

Meeting the Needs of Children with Dyslexia in Public Schools

ACT 1294 of 2013

A.C.A. § 6-41-601, Title 6, Subtitle 3, et al.

Vicki King, M.Ed., CALT, QI
Arkansas Department of Education
Dyslexia Specialist
vicki.king@arkansas.gov
(501)682-3213



The Arkansas State Legislature enacted Act 1294 of 2013, codified as A.C.A. § 6-41-601, Title 6, Subtitle 3, et al., to ensure that children with dyslexia have their needs met by the public school system.



Components of the Law

- Required screening and RTI
- Dyslexia evaluations and therapeutic services
- Instructional approaches
- ADE approved programs
- Dyslexia professional awareness for all teachers



Required Screening

A.C.A. § 6-41-603

Level 1: Universal Screener

A school district shall screen using the **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)**

The screening should include:

- Phonological and phonemic awareness;
- Sound symbol recognition;
- Alphabet knowledge;
- Decoding skills;
- **Rapid naming skills;** and
- **Encoding.**



Who is to be screened?

A.C.A. § 6-41-603

- All students kindergarten through grade 2 (K-2);
- K-2 students transferring to a new school who have not been screened;
- K-2 students enrolling from another state who have not had the screening or a similar screening; and
- Any student in grade 3 or higher who has difficulty as noted by a classroom teacher.



For students identified as at-risk, the RTI process begins

A.C.A. § 6-41-604

- Parent notification;
- Data reviewed by school-based decision team;
- Review team refers student for intervention;
- Student progress is continually monitored; and
- Referral for Level 2: Dyslexia Evaluation if dyslexia is suspected.



Level 2: Dyslexia Evaluation

A.C.A. § 6-41-604

A Level 2: Dyslexia evaluation will be

- Completed by a trained professional using norm-referenced testing;
- Used to determine if markers of dyslexia are present;
- Used to determine if therapeutic services are warranted;
- Used to determine a student's eligibility for services and accommodations under Section 504.



Level 2: Dyslexia Evaluation Components

Step 1: Data gathering

Documentation of:

- Reading Instruction
- RtI Progress Monitoring

Other sources:

- Vision/Hearing Screening
- Teacher and Parent Concerns
- Report Cards
- Classroom Accommodations
- Work Samples
- Documentation of English Proficiency
- Assessments for Special Programs (Special Ed., Gifted and Talented, etc.)
- Early Reading Inventories
- State Assessment Results

Step 2: Evaluate using norm-referenced assessments

- Phonological Awareness
 - Blending
 - Segmenting
- Rapid Naming
- Letter Knowledge
- Decoding
- Word Recognition
- Oral Reading Fluency
 - Rate
 - Accuracy
- Spelling
- Reading Comprehension



When Students Exhibit Markers of Dyslexia on Level 2: Dyslexia Evaluation

A.C.A. § 6-41-604

- Parents or legal guardians are notified of results of the Dyslexia Evaluation
- Parents or legal guardians are provided information and resource materials
 - Common indicators of dyslexia
 - Appropriate classroom interventions and accommodations
- Parents or legal guardians have the right to seek an independent, private, evaluation
- Student receives dyslexia therapy services
- Student progress is continually monitored
- Schools may perform a Level III: Comprehensive Dyslexia Evaluation



Level 3: Comprehensive Dyslexia Evaluation

A.C.A. § 6-41-604

District Option

Purpose: Diagnosis, Intervention Planning, and Documentation

Who can diagnose: Professionals with advanced degrees in administration and interpretation of diagnostic assessments. (Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Psychological Examiner, School Psychology Specialist, Speech Language Pathologist...)

What should be assessed: Diagnosis involves data gathering and observation of areas such as expressive and receptive language skills, intellectual functioning, cognitive processing and educational achievement. A comprehensive dyslexia evaluation is used to determine if the student's learning problems are specific to reading or whether they are related to other disorders like ADHD, anxiety, depression, Central Auditory Processing Disorder, or other physical or sensory impairments

<http://ncld.org/parents-child-disabilities/ld-testing/testing-for-dyslexia.pdf> <http://www.interdys.org/ewebeditpro5/upload/TestingandEvaluation.pdf>



Independent Evaluation

A.C.A. § 6-41-604

- At any time, a parent, at his/her expense, may seek an independent, or private dyslexia evaluation.
- The school district shall consider a diagnosis from independent evaluation and allow students to receive direct intervention from a dyslexia therapist based on a valid independent evaluation.



