

Building a dyslexia friendly workplace



Today's Agenda

1. What is dyslexia?
2. Impacts of dyslexia at work
3. How you can help
4. Dyslexia Canada's mission

1. Foundations of Dyslexia

What is dyslexia?

“Dyslexia is a **specific learning disability** that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by **difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition** and by **poor spelling and decoding abilities.**”

International Dyslexia Association, 2002

What is dyslexia?

“These difficulties typically result from a **deficit in the phonological component** of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the **provision of effective classroom instruction.**”

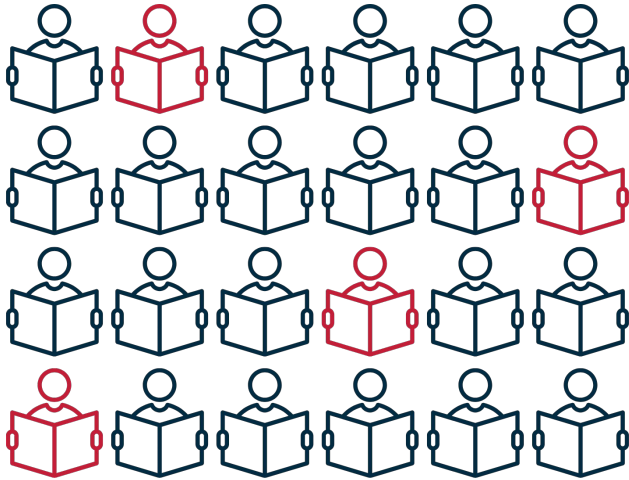
International Dyslexia Association, 2002

What is dyslexia?

“Secondary consequences may include **problems in reading comprehension** and **reduced reading experience** that can **impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.**”

International Dyslexia Association, 2002

Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading difficulties



10 – 20% of the population

4 million people in Canada

Dyslexia is the most common learning disability

Learning Disability
impacting word level
reading and spelling

=

Dyslexia

Dyslexia often runs in families

Dyslexia isn't...

Dyslexia isn't

Caused by low intelligence

Dyslexia isn't

Caused by a lack of motivation

Dyslexia isn't

Something kids outgrow

Dyslexia isn't

All about reversing letters

Dyslexia isn't

a visual issue

Steer clear of...

This Is an
example of
the Open Dyslexic
Typeface



**The only evidence-based intervention
for dyslexia is
structured literacy instruction**

**While it is never too late, intervention is
most effective when it starts in
Kindergarten**

Many (most) Canadians with dyslexia did not receive effective intervention when they were children, resulting in lifelong challenges

2. Impacts of dyslexia

Impacts of dyslexia on reading

- Difficulty recognizing words accurately and fluently.
- Trouble decoding (sounding out) words.
- Challenges with spelling and written expression.
- Can impact comprehension when reading is slow and effortful.

Impacts of dyslexia beyond reading

- Frustration
- Avoidance
- Self-esteem
- Mental health

“An estimated 40% of people with learning disabilities struggle with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem”

Integra, “A Handbook on Learning Disabilities,” (2009) p 23

“Canadians with a learning disability were 46% more likely to have attempted suicide.”

Fuller-Thomson et al. 2018

“(71.9%) indicated that their LD impacted their performance in the workplace..”

Holmes et al., 2011

Self-reported impacts of LD at work

- Rate of information processing (49.4%)
- Spelling (44%)
- Writing (37.4%)
- Reading in public (30%)
- Math computation (30%)
- Short term memory (28.6%)

[Holmes et al., 2011](#)

“Most, (62%) choose not to disclose their LD at work.”

Holmes et al., 2011

Reasons people choose not to disclose:

- Not wanting to be judged (75%)
- Embarrassment (42.2%)
- Concerned about job security (37.8%)
- Fear it will negatively impact relationship with supervisor (26.7%)
- Belief it doesn't impact their work (55.6%)

[Holmes et al., 2011](#)

The most common coping strategy

WORKING HARDER

- Arriving early (48.3%)
- Staying Late (27%)
- Working outside working hours (18.3%)

[Holmes et al., 2011](#)

3. How you can help

Recognize that there are likely
people with dyslexia in your
organization

Remember that many people with
dyslexia do not feel comfortable
disclosing at work

Implement **universal practices**
that can help without making
people feel singled out

Common Strategies

- Setting goals & priorities
- Time management
- Problem-solving / brainstorming with co-workers
- Delegation of tasks
- Finding a quiet workspace
- Use of technology for reading, writing & spelling

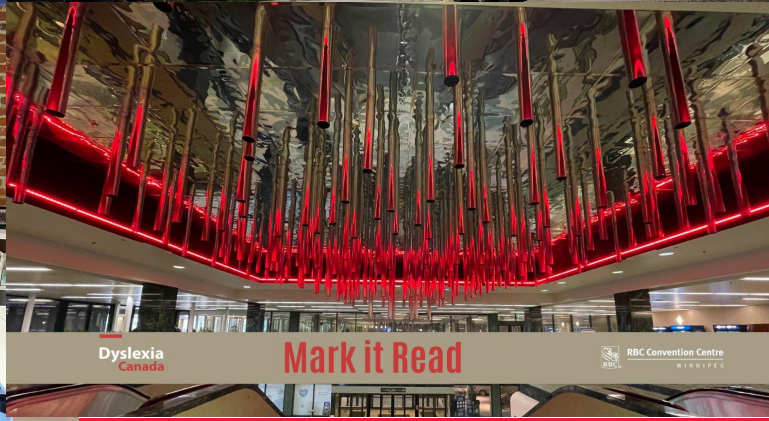
[Holmes et al., 2011](#)

