Components of Dyslexia Therapy:

- Phonological awareness
- Alphabetic principle
- Vocabulary development
- Reading
- Fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Written Expression
- Listening comprehension

Goals of the program:
The Choctaw Tribal Schools Exceptional Education Department does not claim that the student will be “cured” during the therapy period because dyslexia is a life-long condition. Our goals are that students from the Choctaw Tribal Schools with dyslexia will become functional readers, gain valuable tools to aid in coping with their disability, and achieve academic success.

For more information about dyslexia therapy services contact the following therapists at each school:

Tisha Franklin, Choctaw Central
Karla Russell, Conehatta
Mary Lou Johnson, Bogue Chitto
Carla Lowry, Choctaw Middle & Red Water
Angel McKinion, Standing Pine
Nancy Peoples, Standing Pine
Courtney Sorey, Tucker & Pearl River
Cindy Washington, Red Water

“Striving to help students with reading disabilities become successful.”
The Exceptional Education Department of the Choctaw Tribal Schools began a pilot program during the 2008-2009 school year to provide specialized reading services for students with specific learning disabilities primarily in the areas of reading and language processing and who exhibited the characteristics of dyslexia. The primary characteristics of dyslexia are difficulties with accurate word recognition, poor spelling, and decoding abilities which research has shown to be linked with the differences in the way the brain is developed in a dyslexic person. This results in the person having difficulty identifying separate speech sounds within a word and/or learning how letters represent these sounds. Dyslexia is not due to a lack of intelligence or a desire to learn. Recent reading research shows dyslexic students can learn to read with a systematic, explicit reading method that is taught involving the senses of hearing, touching, and seeing (known as a multisensory reading approach). There are now eight dyslexic therapists on staff for each Choctaw Tribal School. All therapists have been trained in the Mississippi College Dyslexia Therapy Masters Program which is Orton-Gillingham based and is recognized by MS Dyslexia Law (formerly HB 1031) as appropriate education for students with dyslexia. Students who have been identified as having a reading disability or identified through the tier intervention are eligible to receive services by our trained dyslexic therapists.

### What is dyslexia therapy?

- The Dyslexia Therapy Program is a research-based method in which the therapist has been specifically trained in using a multisensory, structured language approach based on Orton-Gillingham methodology/Alphabetic Phonics. Students will be taught by using a systematic and explicit method that involves the senses of hearing, sight, and touch at the same time. Students will receive structured practice individually or in small groups for three to five days a week for 30 to 60 minutes with immediate, corrective feedback to develop automatic word recognition skills.

### Assessment and Placement

- Students currently on the exceptionality list with a specific learning disability in reading recognition/comprehension/written expression will be screened by formal and informal assessments to determine if specific characteristics of phonological processing deficits and dyslexia exist and if dyslexia therapy would be beneficial. Students who are in Tier Intervention may be recommended for dyslexia therapy/reading readiness if general education teachers believe characteristics of dyslexia exist. A meeting with parents will be held to complete a parent interview with the dyslexia therapist.

- Parent permission to place in dyslexia therapy classes will be requested after screenings have been conducted and an IEP/RTI committee determines placement in dyslexia therapy would be beneficial.

### Therapy Progress

- Therapy is recommended for at least two years so the students may be re-taught 68 graphemes which represent 44 sounds using a kinesthetic coding system. The program is a comprehensive curriculum which covers most aspects of the English language system.

- Students will be assessed every 9-weeks on program benchmarks, and at the end of each year progress and continuation in the therapy program will be evaluated by the therapist and IEP/RTI team. Students with more severe levels of dyslexia may require more than the recommended two-year therapy time period and receive ongoing therapy throughout their educational process.

- Input from parents, general education classroom teachers, and other special education providers for the students will be essential during therapy to determine each student’s academic needs and accommodations.

For more information:

- [www.mde.k12.ms.us](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us) — MS Dept. of Ed. Curriculum and Instruction, Dyslexia

- [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org), International Dyslexia Association