

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT DYSLEXIA

MYTH: Reading is the best way to learn

- There are three types of reading: eye reading (paper), ear reading (books on tape) and finger reading (braille). A central contributor to a dyslexic's sense of shame is the fixation on eye reading as the best way to learn. If someone lost his or her vision, would we question their intelligence and refer to non-text based strategies as "a crutch"? Alternatives work just as well.

MYTH: Dyslexic students are unintelligent or lazy, and including them or providing accommodations lowers classroom standards

- Dyslexia—difficulty with standard reading—has nothing to do with a person's level of intelligence.
- The SAT has an extremely poor track record in predicting who will do well in college.
- Measuring students on resiliency and their strengths rather than spelling is better.

MYTH: Your child can be fixed

- There is no cure for dyslexia, because it is not a disease. Instead the focus should be on integrating this profile, building on strengths and developing eight key attitudes.
- A dyslexic person will never be in the top half of mainstream reading ability compared to their peers, but they can still go on to be very successful in school and in life.

MYTH: Dyslexia is the fault of bad parenting

- Dyslexia is like your child's height. Yes, your genes played a large role in it, but your actions did not do anything to cause it. Dyslexia has nothing to do with eating the wrong things during pregnancy, or waiting until nursery school to familiarize your child with the alphabet.

MYTH: Boys are more likely to be dyslexic than girls

- There are a number of studies that show the same incidence of dyslexia in boys and girls. Negative behavior increases the odds that a child is going to get identified. Boys frustrated by their difficulty in school tend to act out; girls tend to clam up.

MYTH: It's best to keep these problems hidden from my child and others

- Both you and your child will be much happier if you can get over the notion that dyslexia is best kept secret and instead tell people what is really going on. As Steven Spielberg put it after he was identified as dyslexic, "It was the missing puzzle piece."

From Headstrong Nation, the national organization for the dyslexic community. Visit www.headstrongnation.org for videos and more information.

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