

Dyslexia Tips: School Environment

Classroom Environment

Brain Breaks

Why - Allows time for the brain to reset and take a rest from extended concentration. Giving the brain a rest makes it possible to process new information.

Examples

- Yoga
- Skip
- Jumping jacks or dynamic movements

No Cold Calling to Read

Why - It is one of the most stressful things for a dyslexic. Not only does it produce anxiety, but it causes dyslexics to only focus on reading smoothly rather than comprehension.

Alternative - "Preview" what you are going to ask the student by giving them time to prepare.

Encouraging Posters. But not too Many!

Why - Multiple dyslexia specialized teachers mentioned how "less is more" and too much happening on the walls can be distracting for kids with ADHD. Suggested places for posters is on doors or in the back of the classroom.

Celebrate and Acknowledge Learning Differences

Why - Recognize learning differences, acknowledge there is nothing wrong with them, and celebrate students who have them.

Suggestions

- Read books with dyslexic characters
- Have class discussions about learning differences
- Share stories of famous dyslexics

Allow Time for Questions

Why - Gives dyslexic students the option to clarify anything they are confused about. Slows class pace down allowing for a brain reset.

Suggestion

- Routinely build in 2-5 minutes after teaching new concept for questions.

Plan Review Time

Why - A student might need more repetition or time to digest material. This provides dyslexics a chance to catch up.

Give an Option to Express Thoughts in Different Forms

Why - Dyslexics can feel limited by what they are able to communicate through writing. Allowing them to respond verbally or through pictures can enable them to share all their thoughts & ideas.

Examples

- Drawing
- Videos
- Acting through motions or dance
- Art projects

Allow Different Spaces to Learn

Why - Helps dyslexics who need to move and are stimulated by different environments

Suggestions

- Go outside as a class
- Stand in different parts of the classroom

Positive Conversations

"Focus on the part of dyslexia that makes you great."

"I'm proud of you."

"Dyslexia is a superpower."

"1 in 5 students are dyslexic."

"I can see you are doing your best."

"Come talk to me – this is great and we can talk about it."

"I will help you."

"Really nice job."

"We know you are struggling, but we are here for you and here to help you."

All examples are direct quotes from dyslexic students or dyslexic-specialized teachers

Hurtful Conversations

"You'll get there eventually."

"We worked on that word yesterday. You can remember."

"You are so disorganized."

"Your spelling is sloppy."

"Why can't you do this?"

"Okay, everyone, hurry up."

"You just spelled it yesterday. What's the matter?"

"Your stuff is a hot mess."

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