

A Child's Odyssey With Dyslexia

I Hate School. School Is Torture.

When it is my turn to read aloud other kids sigh or blurt out the word I am trying to figure out. Sometimes my teacher lets somebody else finish for me. Writing is impossible because I can't spell and I forget how to write my letters. I get embarrassed if the other kids see my writing or hear me read, I feel like running out of the room. Usually, I just act like I don't care. Kids with dyslexia, dysgraphia and OWL LD develop strategies to cope with their failure that often manifests in anti-social behavior. Some kids act out in class displaying their frustration and anger at their own inability. Going to the principal's office lets them escape from the embarrassment of failing in front of their peers. Some withdraw from social interaction to avoid the shame, and some space out in class sitting quietly doing nothing while others work until time has run out.

Some kids think I am dumb but I know that I am smart, maybe...

My parents, my teacher and the kids at school think I am lazy and don't try hard enough, but I am working so hard sometimes I think my head will explode. Children with dyslexia, dysgraphia or OWL LD have normal to extremely high cognitive ability. It is not uncommon, however, for teachers to tell parents that their child is not learning because he or she is "not motivated" or "does not apply him or herself to learning." The fact is, kids with dyslexia, dysgraphia and OWL LD are working doubly hard to decode even the simplest words.

My parents take away my favorite games to try to make me finish my homework and do better in school.

Most parents of kids with dyslexia, dysgraphia or OWL LD do not understand why their child hates school so much or why they are struggling with reading, spelling and writing. They don't understand why their child hates homework and fights tooth and nail to avoid it. Parents blame themselves and use discipline to try to solve a learning problem.

I miss recess a lot or have to stay after school to get my work done.

I can't help it if I take longer. It takes all the fun out of school and I get tired from sitting and working so much. I need a break! All kids need to stretch and run. It actually increases their ability to learn.

www.readonforkids.org

A Child's Odyssey Continued...

Naming the Struggle: first step toward success

I am not dumb. I have Dyslexia!

Now I know why learning to read is hard for me. Now I know that I can get better at reading, spelling and writing. I will have to work really hard, but at least now I know I CAN learn. Diagnosing dyslexia, dysgraphia or OWL LD is an important first step toward successful intervention. It can be a great relief for a child to know why he or she is struggling and that it is not just because they are "dumb."

I read a whole book today!

I started tutoring and the words are beginning to make more sense. There is so much I want to read. Someday I will be able to read anything I want. When kids receive the right research-based, multi-sensory, direct, sequential instruction, provided in an intellectually engaging way, the transformation is dramatic and swift. Still, becoming proficient takes time, hard work and is different for every child.

School is not so bad after all.

It is still hard, but now I realize school can be pretty cool. When children receive effective intervention and begin to read, spell and write at levels appropriate to their intellectual ability, it is as if their mind has been set free. Self-confidence begins to bloom and the voice once buried in shame begins to emerge.



SOAR is Read On's support group for children struggling with dyslexia, dysgraphia and OWL LD. The activities are designed to build the children's confidence through fun group activities and through community outreach projects. This year SOAR has teamed with a local food bank to help raise donations for homeless families and the elderly.



Read On is a group of concerned parents and educators dedicated to raising awareness about the lack of effective screening and intervention for struggling readers in public schools.

www.readonforkids.org

Dyslexia Professional Development
Parent Panel 12/9/09

Washington OSPI ESD Training, mandated by Bill 6016

SHARING OUR STORY THE PARENT/CHILD PERSPECTIVE Having a Child with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia & OWL LD in Public Education

Lynn Gilliland - *The Read On Story*
Jennifer Hamann - *Twice Exceptional Child*
Lesley Wright - *If He Would Only Try Harder*
Sherine Tully - *A Tutor's Experience*

Panel Discussion to Follow

CHANGING COURSE: PARENT TEACHER PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

Together Parents and Teachers Can Change the Course of Failure for Dyslexic/Dysgraphia and OWL LD Students

Key Steps For Success:

1. Educate the Educators

Teachers and educators must do their homework. At the very least educators must know the general identifying markers of children struggling with dyslexia, dysgraphia or OWL LD. They should also understand the basic research on how children learn to read, write and spell, and why some students of normal or higher intelligence struggle with language-based skills.

2. Identify Struggling Students

Schools must have an effective screening tool to identify all students for language-based learning issues. This is essential for every grade, but most critical in the early elementary years.

3. Inform Parents Immediately

Teachers should inform parents immediately if they have flagged their child as a struggling reader. Teachers should not wait until parent/teacher conferences to inform parents that their child has been flagged and/or enrolled in a special pullout program.

4. Meet with Parents – Listen and Inform

Parents and educators must meet to discuss what evaluations and interventions may be necessary. **The meeting can only be productive if the educators on the intervention team are informed about the current research on how children learn to read and why some struggle.** Remember that this has been a difficult and emotional journey for the parents and child. You should stress the positive fact that their child will learn to read, spell and write with the right intervention.

www.readonforkids.org

Meeting With Parents: Goals

1. Educate the Parent about Dyslexia: Provide Resource Guide

The teacher must educate the parent about their child's learning issues. The teacher should have a handout available for the parent that explains the basic facts about dyslexia, dysgraphia and OWL LD. The handout should list information resources available on-line, through their school or school district, and within the local community.

2. Effective Intervention Plan – Make it Happen

The meeting must establish an effective intervention plan that includes the child working regularly with a reading specialist trained in a specific multi-sensory, research-based method with built-in measures to test the effectiveness of the intervention for the child.

3. Include the Parents in the Intervention Process as Home Helpers

Include the parents, if possible, in the intervention process by giving them clear instructions on how they can help their child at home.

4. Keep Parents Informed of Progress Measures

Keep the parents informed of their child's progress in a language and context that they can understand. Too often the teacher will show test scores without showing what they mean in relation to the rest of the class or with the child's peers. If significant progress is not being made consider other intervention options.

www.readonforkids.org

Share the Wealth!

All Kids Deserve the Kind of Learning that Dyslexic Kids Need

All kindergarten through 2nd graders should be taught to read, write and spell using the same multi-sensory, direct, sequential, phonemic awareness-based, research-based method that dyslexic, dysgraphia and OWL LD kids can't learn without. It can be used effectively in the general classroom. If all kids received this strong foundation for reading, writing and spelling, the discrepancy levels in classrooms would be less pronounced, and every child would have a richer and deeper understanding of language from which all other learning can grow.

Parents Should Ask & Educators Should Be Able to Answer

- What is my child's phonemic awareness score?
- What is my child's fluency?
- What intervention are you currently using?
- How effective is that program for my child?
- How often are you progress monitoring?
- What are you using as the assessment tool?
- What research is your plan based on?
- What is your goal for my child?
- What other assessments have you done on my child?
- What are my child's scores?

www.readonforkids.org