

Hyperlexia Fact Sheet

Hyperlexia is ...

- ✓ **A syndrome characterized by an intense fascination with written material from a very early age.** There is a significant difference between word recognition skills and the ability to understand what is being read.
- ✓ **Some pupils with hyperlexia experience difficulty with social skills, communication and understanding.**

Type 1: [Neurotypical](#) children who are very early readers **Type 2:** Children on the autism spectrum who demonstrate very early reading as a [splinter skill](#) **Type 3:** Very early readers who are not on the autism spectrum, though they exhibit some "autistic-like" traits and behaviours which gradually fade as the child gets older (Darold Treffert).

Hyperlexia is not ...

- ✗ **Always** a symptom of autism spectrum condition (but it can be)
- ✗ Common. It is in fact relatively rare
- ✗ Currently a stand alone diagnosis. It does not appear as an official diagnosis in psychiatric and psychological diagnostic manuals such as the DSM-V. It is often diagnosed alongside other diagnoses, such as autism, but since hyperlexia is not an official diagnosis, you will likely not receive an official "diagnosis" on paper

Unusual" or "different" **social skills**; difficulty interacting appropriately with peers and adults

Intense fascination with letters, numbers, logos, maps or visual patterns

Sensory integration, participating in school routines and activities, **handwriting**

Pupils with Hyperlexia may have trouble with...

Communication: Often, hyperlexic children will learn to speak only by [rote](#) and heavy repetition, and may also have difficulty learning the [rules of language](#) from examples or from [trial and error](#), which may result in social problems. Their language may develop using [echolalia](#), often repeating words and sentences. Often, the child has a large [vocabulary](#) and can identify many objects and pictures, but cannot put their language skills to good use. Spontaneous language is lacking and their [pragmatic speech](#) is [delayed](#). Hyperlexic children often struggle with [Who? What? Where? Why? and How? questions](#)

Ways to help pupils with Hyperlexia

A Speech Therapist can offer an assessment, support and advice to help with communication difficulties

An Occupational Therapist can offer an assessment, support and advice to help with any sensory integration difficulties, issues with handwriting and problems with fitting into routines

The most important thing to remember is to **use written language to help teach them the skills they need**. When in doubt, write it out. This empowers pupils by building confidence and reducing stress as they stay within their comfort zone during the learning process

Classroom accommodations such as the teacher using literal language, short sentences and providing 'talking frames'

Other Information ...

HYPERLEXIA HANDBOOK: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZePhAyVkUns_NOOTyVDVuk_zleT7kyVC/view

GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS <https://105b31079a1ba381f52e-ac2ec5114feb632a1114f20df0e72453.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/Page/573dcbca-b348-492f-a69d-02320ad286aa/hyperlexia-therapy-that-works.pdf>

HYPERLEXIA UK: <http://www.spanglefish.com/hyperlexiauk/index.asp>