

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA DON'T GET HELP?

The consequences of undiagnosed & untreated dyslexia — and what evidence-based intervention changes
WYO Right to Read | Wyoming SF0059 — K-12 Language & Literacy Program — Signed March 6, 2026

PREVALENCE

15–20%

of the population is affected by dyslexia — up to 1 in 5 students in every classroom.
International Dyslexia Association

80%

of students identified with a learning disability have reading as their primary area of difficulty. *NIH/NICHHD*

Dyslexia is the most common language-based learning disability and the leading cause of illiteracy in the U.S.

89%

of students with an IEP have reading problems; 85% of those have dyslexia.

Dyslexia affects people of all backgrounds and income levels equally — it does not discriminate.

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT & ECONOMIC IMPACT

62%

dropout rate for students with reading problems. *NIH/NICHHD*

35%

of students with dyslexia drop out — vs. the national average of 8%.

Students with learning disabilities drop out at nearly 3× the rate of all students.

\$28,000

less per year in average earnings for adults with low literacy. *Learning Ally, 2024*

58%

of adults with dyslexia are employed — vs. 72% of the general population.

MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE RISK

19%

of poor readers had suicidal thoughts or attempts — vs. 5% of typical readers. *AAS, 2006*

3×

Students with dyslexia have a 3× higher risk of attempting suicide. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 2006*

3–4×

increased risk of depression and anxiety for students with unidentified or untreated dyslexia.

89%

of suicide notes contain dyslexic-type spellings. *J. of Learning Disabilities, 1997*

16.6%

lifetime suicide attempt rate for women with LDs — vs. 3.3% without. *University of Toronto, 2017*

7.7%

lifetime suicide attempt rate for men with LDs — vs. 2.1% without. *University of Toronto, 2017*

46%

higher odds of suicide attempts for adults with LDs, even controlling for depression & ADHD. *Fuller-Thomson*

INCARCERATION & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

"Dyslexia is a leading cause of illiteracy, a risk factor for criminal behavior." — International Dyslexia Association

48%

of Texas DOC inmates were dyslexic; 2/3 struggled with reading comprehension. *TX DOC, 2000*

43–52%

of adults in the prison population identified with dyslexia or significant reading disabilities. *Texas DOC; multiple state studies*

Follow-up screening in two additional state prison systems found more than half of inmates were dyslexic.

80%

of prison inmates have difficulty with reading comprehension. *NYC Public Advocate, 2023*

85%

of juveniles in the justice system have significant reading difficulties. *NAACP; NYC Public Advocate*

Some states project future prison bed needs based on 3rd and 4th grade reading test scores.

WHAT CHANGES WITH EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTION — WHY SF0059 MATTERS

74%

of students identified with reading disabilities in 3rd grade remain poor readers in 9th grade WITHOUT intervention. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*

90–95%

of students with reading difficulties CAN learn to read at grade level with early, intensive, evidence-based instruction. *NIH/NICHD*

43%

less likely to re-offend when incarcerated individuals participate in education programs. *NYC Public Advocate*

Early, structured literacy intervention dramatically reduces dropout risk, anxiety, depression, and unemployment.

Early identification and evidence-based intervention may also reduce long-term suicide risk. (Fuller-Thomson, University of Toronto)

Wyoming SF0059 (signed March 6, 2026) — K-12 Language & Literacy Program — mandates science-based reading instruction for every Wyoming child.

WYO Right to Read | wyrighttoread.org | Wyoming Department of Education Literacy Conference

Sources: International Dyslexia Association · NIH/NICHD · University of Toronto · Journal of Learning Disabilities · Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice · Learning Ally (2024) · NAACP · NYC Public Advocate · American Association of Suicidology · Fuller-Thomson