

I write on behalf of Dyslexia Canada in participation with Decoding Dyslexia Saskatchewan. According to the International Dyslexia Association, 10-20% of the population has a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties. We believe many library visitors would be interested in learning more about dyslexia, such as the famous people with dyslexia, including Albert Einstein, Steven Spielberg, and Chef Jamie Oliver to name a few. People with dyslexia face many challenges but they also more often than not possess special special gifts such as creativity and problem solving.

October has been designated as International Dyslexia Awareness Month, and many countries including Canada plan special events to help raise awareness about dyslexia to support those with dyslexia. Dyslexia Canada partners with organizations across the country to raise awareness through the "[Mark it Read](#)" campaign. This year's theme is "Empowering Voices". For the many kids, struggling with dyslexia, the teacher's red pen is a constant reminder of the lack of awareness and support needed for them to learn to read, write, and spell with their peers and be successful in school and in life.

This year, we would love to expand our campaign and are reaching out to libraries for their help. Libraries can be intimidating places for people who struggle to read. But we also know they are often the first places families go to try to find solutions, information and resources. It is because of this we are asking for your help.

The Mark it Read campaign can help those with dyslexia empower their voices and educate others about this learning challenge.

We are pleased to announce that "Mark it Read" has been added to the Government of Canada website as a health promotion day! You can view it here in [French](#) and [English](#).

We are hopeful that all libraries, across Canada will also support our goal to raise awareness about dyslexia during the month of October, Dyslexia Awareness Month.

### How you can participate:

However you choose to participate - please make sure you **share using the hashtag #MarkItRead2021** so we can reshare and like!

- Feature **a table of books in a prominent location** to illustrate authors with dyslexia, and/or books related to dyslexia. A list of relevant books for both children as well as parents/caregivers can be found in our [Toolkit](#).
- Dyslexia Canada has created a [Toolkit](#) to make it easier than ever to show your support! We have **included social posts, printables and banners** to help you join in on the campaign this year.
- **Create your own posters about dyslexia to help visitors** to the library and social media patrons learn about dyslexia. They likely have a family member who can be "empowered to use their voice to speak up". You can also download one of our printables from the [Toolkit](#).
- **Posters can be created with a special font** that makes things easier to read. It's called [Open Dyslexic](#) and is specially designed font to make text easier for people with reading challenges to process. E-books can be changed to use this font.
- Combine Halloween activities with promoting dyslexia: "**Paint a Halloween Pumpkin Red**", Halloween posters can be created all in red.
- **Wear red** to work and encourage others to wear red on one designated day in October. We encourage October 20 to support the 20% of people who struggle with dyslexia to support those with limited or no remedial support.
- Host family **Storytime with live readings** featuring books by famous dyslexic authors such as Henry Winkler or Dav Pilkey
- **Overdrive, Libby and Sora** have this available. If you are using **Hoopla**, they have this listed under "fonts" as "Dyslexia Support."
- Provide coloured page overlays, also known as "**reading rulers**" or "**highlight strips**." These are transparent, coloured pieces of plastic that a reader can place over a page. For some people, the change in

colour helps the words to stay grounded on the page, and the horizontal line helps to keep the reader on the correct sentence.

- Consider handing out **Dyslexia Canada** bookmarks and pens. Please send requests for items by **September 29, 2021** by contacting [info@dyslexiacanada.org](mailto:info@dyslexiacanada.org).
- Encourage “Empowering Voices”. **Share facts about dyslexia** - for example 40% of self-made millionaires are dyslexic, 35% of entrepreneurs are dyslexic, 1 out 2 astronauts are dyslexic. Share the struggles to encourage children. Let them know they are not alone.
- The list is endless... **use your imagination** to come up with an event for your library

We would also appreciate you promoting the CELA program, Nells or other audibles at your library. The Centre for Equitable Library Access, CELA, is Canada’s comprehensive accessible reading service, providing books and other materials to Canadians with print disabilities in the formats of their choice. CELA provides access to 800,000 professionally produced titles to provide people with print disabilities with a quality library experience.

Please share a picture with us so we can proudly post on our social media in support of Dyslexia Awareness this October - **please make sure you share using the hashtag #MarkItRead2021** so we can reshare and like!

Sincerely,

Kirsten Downey