

# DYSGRAPHIA SUBTYPES



Not all specialist teachers divide dysgraphia into subtypes, but those that do usually refer to 3 types of dysgraphia, each focused on a different processing difficulty.

	DYSLEXIC DYSGRAPHIA	MOTOR DYSGRAPHIA	SPATIAL DYSGRAPHIA
	<b>MAJOR ISSUE - ORTHOGRAPHIC</b>	<b>MAJOR ISSUE - MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>MAJOR ISSUE - SPATIAL</b>
<b>ability to copy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegible independent work</li> <li>• Can copy reasonably legibly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegible independent work</li> <li>• Cannot copy legibly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegible independent work</li> <li>• Cannot copy legibly</li> </ul>
<b>spelling knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling is very poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling orally may be fine.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal spelling</li> </ul>
<b>letter formation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine-motor skills may be intact</li> <li>• Normal pen grip and posture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine-motor skills are poor, with limited dexterity and poor muscle tone.</li> <li>• Work gets progressively untidier with time.</li> <li>• letter formation is irregular.</li> <li>• Pencil grip and posture may be odd, often strained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine-motor skills are intact</li> <li>• Normal pen grip and posture</li> </ul>
<b>spatial layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatially consistent writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatially consistent writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatially inconsistent lettering</li> <li>• does not relate to lines or margins consistently.</li> </ul>
<b>drawing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No difficulty drawing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty drawing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty drawing</li> </ul>

These subtypes are described in their purest form in the interests of clarity. However there is often overlap between different types of dysgraphia and children will usually present with a mix of signs of dysgraphia.

## DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

Dysgraphia has signs in common with other learning differences. However, there are specific distinctions which delineate one specific learning difference from another.

**Dyslexia** - Major distinction from dyslexia is that for children with dysgraphia reading is not affected. Children with dyslexia tend to have phonological difficulties alongside orthographic difficulties. Children with dysgraphia tend to have orthographic difficulties alongside motor difficulties.

**Dyspraxia** - Major distinction from dyspraxia is that gross motor skills are generally not affected. Children with dyspraxia tend not to have orthographical difficulties.

**SLI** - Major distinction is children with SLI / Oral and Written Language Learning Difficulty - (OWL/LD) tend to have difficulties with phonological, orthographical and morphological aspects of language development. Children with dysgraphia tend not to have morphological difficulties and have no spoken language difficulty.

Dysgraphia is understood to be more than underdeveloped or poor handwriting skills although fine motor skills are affected. The extent to which working memory issues associated with dysgraphia affect other aspects of life and learning is in line with dyslexia. Therefore children may show similar difficulties with multistep instructions, remembering sentences while writing etc.

## WHAT IS THE OVERLAP WITH OTHER DISORDERS CO-OCCURRENCE?

Children with dysgraphia may also have ADHD (attention-deficit disorder), SLI (selective language impairment) Dyspraxia or Dyslexia. There appears to be a high correlation between these learning differences with many children having more than one issue identified.