



**Ensuring the Success of Students with Dyslexia**

**Nancy A. Madden, Ph.D.**  
**Co-Founder**  
**Success for All Foundation**

**Professor**  
**Center for Research and Reform in Education**  
**School of Education**  
**Johns Hopkins University**

**1/15/2019**

## **Ensuring the Success of Students with Dyslexia**

The Success for All programs were designed to support success in reading for all students, including those who struggle to learn to read. An estimated 4 to 12% of school age children struggle with a learning disability that results in difficulty reading despite normal intelligence (American Psychiatric Association, 2019). This disorder is referred to as *dyslexia*. In order to be successful with all students, Success for All designed its tools to address the needs of students with dyslexia as well as other students.

The International Dyslexia Association summarizes the effective strategies for teaching reading that have been identified as important for the success of students with dyslexia (IDA, 2017). Use of a structured literacy approach that provides direct, multi-sensory instruction is critical. This approach should focus on phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, and meaning.

FastTrack Phonics was designed to provide all students with a successful experience in learning the building blocks of reading. Sounds, letters, word parts and words are introduced systematically, using a regular routine of activities that include visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic involvement during presentation and practice. Partner reading and writing activities, one of the hallmarks of FastTrack Phonics, dramatically increase the amount of time each student is actively practicing their reading and receiving feedback. Peers are partners in success in FastTrack Phonics, making the classroom a more inviting place for students with dyslexia.

The success of the design of FastTrack Phonics is supported in research done in many first grade classrooms. High quality control group studies have demonstrated that the implementation of a first grade reading program including FastTrack Phonics significantly and substantially improves reading outcomes for all students, students struggling with learning to read, and students identified as needing special education for reading problems. A sample of the student outcomes is presented below:

- Struggling first and second grade readers gained reading skills significantly faster in schools using FastTrack Phonics as a part of Reading Roots than did students in a randomized sample of comparison schools using traditional instruction (Quint et al., 2015).
- First grade students identified as needing special education for reading issues were significantly more successful in schools using FastTrack Phonics as a part of Success for All than students in control schools using traditional instruction (ES=.77, Ross, Smith, Casey, and Slavin 1995).
- Referrals to special education for reading problems in grades 1 and 2 were 3.2% in schools using FastTrack Phonics as a part of Success for All compared to 14.4% in control schools using traditional instruction (Smith, Ross, and Casey, 1994.)

### References

American Psychiatric Association, 2019. What is Specific Learning Disorder? Retrieved on 1-15-19 from <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/specific-learning-disorder/what-is-specific-learning-disorder>.

International Dyslexia Association, 2017 – *Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Dyslexia* <https://app.box.com/s/hvjb2c4dctr2jrsrpmi6kqg9f4k1bjsl>

Quint, Janet and Balu, Rekha and DeLaurentis, Micah and Rappaport, Shelley and Smith, Thomas and Zhu, Pei and Alterman, Emma and Pramik, Emily (2015). *The Success for All Model of School Reform: Interim Findings from the Investing in Innovation (i3) Scale-Up* New York: MDRC.

Ross, S.M., Smith, L.J., Casey, J., & Slavin, R.E. (1995). Increasing the academic success of disadvantaged children: An examination of alternative early intervention programs. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 773-800.

Smith, L.J., Ross, S.M., & Casey, J.P. (1994). *Special education analyses for Success for All in four cities*. Memphis: University of Memphis, Center for Research in Educational Policy.