Examples of tech tools

- Grammarly / Antidote
- Speechify
- Immersive Reader
- AI tools like Co-pilot / Chat GPT

Promote dyslexia awareness in
your organization

Celebrate Dyslexia Awareness Month in October



Highlight the accomplishments
and contributions of leaders with
dyslexia in your organization



BREAKING THE SILENCE

Podcast Series



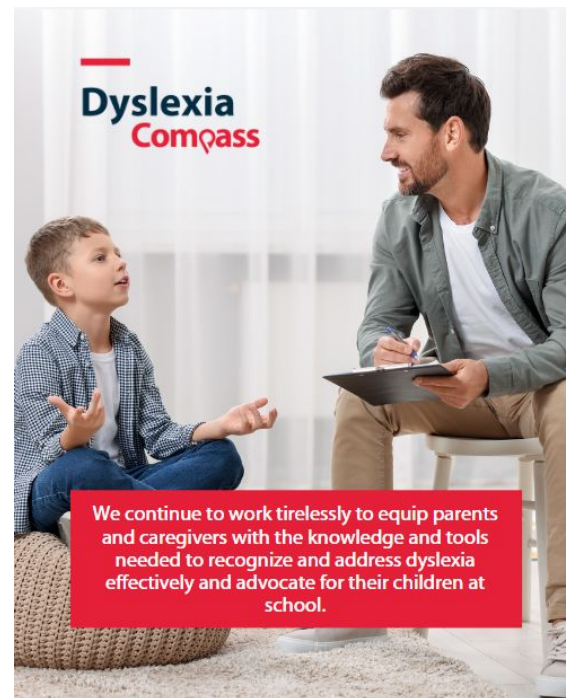
Dyslexia
Canada

Mark it ~~Red~~
READ

Be aware of the stress and emotional demands on those in your organization who parent a child with dyslexia

We help families

- Understand assessment reports, IEPs and intervention plans
- Advocate for support at school
- Find local service providers



We continue to work tirelessly to equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge and tools needed to recognize and address dyslexia effectively and advocate for their children at school.

4. Our mission

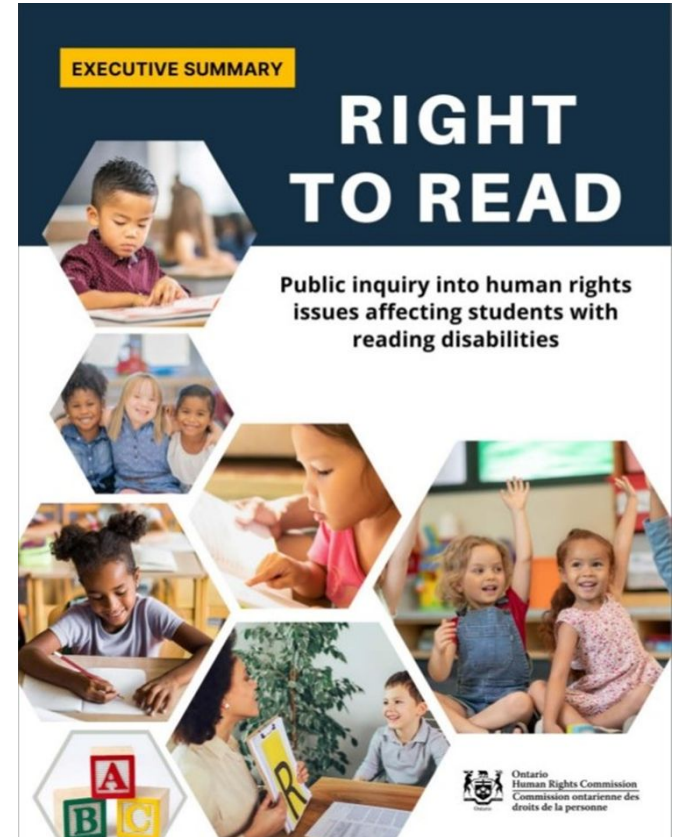
We are a national charity
committed to ensuring that every
child with dyslexia in Canada
receives a fair and equitable
education

We advocate for

- Effective reading instruction for all children
- Universal early screening
- Evidence-based intervention
- Teacher training



“Ontario is systematically failing students with reading disabilities and many other students”



The Right to Read Inquiry concluded
teacher education programs

***“do not prepare teachers to use
approaches to teaching
word-reading skills supported by
scientific research”***

Over **19,000** Canadian educators
have joined our network to learn
about evidence-based reading
instruction

Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick,
PEI, and Nova Scotia have updated
their reading curriculum to use a
Structured Literacy approach

In fall of 2024 every child in kindergarten to grade two in Ontario was screened for risk of reading difficulties

We are working to change the system, but there is a lot of work to yet to be done.

Please support our work by

- amplifying our messages on social media
- celebrating dyslexia awareness month
- volunteering
- running or walking with us in October
- donating and/or hosting a fundraiser

What questions can we answer?

Thank you!

