

Dyslexia in Europe

More than 50 Million People with Dyslexia in Europe

The European Dyslexia Association (EDA), "The Voice of People with Dyslexia in Europe", is the umbrella organisation for Dyslexia in Europe. It represents 33 Dyslexia organizations in 24 European countries. Research findings indicate that at least 50 million people in Europe are dyslexic and may face impaired access to education and work.

Dyslexia is a difference, which makes the acquisition and use of reading, spelling and writing skills difficult. This difference is neurological in origin.

Central to many Specific Learning Difficulties/Disabilities (Sp.L.D.) is the role of cerebellar functioning and also the inhibition of primitive reflexes. This, along with cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors can lead to the co-existence or overlap between indicators of Sp.L.D. and is the reason why many labels may be attached to the same students. When this occurs (whatever the etiology) the label which best describes these students is the umbrella term Sp.L.D. Children with co-existing Sp.L.D. experience even more difficulties within the learning situation. Few countries accept that dyslexia is only one of a group of difficulties/disabilities which may also have varying degrees of co-existence, including:

- Dyslexia: (4 to 10% population)
- Dysgraphia: hand writing difficulty (10%)
- Dyspraxia: motor difficulties (2 to 10%); 50% dyslexia have some motor dysfunction
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): concentration difficulties and impulsiveness. (3 to 9% school population); co-existence ADHD and learning disabilities 4%
- Dyscalculia: difficulties in maths calculations (3 to 6%); Dyscalculic children with ADHD 15 to 26%; 50 to 60% dyslexics have difficulties with maths
- Asperger's Syndrome: emotional behaviour & social communication difficulties. These learning difficulties typically affect a student's motor skills, information processing and memory. (1.5%)
- Specific Language Impairment (SLI): (1%); link between SLI and Dyslexia is well documented. Persons with Sp.L.D. will have average or above average cognitive functioning.

The cognitive difficulties which are underlying this difference can also affect organisational skills, calculation abilities and other cognitive and emotional abilities.

Dyslexia may be caused by a combination of difficulties in phonological processing, working memory, rapid naming, sequencing and the automaticity of the acquisition of literacy skills.