

Each person has different challenges. Classroom accommodations for one student with a diagnosis may not work for the other students. To best help each student, talk with the students, teachers and their parents to learn which accommodations work best for them. Have the child be an active participant in telling you what they need.

### Dyslexia

- Provide color strips or bookmarks to help students focus on a line of text.
- Give extra time for reading and writing activities.
- Use text-to-speech and speech-to-text software to help with reading and writing.
- Keep a structured classroom routine and set visual schedules that the teacher will read aloud.
- Provide high-interest books for low reading levels (hi-lo books) and audiobooks.
- Breaking up presentations, lectures, and blocks of text with pictures and diagrams.
- Writing down key points on the board during class.
- Using colorful posters and letter strips in the classroom to help with dyslexia spelling strategies.
- Making mind maps to reinforce the content of a lesson.
- Having students visualize the main points of a lesson.
- Color coding all materials.
- Technology such as audiobooks, videos, and text-to-speech software are excellent resources that help students with dyslexia master reading skills.
- Larger fonts, speech-to-text software, and spellcheck are great ways for students with dyslexia to strengthen their writing skills.

## ADHD

- Seating the student in an area with fewer distractions where he or she can focus on the lesson. For example, near the teacher's desk, away from windows and the doorway, or in another area that has few distractions.
- Seating the student next to positive role models, peers who are less likely to provide distractions and can help them stay on task.
- Breaking long assignments into smaller parts. This allows students to see both the start and end of the task.
- Making sure all assignments are clear and provided in writing in addition to giving them out loud.
- Checking with the student before they complete an assignment to see if they heard and understood instructions. Ask them to repeat it back to verify understanding.
- Allowing them to take tests in a different room, one that is quiet and has few distractions. Or using aids such as headphones or privacy boards to create quiet spaces in the classroom.
- Giving more time to complete assignments, projects, and tests.
- Using a timer or alarm to help with time management.
- Providing breaks. Depending on the student, these could include stretching, walking to the board to complete a task, or handing out assignments or materials.
- Limiting repetitive assignments, particularly those the students has already mastered, or tasks that are too far above the student's level. Students are most able to pay attention to tasks that present some challenge but are within their current learning zone.
- Making sure that the student has the opportunity for physical activities because active movement increases the ability to focus. Recess should never be taken away as a punishment for misbehavior.

- Providing tools to help with organization, such as different colored folders, a notebook with dividers, or a homework assignment book.
- Using computers or tablets for work. Computers are visually stimulating and allow for more engagement and also help students organize their thoughts.

### Sensory Processing

- Have a consistent daily routine.
- Give advance warning of changes to the routine.
- Build in brain breaks throughout the day.
- Establish clear starting and ending times for tasks.
- Post visual schedules, directions, to-do lists, and classroom expectations. Be sure students see them.
- Use visuals with pictures of sensory input choices.  
Provide a quiet work space or “calm down” area.
- Seat the student away from doors, windows, or buzzing lights.
- Adjust the desk and chair so the student’s feet are flat on the floor and hips are at a 90-degree angle. Or put a footstool under the desk.
- Let the student use alternative seating. Try an exercise ball chair, wobble stool, or stand-up desk.
- Consult with the occupational therapist (OT) about attaching a stretchy exercise band to the chair legs or desk for students who need to bounce their feet.
- Let the student work in a different position, like lying on the floor using a clipboard or at an easel.
- Provide a weighted lap pad, weighted vest, compression vest, air-filled seat cushion, or other OT-approved sensory tools.

