

## Quick Facts

- Students with dyslexia require specific kinds of reading instruction
- Many reading programs are ineffective for dyslexic students
- The Orton Gillingham approach is the oldest and best researched for teaching those with dyslexia
- Explicit, intensive and multisensory methods work best
- Content should include phonemic awareness, fluency and explicit instruction of spelling rules
- Assistive technology is opening the door to more efficient and effective methods for teaching reading
- Software based reading programs hold many advantages over traditional programs but have not been widely adopted—yet

## How do you Teach a Child with Dyslexia to Read?

The research on dyslexia treatment clearly shows that children with dyslexia need special kinds of instruction in terms of both content and method. Below is a summary of what we know works.

### Dyslexia Treatment: Content

According to the prominent dyslexia researcher Dr. Sally Shaywitz, in her book *Overcoming Dyslexia*, the key ingredients of effective early intervention programs are:

#### 1) Systematic and direct instruction in:

- [Phonemic Awareness](#)
- Phonics
- Sounding out words
- Spelling
- Reading sight words
- Vocabulary and concepts
- Reading comprehension strategies

2) **Practice applying these skills in reading and writing:** Practice means using them everyday from reading [comic strips](#) to writing e-mail.

3) **Fluency training:** Fluency is the ability to read quickly, smoothly, accurately and with good comprehension. When reading is slow and tough, kids spend all their energy to just sound out the words, often missing the meaning entirely.

4) **Enriched language experiences:** Interactive dialogue involving listening, speaking and story telling.

## **Dyslexia Treatment: Method**

In terms of a successful method, the [Orton Gillingham \(OG\) approach](#) to reading that was developed in the 1930s by Samuel Torrey Orton and Anna Gillingham is still believed to be the most effective dyslexia treatment. It is based on the following process elements:

**Personalized:** Teaching begins with recognizing the differing needs of learners.

**Multisensory:** The simultaneous use of multiple senses including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic (touch). For example, a dyslexic learner is taught to see the letter A, say its name and sound and write it in the air—all at the same time. The use of multisensory input is thought to enhance memory storage and retrieval. Multisensory approaches can even be used for [math](#).

### **Does Font Matter?**

Much has been written in the media about special fonts for dyslexia. Discover if fonts can really make a difference in our [Dyslexia Font and Style Guide](#).

**Structured, Systematic, Sequential, and Cumulative:** Language elements and rules are introduced in a linguistically logical, understandable order. Students go back to the very beginning of their language learning, to lay a proper foundation.

Beginning by reading and writing sounds in isolation ([phonemes](#)), then blending sounds into syllables and words. Elements of language—consonants, vowels, digraph blends, and diphthongs are introduced in an orderly fashion. Only later, learners proceed to advanced structural elements such as syllable types, roots, prefixes and suffixes.

**Cognitive:** Students study the many generalizations and rules that govern the structure of language.

**Flexible:** Instructors ensure the learner is not simply recognizing a pattern and applying it without understanding. When confusion of a previously taught rule is discovered, it is re-taught from the beginning.

**Personal and Direct:** Building a close teacher-student relationship with continuous feedback and positive reinforcement leading to success and self confidence.