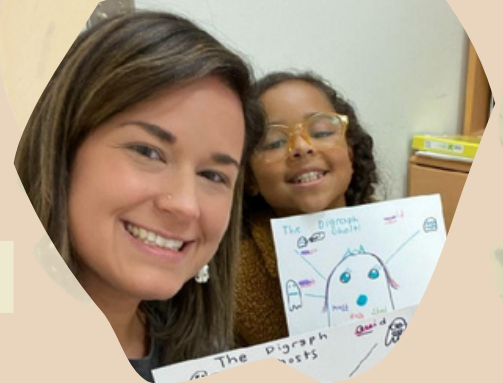


EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

by: Karen Tecco Graham

The first indicators of dyslexia appear long before the first day of kindergarten. Researchers have found that dyslexic students have a unique neurological profile and if we look carefully at their early speech and language development, we will see signs that suggest they will struggle to learn to read. These young children who later go on to be diagnosed with dyslexia are more likely to:

- Have a family history of learning disabilities
 - Begin talking later than typical
 - Have difficulty learning names of letters, numbers
 - Have difficulty pronouncing words correctly
 - Have difficulty learning common nursery rhymes
 - Have slower development of vocabulary & morphosyntax
- (Adlof, 2019 ASHA conference)



When we see these red flags in preschoolers, it is very important to consider language and literacy testing. We want to identify children who are at a heightened risk for dyslexia, so we can support them with early and appropriate intervention. We are not labeling children with dyslexia; rather we are identifying children who are at heightened risk for dyslexia--analogous to identifying people who are at risk for a certain disease in order to prevent, delay, or reduce the severity of their illness. Research suggests that the most optimal time to intervene is in kindergarten and first grade, not later. Waiting until second or third grade to provide support increases the discrepancy between their reading skills and what is expected for their grade level, and it also greatly impacts their emotional well-being.

(continued on the next page)

For more information, visit:

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EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY (CONT'D)

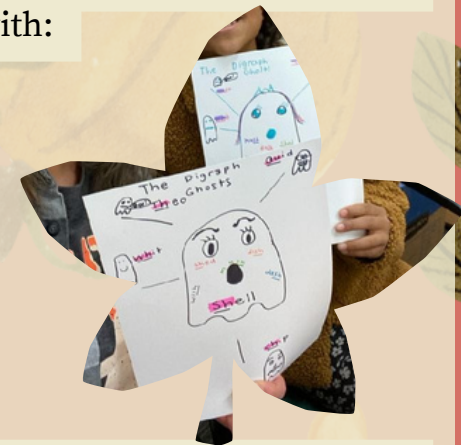
What does an early language and literacy evaluation look like? With young children, it is more important to focus an evaluation on the precursors of reading development. Measures of language skills, phonological awareness, memory and rapid naming are more suggestive of being at-risk for dyslexia than are measures of word reading, decoding and spelling. Thus, we look at the underlying skills that are the foundations for reading success, with particular attention to phonological processing skills.

Teacher observations are key to identifying children who may benefit from testing. Children with poor phonological processing skills might display difficulty with:

- Noticing rhymes, alliteration, or repetition of sounds
- Remembering how to pronounce new words or names
- Distinguishing difference(s) in similar sounding words
- Clapping out syllables or separating a compound word
- Identifying the first sound in a word

(Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Ed)

Children who begin school with poor pre-reading skills continue to be behind their peers years later. To prevent this, it is essential to accurately identify reading difficulties as early as possible, so that children can be provided with the intervention they need.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- November 9, 2022: The Writing Rope (PATTAN Webinars)- Act 48 Hours
- November 19, 2022: The Science of Oral Reading Fluency by Dr. Stephanie Stollar
- November 30, 2022: Lessons Learned (A Mother and Daughter Talk About Growing Up with Dyslexia at Provident Charter

For more information, visit:

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MEET KAREN TECCO GRAHAM

I am a PA state licensed and ASHA certified Speech-Language Pathologist and owner of Sewickley Speech Therapy. I graduated from Case Western Reserve University, where I received a BA in Communicative Sciences and a MA in Communication Disorders. With the financial support of the Peirce Structured Literacy scholarship, I completed Robert Morris University's graduate-level certificate program in Structured Literacy, to further understand and support my students with dyslexia.

I provide speech, language, and literacy evaluations and therapy, both in-person and online. My passion lies in reaching the youngest students before they struggle in school. I recently created an assessment protocol that is designed to identify children 5-7 years of age who are at risk for dyslexia and would benefit from early identification and treatment. These comprehensive Early Language and Literacy Evaluations flag early readers in need of intervention, thus preventing the significant academic difficulties they will encounter if the wait-and-see approach is taken.

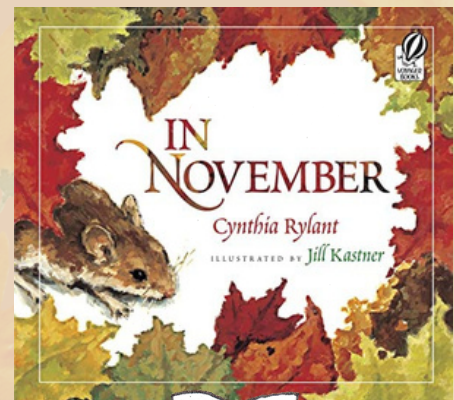
For more information, please reach out to: Karen Tecco Graham at kctgraham@gmail.com or (412) 356-3842. (sewickleyspeechtherapy.com)



WANT TO JOIN THE PEIRCE CENTER?

The Robert Morris University Education Department is hiring a part-time staff position for Structured Literacy Tutor at the Peirce Center. The Structured Literacy Tutor will work directly with children in grades K-12 that are referred to the Center for reading and/or writing tutoring. The Tutor will conduct screenings on all incoming students to determine instructional needs, plan developmentally appropriate instruction based on data, conduct progress monitoring, communicate with parents, and administer all post assessments with clients.

BOOK OF THE MONTH



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