

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

California Department of Education Issues Dyslexia Guidelines

The California Department of Education (CDE) has published new guidelines for serving students with dyslexia. The California Dyslexia Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Assembly Bill (AB) 1369, which became effective on January 1, 2016, required the CDE to develop and disseminate the guidelines in time for use no later than the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year.

The guidelines are not mandatory, but they offer practical methods to identify and comprehensively assess students with dyslexia that are likely to assist local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts and county offices of education, in complying with the "child find" mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities to ensure that they receive special education and related services if they qualify.

In addition to practical methods to identify students with dyslexia the guidelines also contain tools for comprehensive assessments and evidence-based interventions. Advice and tools offered in the guidelines include:

- Universal screenings, beginning in kindergarten and continuing each year, increase the likelihood of early identification of and intervention for students with dyslexia. The guidelines' extensive list of dyslexia characteristics, broken down by age group and grade level, will support classroom teachers in screening for students with dyslexia.
- Assessments must cover essential reading, writing and spoken language areas, such as phonological awareness, encoding, reading comprehension and rapid naming. Speech and language pathologists and school psychologists can refer to the guidelines' appendix of assessment tools and instruments to measure students' phonological processing abilities when they assess for special education eligibility.
- In addition to practical instruction on teaching methods, the guidelines suggest various accommodations and assistive technology that may help students with dyslexia fully participate in the classroom.
- The guidelines also note that a student who has dyslexia does not necessarily need special education or related services and is not automatically eligible for services. However, the guidelines remind LEAs not to delay evaluating a student for special education eligibility if the LEA suspects or has reason to suspect that the student has dyslexia and needs special education as a result.

As the new academic year begins for schools across California, it is a good time to review the eligibility criteria for specific learning disability, with special attention paid to phonological processing and dyslexia. The guidelines provide an opportunity for school districts to identify students who are struggling,

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provide interventions and ensure compliance with laws protecting students with disabilities.

If you have any questions about the California Dyslexia Guidelines or special education in general, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or download our [Client News Brief App](#).

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