

How to Have a Dyslexia-Friendly Classroom!

- *Learn what it means* to have dyslexia. Visit the web sites of Decoding Dyslexia Iowa and the International Dyslexia Association for information.
- Familiarize yourself with *classroom accommodations* for dyslexia. Understand that accommodations are not cheating - they give students with dyslexia equal access to the curriculum.
- *Facilitate and encourage* the use of accommodations – do not make students ask for them, especially in front of others. They are often embarrassed to do so.
- Understand that most students with dyslexia will have trouble copying from the board. If the board is used, *provide a transcript*.
- Allow students with dyslexia to show what they know despite their difficulties with reading and writing. Often they will be able to shine orally. Let them answer questions out loud and consider *alternative assignments*, such as oral reports instead of written ones.
- Don't ask students with dyslexia to do things that publicly expose their weaknesses. For example, don't ask them to read aloud unless they are *comfortable* and agree to do so *in private*.
- Watch for signs of *fatigue*. Students with dyslexia have to work much harder than other students, which is exhausting. Their work will often deteriorate over time, especially at the end of the day.
- Don't overload students with dyslexia with oral instructions. *Go a little slower and allow time* for your words to sink in. Remember that many have weak auditory processing.
- Make worksheets *dyslexia-friendly*. Avoid visual crowding of text, flowery fonts, and multiple choice questions with confusing wording. Familiarize yourself with *technology* that allows students with dyslexia to have worksheets read to them and to type their answers.
- *Don't scold* students with dyslexia when they lose or forget things, miss the meaning of something or have a bad day – just as you would not scold a deaf child for not hearing something.
- Don't expect the same *quantity of written work* as you do from other students.
- Offer *audio books* in your classroom for required reading and during free reading time. Audio books have been shown to improve literacy outcomes for all students, but they are especially important for students with dyslexia, who tend to have high comprehension but low decoding.