

PSYCHOLOGY

Child Reads Backward? Suspect Dyslexia

➤ IF A BOY or girl reads "saw" as "was" or starts reading from the right to the left, then be suspicious of a language disability called dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a condition present in children many of whom have normal or above intelligence, said Roger Saunders, psychologist, Baltimore County Board of Education, Maryland, to the Eastern Regional Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children in Washington, D.C.

Although dyslexia is not the only reason some children cannot read well, experts have estimated that anywhere from 5% to 20% of normal children have this problem. An interesting feature of this condition, however, is that almost four boys to every girl has this language disability.

Psychologist Saunders said that although dyslexia has symptoms, it should not be considered a disease. One symptom often shown is "twisted symbols." This occurs, for example, when a child confuses "W" with "M" or "3" or perhaps a "B" with a "D".

Dyslexic children can be rehabilitated, particularly if they are recognized early. There are a number of educational centers around the country dealing with these problems.

Why some children have the condition is a matter of controversy. One accepted theory is that it is a family trait, but educators in general do not think that the whole problem stems from heredity.

Mr. Saunders emphasized that often children who are above average in intelligence have this condition. In many cases, such children do well in arithmetic and other subjects that do not require so much language skill.

Speaking disability can also be blamed on dyslexia. Delayed speaking, stuttering, lisping and articulation difficulties are symptoms common to this condition.

• Science News Letter, 87:61 January 23, 1965

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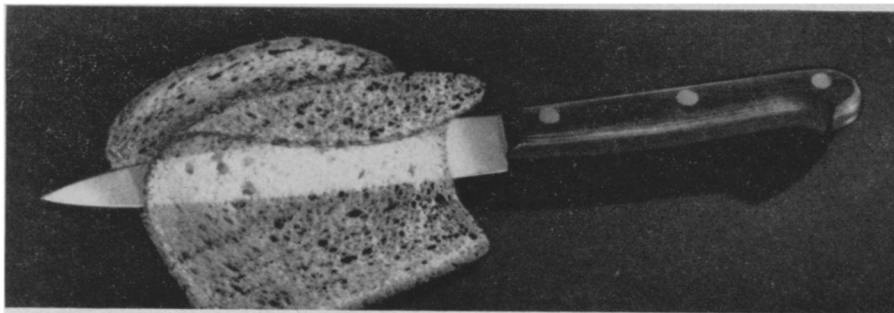
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