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Educators today are familiar with the signs and symptoms of dyslexia where the academic issues of reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic is concerned. There are many programs and international curricula to assist and help children suffering from dyslexia function and progress academically very well. The area of dyslexia which is also prominent in child suffers, however not nearly as frequently addressed is physical coordination. Children suffering from dyslexia have trouble with their overall gross motor coordination. Furthermore they have trouble with their sense of left and right, sense of direction in relationship to body in space, short-term memory, scheduling, and getting to the right place at the right time. Movement Games, Activities and Dances are enrichment activities, which require the child’s full body participation. These activities help to enhance the child’s sense of direction, memory, sequencing, location of body in space, and overall gross motor coordination skills. Furthermore, these activities serve to enhance the child’s social and emotional growth through participating in a group.

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Dyslexia is becoming more widely recognized among education specialists, classroom teachers and parents; however, this particular learning disability is not yet fully understood.

Dyslexia Defined

The World Federation of Neurologists defines dyslexia as:  
“A disorder in children, who despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing, and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities” (World Federation of Neurologists, 1968).

Ramus defined dyslexia more simply by stating:  
“Individuals who have a severe impediment in their ability to read and spell.” (Ramus, 2004).

Furthermore, the World Federation of Neurologists places dyslexia under the category of a learning disability and happens to be the most common learning disability among children. It is also more common among boys than girls (Heiervang, Stevenson, Lund, & Hugdahl, 2001).

When considering children of pre-school age, the symptoms of dyslexia are not easy to recognise because they can easily be confused with the normal maturation of childhood development. For example, children under age seven or eight commonly reverse letters and numbers. However, when children continue to have difficulties with these basic learning concepts into the primary schooling years, they are exhibiting signs of dyslexia. In the case that it is dyslexia, without the proper educational treatment plan, it is likely to become an overall impediment to the holistic development of the child, including the social and emotional domains.

Other common symptoms of dyslexia according to the Davis Dyslexia Correction Program (1992) are as follows:

- Difficulty copying work accurately
- Crowding of letters and numbers
- Difficulty remembering events in sequence (chronological order) even after being exposed several times to the information
- Spatial relations
- Trouble with gross motor skills and overall coordination
- Trouble distinguishing between left and right
- Word pronunciation, forming sentences in speech
- Poor concentration and attention
- Often dual diagnosed with ADHD

It has been observed through the years that dyslexic children often engage in “acting out” behaviors (hence the common dual diagnosis of ADHD) as a way of drawing attention away from their learning disabilities and social incompetencies. This will often lead to further issues with their self-esteem, and their relations with other children, including their own siblings (Dyslexic Professionals, 2006). This “acting out” behaviour often becomes annoying to other children. Also, other children who do not understand them can become impatient with the dyslexic child’s inability to perform tasks quickly and efficiently as normal children or their lack of coordination on sports teams and other interactive activities.

This becomes a major impediment to the child’s sense of self and overall socialisation skills. As explained in Eric Erickson’s 4th stage of Psycho-social Development (7 – 12 years old), this stage is called Industry vs. Inferiority.