

High Visual Intelligence Can Make Learning To read Difficult

In every class you will find children displaying this phenomenon.

There will be bright children in the class, who work hard but struggle to read.

Stranger still, everything seems OK at first. But then they start to fall behind and eventually hit a plateau at around the age of 6 or 7. As the text gets more complicated they start to guess wildly and they become steadily more confused.

Eventually their confidence begins to crumble. They can feel the frustration and concern of the adults around them, but don't know what to do.

Because people are not trained to recognise this pattern, it is often diagnosed as dyslexia. But that is quite wrong.

Dyslexia suggests there is some underlying problem that cannot be overcome.

But these children have no real reason not to be able to read. They are just approaching it in the wrong way.

Let me explain what's happening.

A very visual child will learn most of the alphabet quite easily. Then they are usually shown some simple high frequency words, which they can sight-memorise. Their first early reader books are usually made up of a very simple vocabulary of these common words and they can apparently read them, using this sight-memorisation and a bit of intelligent guessing.

So everyone thinks it is going fine.

But this technique gets more and more difficult as the text gets more complex. Children with a good natural ear for the phonic structure in words will now switch to decoding the words instead.

Others cannot make the switch without careful instruction. Their auditory perception just isn't up to hearing the phonic structure of the words.

And these are the ones that have major problems.

They become more and more addicted to wild guessing, using the context and the first letter of the word as cues.

They find themselves down a cul-de-sac and don't know the way out. At the same time they can feel how worried their teacher and parents are, but can't do any more than they already are.

Of the one in five children who reach the age of 11 unable to read properly, around 80% are in this group. It virtually destroys their chances of a good academic career and severely limits their working options.

And that is a tragedy for each of them because they are just trying to read the wrong way. We routinely see them successfully crack it in just a matter of weeks.

The label dyslexic is very dangerous. It lets everyone off the hook of actually finding a solution. And still consigns the child to a lower and tougher track through life.

About the Author

To read more detail on [how to help a child learn to read](#) have a look at our site. There is a range of information on techniques to cure almost every form of [dyslexia](#). There is usually a solution!

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