

Working towards a national strategy for dyslexia: the Delphi Definition and SASC

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Why do we need an updated definition of dyslexia?

- Rose (2009) is 15 years old and child focused
- Different definitions and approaches used:
 - research versus practice
 - schools versus university/workplace
 - different local authorities
- Using the Delphi approach draws together experts from different fields and focuses on what we can agree on
 - Assessors, psychologists, academics, charities and individuals with lived experience
 - Use anonymous comments and ratings on a set of candidate statements





A Consensus Definition of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is primarily a set of **processing difficulties** that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling.

In dyslexia, some or all aspects of literacy attainment are weak in relation to age, standard teaching and instruction, and level of other attainments.

Across languages and age groups, difficulties in **reading fluency and spelling** are a key marker of dyslexia.

The nature and developmental trajectory of dyslexia depends on **multiple** genetic and environmental influences.

Dyslexic difficulties exist on a **continuum** and can be experienced to various degrees of severity.

Dyslexia can affect the acquisition of **other skills**, such as mathematics, reading comprehension or learning another language.

The most commonly observed cognitive impairment in dyslexia is a difficulty in phonological processing (i.e. in phonological awareness, phonemic decoding skill or phonological memory). However, **phonological difficulties do not fully explain** the variability that is observed.

Working memory, orthographic skills and processing speed problems can contribute to the impact of dyslexia and therefore should be assessed.

Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with one or more other developmental difficulty, including developmental language disorder, dyscalculia, ADHD, and developmental coordination disorder.



