Today’s piece was prepared by Erika Lund, MD and is based on an article from Associated Press featured in Huffington Post, entitled [It Could Be Possible To Predict Which Kids Will Struggle With Reading, Says Study](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/07/15/northwestern-children-reading_n_7802242.html?utm_hp_ref=health-news&ir=Health+News).

The author discusses research from Northwestern University that suggests later reading difficulties may be predicted early in life with EEG’s, providing an avenue to obtain extra resources for those children that may benefit from early intervention.

The study examined how well toddlers’ brains discriminated consonants from background noise by using an EEG to track responses via changes in the wave forms. The basis of the experiment lies in the idea that specific sounds and noises are the first part in learning how sounds become associated to one another to make words. These sound associations can then be encoded as letters (symbols) and enable reading. Phonological discrimination among similar-sounding phonemes must be virtually immediate in speech and language perception and, hence, in reading skills. Difficulty in recognizing or responding to specific sounds may interfere with recognizing the associations needed for social language and reading.

While problems in phonological perceptual awareness are now known to underlie the core difficulty in many or most people diagnosed with dyslexia, the Associated Press journalist provides only a limited description of this background information necessary to understand the purpose of the researchers’ study. However, the journalist conveys somewhat well the limitations to the research design and notes the longitudinal aspect of the research design. Readers may, nevertheless, jump prematurely to conclusions that EEGs provide diagnostic support to learning disability. While EEGs may serve such a role in the future, such conclusions can in no way be drawn today.

**RESOURCES ON LEARNING DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA:**

[Learning Disorder Association of America](http://ldaamerica.org/resources/)

[Dyslexia resources](https://depts.washington.edu/dbpeds/Resources.html#section4_textarea29_heading) *Includes sources on phonological awareness, neuropathophysiology and treatment*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!