- Provide earplugs or noise-muffling headphones.
- Let the student use a sensory tool, like a stress ball or a fidget spinner.
- Have chewing gum available. Or attach a chewable item to the end of a pencil.
- Let the student sit on a carpet square, in a beanbag chair, or in a chair during group seating.
- Let the student move as needed within a space outlined in tape or at a seat to the side.
- Work with the student to come up with nonverbal signals to use when in need of a break.
- Create a proactive behavior plan for handling sensory triggers.
- Warn the student when there will be loud noises like bells, announcements, or planned fire alarms.
- Allow the student to ask for breaks to promote self-regulation.
- Reduce the need for handwriting. For example, use fill-in-the-blank questions instead of short-answer questions.
- Allow extra time for writing if a student has motor skills fatigue.
- Let the student use speech-to-text software or a computer.
- Reduce the amount of information on a page.
- Provide colored overlays for reading to reduce visual distraction.
- Use blank pieces of paper to cover all but a few of the questions on a page.
- Use manila folders as a screen to block visual distractions.

- Offer pencil grips, slant boards, and bold or raised-line paper for writing.
- Use a highlighter or sticky notes to help the student stay focused.
- Allow the student to listen to music while working to keep focused and regulated.

## Dyscalculia

### ● ACTIVE MODELING

Actively model concepts and problems, focus on language, reason aloud, and use a [language-enhanced place value chart](#) to hold number information, see number relationships, and free up cognitive resources.

### ● MONITOR

A monitor points out errors, reorients the student, and allows multiple opportunities to demonstrate and explain ideas. (Error examples: saying one digit but writing another; copying errors; subtracting instead of adding; finding the difference between digits instead of subtracting).

### ● 1:1 PERFORMANCE

The student performs individually with the instructor instead of independently or in a group. The instructor monitors for, and corrects, unintentional dyscalculic errors and allows the student to: reason aloud; model ideas; illustrate; stand; work on a board; use a language-enhanced place value chart, math visualization apps, and tools to organize information (ex.

ruler, color highlighters, erasable color pens, templates, and masking).

- AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

Instead of traditional math tests, the dyscalculic should demonstrate understanding with verbal explanations, illustrations, color-coding to organize elements and operations, active modeling, a language-enhanced place value chart, and appropriate math apps or tools. Demonstrations can be live with a teacher or created independently and submitted as a video, presentation, website, PDF, illustrated study guide, or other form.

- REMOVE TIME CONSTRAINTS, AND DISTRACTIONS

A dyscalculic is quickly overwhelmed by compounding demands. Awareness of time running out, adds additional stress, and further impairs functioning. Mask all visual stimuli to reveal only the information at hand. To aid visuospatial perception and processing, use highlighters, rulers, color ink, erasable color pens, and templates.

## Anxiety

- Provide classroom seating where the student is most comfortable (near a door, near the front of the room, near the teacher or a friend).
- Let the student sit near the back of the room or by an exit during assemblies.
- Assign the student a designated buddy for lunchtime, recess, and/or hallways.
- Allow preferential grouping for field trips so the student is with a teacher or friends.
- Provide a “take a break pass” to let the student walk down the hallway, get a drink, or leave the classroom when needed.
- Create a plan for catching up after an absence or illness (for example, excusing missed homework or having a known time frame for making up work).
- Give advance notice of planned substitute teachers or other changes in routine.
- Give the student notice and extra time before upcoming transitions, like before recess and lunch, and rehearse transitions in a private or low-stress environment.
- Clearly state and/or write down classroom expectations and consequences.
- Break down assignments into smaller chunks.
- Check in frequently for understanding and “emotional temperature.”
- Provide a signal before calling on the student and a signal for the student to opt out of answering.

- Offer written instructions in addition to spoken directions.
- Exempt the student from reading aloud or demonstrating work in front of the class.
- Let the student present projects to the teacher instead of to the entire class.
- Give extended time on tests and/or separate test-taking space to reduce performance anxiety.
- Allow use of word banks, cheat sheets, or fact cards for tests (for students who freeze or “go blank” during in-class tests).
- Set time limits for homework or reduce the amount of homework.
- Assure that work not completed in that time won’t count against the student.
- Provide class notes via email or a school portal for the student to preview.
- Give notice of upcoming tests (no “pop quizzes”).