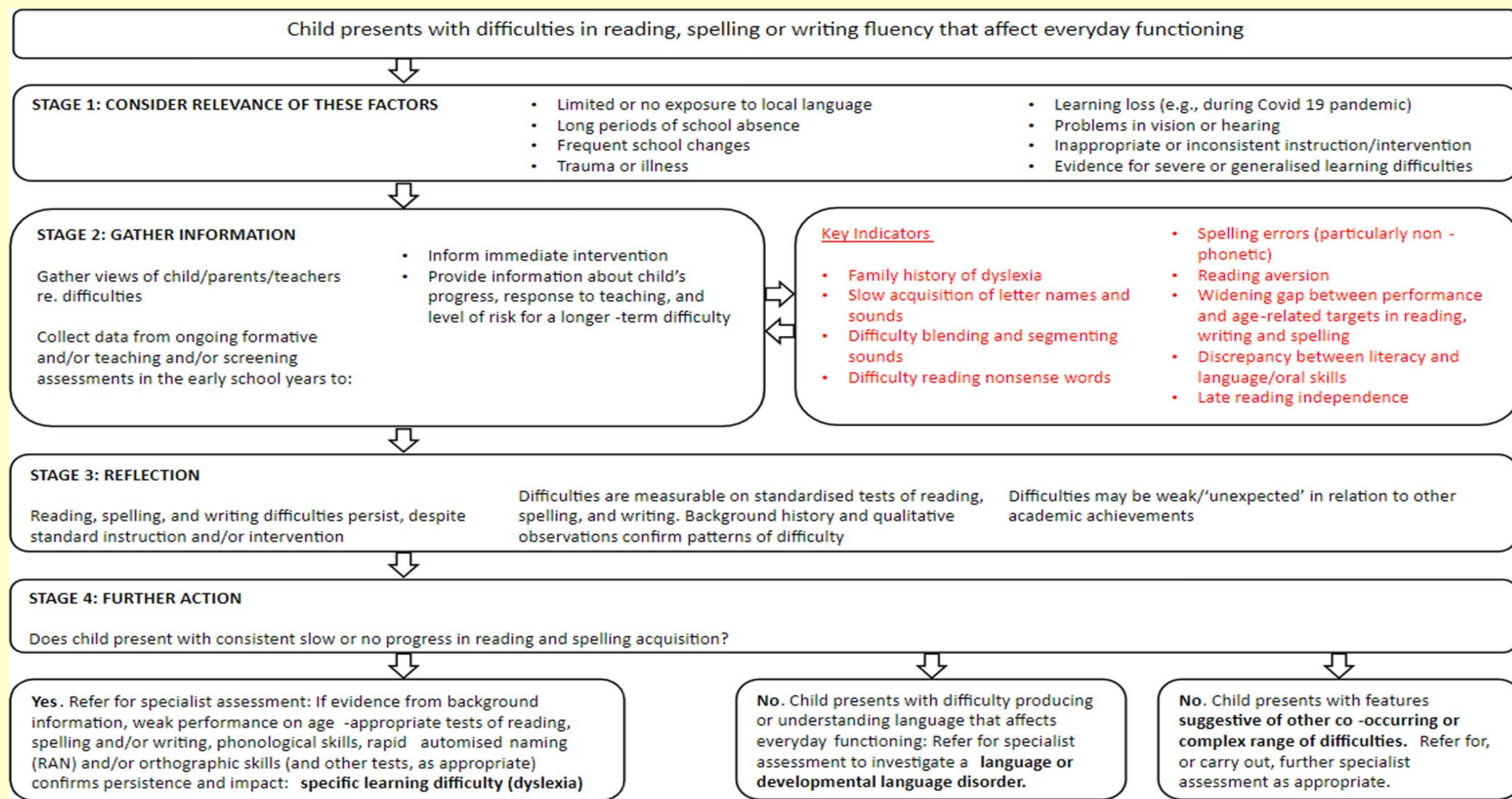


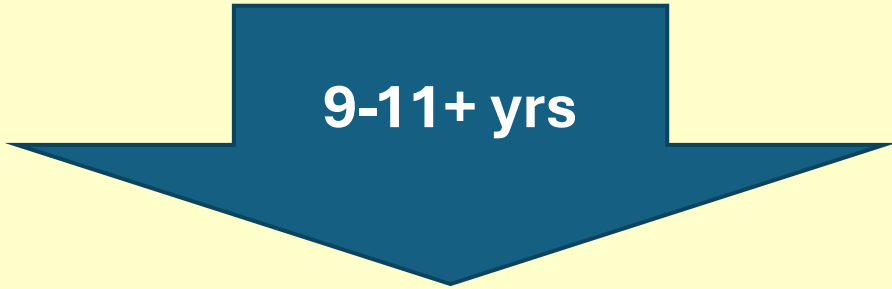
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Towards a Consensus for Dyslexia Practice: Findings of a Delphi Study on Assessment and Identification

