





Progress,
Definitions,
Mindset,
Responsibility

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The History



Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) - Foundations

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) was formed in **November 2006** to provide a voice for, and services to, the estimated one in ten New Zealanders with dyslexia as well as to those supporting them.

The DFNZ launch was funded through the generous support of principal sponsor, Cookie Time Charitable Trust, which has also funded several key achievements along the way. Just six months after launch, DFNZ was successful in having the New Zealand Government recognise dyslexia for the first time. Since then, it has been working hard to facilitate greater recognition, understanding and action on dyslexia.

[DFNZ - Dyslexic Foundation of New Zealand](#)





In **April 2007**, after much hard work by the Foundation, the New Zealand Government finally recognised dyslexia for the first time. In an accompanying statement, the Ministry of Education said it would be putting greater emphasis on assisting students with dyslexia, and would be implementing a range of initiatives to increase the level and quality of assistance given to these students.

[Click here](#) for the Ministry of Education announcement.





Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) - Process and Principles

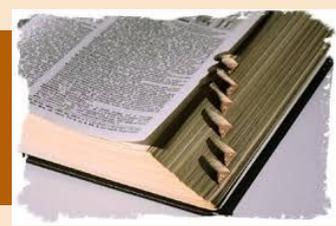
The process involved includes three steps –
recognition, understanding and action.

They are critical to effectively addressing dyslexia and are based on the following principles:

- **Recognition:** identifying and naming the issue
- **Understanding:** noticing what this means for everyday life – at school, and within the family, and work
- **Action:** adjusting the approach to improve outcomes – at school, within the family work



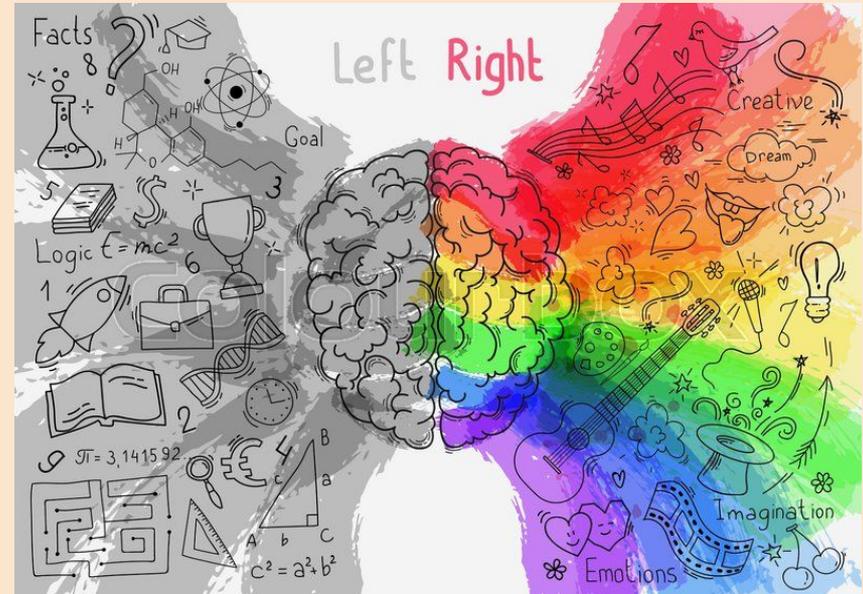
Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) - A Definition of Dyslexia



DFNZ supports a broad spectrum view of dyslexia. Common themes are that it is an alternative or atypical way of thinking; that it has a proven neurobiological basis; and that it occurs across a range of intellectual abilities.

The definition used by DFNZ is that dyslexia is: "A specific learning difference which is *constitutional in origin* and which, for a given level of ability, may cause unexpected difficulties in the acquisition of certain literacy and numeracy skills."

Constitutional in origin refers to the fact that dyslexia has a substantive neurobiological basis. Brain research, including studies from Yale and Auckland universities, has shown that while it is common to use the 'verbal' left side of our brain to understand words, dyslexic people use the 'pictorial' right side – making them slower to process and understand language, but stronger in creative areas like problem solving, empathy and lateral thinking.



[Click here for link to DFNZ - What is Dyslexia?](#)



SPELD NZ is a not-for-profit organisation established in the 1970s to support children and adults with dyslexia.

As well as diagnostic assessment and one-on-one remediation, SPELD NZ provides resources and information and runs training programmes for professionals and families.

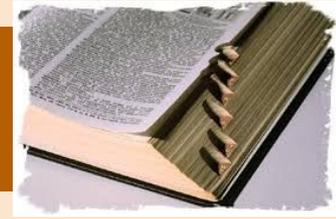
SPELD NZ has also been a strong player in raising awareness for the needs of those with dyslexia in New Zealand. It actively advocates and lobbies both locally and nationally, and was heavily involved with the campaign to convince the Ministry of Education to recognise and support dyslexia in schools.



[Click here](#) for link to SPELD services.

Recent Progress : Report of the Education and Science Committee

(November 2016)



On 19 August 2015, the Education and Science Committee began an inquiry into the identification and support for students with the significant challenges of dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism spectrum disorder in primary and secondary schools.

[Click here](#) for the whole report.



Revised Definition : Dyslexia involves an unexpected or persistent difficulty in learning to read, write, and spell that cannot be explained by other factors. Specifically, a person with dyslexia has difficulty decoding and encoding print. This difficulty does not usually affect a person's ability to understand what is read to them or to formulate text that others can write down for them (unless the person does not have enough vocabulary or grammatical knowledge to understand spoken language).



Now : Draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan

(2018)



The [draft plan](#) covers four priority areas:

- improving the way children and young people are assessed for additional learning needs
- strengthening the range of supports for children and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs
- improving the way the education system responds to neurodiverse learners and gifted learners
- ensuring that learning support is resourced for increased support and delivery.

Specific proposals include developing screening tools to help identify learning needs when children start school and the creation of two new roles in the system, including a 'Learning support co-ordinator' within schools.

The draft Action Plan was developed with input from a range of sources, including the 2015 Learning Support Update, and the Select Committee Inquiry into Identification and Support for students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Article - https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12128648