

Dyslexia, Vision and Reading Fact Sheet

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Vision should be assessed by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist

Dyslexia is NOT a visual issue

Vision therapies, Alison Lawson, behavioural optometry, Irlen Lenses, coloured glasses and overlays are **NOT evidence based** interventions for reading difficulties. Dyslexia is **NOT** a visual or visual processing issue! There is a large body of evidence to support that dyslexia can NOT be remediated by such treatments. There is no scientific evidence to support the existence of Irlen syndrome or Irlen lenses as a remediation for reading difficulties.

These therapies are NOT recommended by AUSPELD, Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA), Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) or the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) or the Australian Dyslexia Association (ADA) for the remediation of reading difficulties.

A study published in 2015 which looked at the vision of almost 6,000 children concluded that;

"In this cohort the majority of dyslexic children had normal results for all ophthalmic tests. These population-based data support the consensus that dyslexia is not primarily a vision problem and that vision-based therapies are not justified or likely to help." *Creavin, Lingam, Steer and Williams Pediatrics 2015*

"Conclusion: Vision Therapy Studies Summary--

Poor quality, inadequate numbers, inadequate control groups, anecdotal information, failure to mask the investigators and frequently a direct interest by the investigators in the results."

"Conclusions: Deficits in the magnocellular system do not appear to be a significant cause of dyslexia. There is no evidence that Irlen, Wilkins, or Chromagen filters/lenses

improve reading comprehension or speed. 26,30-33 However, some colors/tinted lenses may make some children more comfortable with print, but this effect is frequently transient.”

American Academy of Ophthalmology, Droste 2017

<https://www.aaopt.org/pediatric-center-detail/learning-disabilities>

“Recommendations for multidisciplinary evaluation and management must be based on evidence of proven effectiveness that is demonstrated by objective scientific methodology.

It is important that any therapy for learning disabilities be scientifically established to be valid before it can be recommended for treatment.

Currently, there is no adequate scientific evidence to support the view that subtle eye or visual problems cause learning disabilities.

Vision and Reading Difficulties

"There is no objective evidence that Irlen syndrome actually exists: several researchers have noted that the symptoms are consistent with known visual problems. There is no credible body of research supporting the use of tinted lenses/overlays – the studies tend to contain significant flaws and the findings are inconsistent." MUSEC briefings 2010

"Independent research shows no conclusive pattern of results and mythological issues. There is also no objective scientific evidence to support the existence of Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, also known as Irlen Syndrome. "AUSPELD *guide to understanding learning difficulties* 2015.

"Although children with coordination, reading, writing and other difficulties should have their vision assessed to ensure that they do not have acuity or refractive problems (or similar problems), *additional assessment by behavioural optometrists is not recommended. There is a clear need for further quality research to test the claims made by behavioural optometrists. Until these claims are tested, and clear evidence for efficacy is available, behavioural optometry cannot be recommended.*" MUSEC briefings 2012

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RANZCO (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists)"There is no scientific evidence that Irlen syndrome exists or that treatment of reading difficulties with Irlen lenses works." "Irlen syndrome is not recognised by the medical community or the World Health Organisation (WHO)." "Consistently, systematic and critical reviews have shown no scientific basis for the benefit of tinted lenses in reading disorders"

RANZCO position statement 2018

<https://ranzco.edu/ArticleDocuments/176/Irlen%20Syndrome%20RANZCO%20Position%20Statement%20260418.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>

" Primary dyslexia and learning disabilities are complex neurocognitive conditions and are not caused by vision problems. There is no evidence to suggest that eye , behavioural vision therapy, or special tinted filters or lenses improve the long-term educational performance of people affected by dyslexia or other learning disabilities." RANZCO 2016

Joint Statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus and American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2009 (reaffirmed 2014)

"Ineffective, controversial methods of treatment such as vision therapy may give parents and teachers a false sense of security that a child's learning difficulties are being addressed, may waste family and/or school resources, and may delay proper instruction or remediation."

Furthermore, the evidence does not support the concept that vision therapy or tinted lenses or filters are effective, directly or indirectly, in the treatment of learning disabilities.

Thus, the claim that vision therapy improves visual efficiency cannot be substantiated" *Joint Statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus and American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2009 (reaffirmed 2014)*

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