

Dysgraphia Facts and Tips

Definition: Dysgraphia is a learning disability that impacts writing skills like handwriting, typing, and spelling. Trouble expressing oneself in writing is not part of dysgraphia, but when someone has to focus so much on transcription, it can get in the way of thinking about ideas and how to convey them.

Symptoms of dysgraphia:

- Messy or illegible handwriting, including forming letters, spacing letters, writing in a straight line, and making letter the right size
- Frequent erasures
- Handwriting may be inconsistent
- Poor spelling, including unfinished words or missing words or letters
- Unusual wrist, body, or paper position while writing
- Trouble reading maps
- Avoids handwriting whenever possible; prefers digital
- May dislike even texting
- When using spell-check, may have difficulty picking out the correct word from other similar words
- May mix lowercase and uppercase letters, seemingly randomly
- May have trouble with typing
- May be overly reliant on simple sentence structures
- May have difficulty with syntax and grammar
- May have difficulty thinking and writing at the same time
- May prefer to give or get directions orally
- May have trouble “getting to the point” in written communication; may often ramble or repeat yourself
- May be able to explain self clearly when speaking, but not when writing

How to help in the classroom:

- ✓ Allow student to use a computer for in-class writing
- ✓ Provide and/or encourage graphic/visual organizers whenever possible
- ✓ Encourage multiple drafts, allowing time for revision and editing
- ✓ Allow student to use spell-check or grammar-check, but remind them that they need to be the ultimate checker
- ✓ Allow oral or other non-written exams whenever possible
- ✓ Allow additional time for writing tasks

Technology (sometimes available through DSP):

- Text-to-speech tools: Kurzweil
- Recording device: Sonocent