



The Right to Read for Students with Learning Disabilities in Manitoba

Position Statement

“Learning to read is critical in building a lifelong sense of personal empowerment. It builds self-confidence; it will improve employment opportunities and enhances physical, emotional and mental well-being.”

Patricia DeGuire

Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission

The **Manitoba Reading Association** (MRA) promotes the development of literacy proficiency of all Manitobans. We recognize that learning to read is a fundamental human right and a gateway to knowledge, personal empowerment, and active engagement in society. Aligned with this commitment, the MRA supports the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission's](#) special project examining the human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities, including those with specific learning disabilities and dyslexia.

The [International Literacy Association](#) underscores the critical role of teacher expertise, responsive interventions, appropriate accommodations, and early screening for supporting those with reading difficulties. Assessments should be timely, responsive to individual needs, and conducted on an ongoing basis. Professional assessments should never be required for interventions or accommodations. Accommodations, often referred to as adaptations, should complement rather than replace appropriate interventions. Early universal screening and identification, followed by appropriate instruction and effective targeted intervention, can mitigate the severity of difficulties ([Dyslexia Research Advisory](#), 2023). Every student, irrespective of their learning abilities, has the right to receive equitable access to evidence-based reading instruction, interventions, and accommodations.



Effective, evidence-based instruction plays a crucial role in supporting students with dyslexia (Dyslexia Research Advisory, 2023). Educators must receive ongoing training and professional development in evidence-based instructional methods, literacy assessment, and foundational knowledge ([Position Statement: Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction](#), 2019). Research suggests that explicit and systematic phonics instruction, which teaches alphabet letters and other orthographic symbols (graphemes) and their correspondences with speech sounds (e.g., phonemes) and meaning units (e.g., morphemes), is essential to students with reading and spelling difficulties. Students should also receive instruction in essential components such as oral language development, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and fluency, which significantly benefit students struggling with word reading and spelling (Dyslexia Research Advisory, 2023).

Manitobans can learn more about how to support children with learning disabilities by contacting organizations like [Manitoba Teachers for Students with Learning Disabilities](#), and [Dyslexia Canada](#). We encourage stakeholders to consult both the International Literacy Association's website and their 2023 Research Advisory on Dyslexia, as well as, the [International Dyslexia Association's](#) website. We recognize the importance of ongoing dialogue and collaboration within the literacy community. We are committed to fostering collaboration with other literacy organizations across the province to address the diverse needs of learners within our community. We encourage educators, policymakers, families, and all stakeholders to engage in productive conversations aimed at ensuring that all students have equitable access to quality literacy education in Manitoba.

Every Manitoban a literate Manitoban.

Manitoba Reading Association