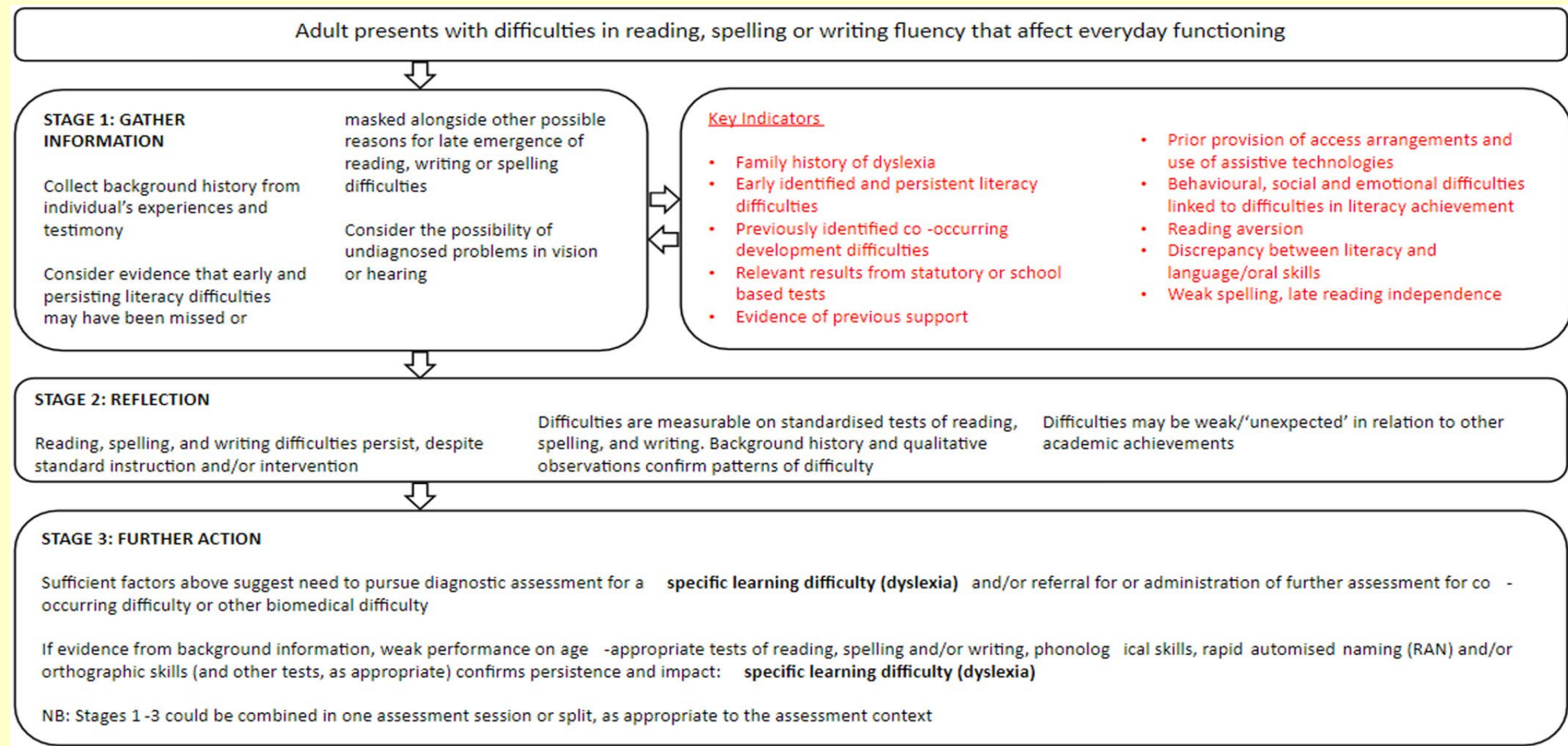




9-11+ yrs

Children with pervasive, complex or persistent difficulties:

- Can continue to struggle to meet age-related attainment expectations in literacy. There may be a range of other emotional, behavioural or social issues affecting learning.
- Are likely to require support at secondary school or beyond and/or require adjustments such as access arrangements in examinations, assistive technologies, or DSA support in higher education.
- Are likely to benefit from the potential labelling and naming of SpLD(s) in facilitating self understanding.



SASC as the Independent Standards Body for SpLD

- Collaborative, multi organisational body representing professional associations, training providers, and independent experts
- Evidence led, impartial development of standards for SpLD Literacy and Numeracy Specialist Teachers and Specialist Teacher Assessors
- Ensures consistency, rigour, and sector wide legitimacy in training and practice
- Successor to the former BDA Accreditation Board (disbanded 2025), maintaining continuity of legacy standards



New Accreditation Framework

Umbrella Accreditation for SpLD Specialist Teacher & Assessor Courses

- Unified national criteria aligned with best practice and long-established quality benchmarks
- Structured to ensure progression, competence, and robust quality assurance
- Recognition maintained for courses previously accredited under BDA criteria where alignment is demonstrated
- Clear pathways to professional membership and certification through SASC-recognised bodies
- Supports workforce development for schools, colleges, and emerging SEND support centres





Public Assurance: APC & TPC Registers

Two Public Registers Providing a Single Source of Truth

Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) Register

- Long-established, trusted mechanism for verifying qualified SpLD assessors
- Confirms compliance with standards, CPD, and ethical practice

New Teaching Practising Certificate (TPC) Register

Public register for qualified SpLD Literacy and Maths Specialist Teachers

Verifies accredited training, professional body membership, and adherence to codes of practice

Expected to be fully active by year-end

Why This Matters

Strengthens public confidence and transparency

Provides schools, parents, DfE and institutions with a reliable way to identify qualified practitioners

Reduces risk from unqualified providers and supports consistent SEND provision nationally