Dyslexia Therapy

A.C.A. § 6-41-602

An appropriate specialized dyslexia instructional program that is...

- delivered by a dyslexia therapist.
- systematic, multisensory, and research based.
- offered in a small group setting.



Instructional Approaches

A.C.A. § 6-41-602

Content:

- Phonology / phonological awareness
- Sound-symbol association
- Syllable instruction
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Strategies for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension

A.C.A. § 6-41-605

Principles of Instruction:

- Explicit, direct instruction
- Systematic, sequential, and cumulative
- Individualized
- Comprehensive and inclusive (meaning based)
- Multisensory



Dyslexia Therapist

A.C.A. § 6-41-602

A professional who has completed training and obtained certification in dyslexia therapy from a dyslexia therapy training program approved by the Arkansas Department of Education.

Timeline:**By 2015-2016**, school districts shall have individuals to serve as dyslexia interventionists as defined in the Dyslexia Resource Guide who are trained interventionists by the department or using other dyslexia training programs approved by the department (A.C.A. § 6-41-607).



ADE-Approved

Dyslexia Therapy Training Programs are:

- Therapist level training courses;
- Accredited by International Dyslexia Association (IDA) or International Multisensory Language Education Council (IMSLEC); with a
- National certification exam.



Dyslexia Therapist Training Participant Requirements

- Degree:** Bachelors in Education or related field
- Course work:** Minimum of 200 clock hours
- Practicum:** 700 clock hours teaching beginning and upper levels of instruction
3 different cases
10 demonstration lessons
24 month minimum
Written reports documenting therapy situations and progress
- Supervision:** Direct observation by a Qualified Instructor



Requirements for a Qualified Instructor

Degree: Masters Degree

Requirements: 1400 therapy hours beyond certification as a therapist

Experience with students of various ages

Experience with one-on-one and small group situations

Internship: 2 year internship at a center offering therapist level training

Observations of the training cycle (basic and advanced courses)

Supervised participation in all facets of therapy training including: lectures, practicums, record keeping, class preparation, written critique of demonstration lessons (10 guided, 10 independent)

Supervision: Direct supervision by a Qualified Instructor



ADE Approved Programs

Until there are a sufficient number of graduates from a dyslexia therapy program established at the university level in Arkansas or from dyslexia therapy program established at the university level in another state that is approved by the ADE, the department shall allow dyslexia therapy to be provided by individuals who have received training and certification from a program approved by the department (A.C.A. § 6-41-605).



ADE Approved Programs

If the school district determines the following five (5) criteria are met within a dyslexia program, that program is considered approved and may be used for dyslexia. No application is required.

1. Training course is delivered by a certified trainer in the selected dyslexia program
2. Training and program is systematic and researched based
3. Instruction is multisensory
4. Provides small group instruction in the essential components of reading including phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, and structure of the English language, linguistic instruction and strategies for decoding, encoding word recognition, fluency and comprehension.
5. The program is approved by another state department of education as an approved dyslexia program.



***If the program meets criteria 1-4 but is not recognized as an approved program by another state department of education, the district must submit the Dyslexia Program Approval Form.**

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Dyslexia Program Approval Form



Education Service Cooperative Dyslexia Specialist

A.C.A. § 6-41-607

ADE will ensure that each education service cooperative will designate a dyslexia contact to provide information and support to school districts.



Dyslexia Professional Awareness

A.C.A. § 6-41-608

No later than the **2014-2015 school year**, the Department of Education shall ensure that each teacher receives professional awareness on

1. The indicators of dyslexia; and
2. The science behind teaching a student who is dyslexic.

The professional awareness may be provided:

- Online;
- At an education service cooperative; or
- At another venue approved by the ADE

ArkansasIdeas online course:

Dyslexia: A Three Part Professional Development (1 hour credit)

