

May 28, 2013

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Action Plan for Parents

Thank you for listening to and investing in your child future. Expect to be on an emotional roller coaster for the next few months. Your actions will make a positive impact on the years ahead. This will be a challenge from time to time, be gentle with yourself and your spouse. By providing the right type of help now, things will get better.

Your child will no longer struggle in school.
Reading, spelling, and writing skills will improve.
So will their self-esteem.

Attending college, pursuing any career, and having a happy and successful life are well within grasp.

1. Explain dyslexia to your child

In a simple manner, using age-appropriate language

Two suggestions are included in “How to Explain Dyslexia to the Child.”

Your child already knows something is different / wrong with him.

The truth will be such a relief.

Read “Telling a Child About Dyslexia” one parent’s experience.

Teach him a way to explain dyslexia to his friends that makes it “no big deal”

I have dyslexia, which means I don’t hear sounds as easily as you.

That’s why spelling is hard for me.

But we’re working on it, and I’m getting better.

Emphasize the many gifts and talents that people with dyslexia have

Read to him the many famous people with dyslexia on the list at:

www.dys-add.com/symptoms.html#famous

2. Start the right type of tutoring as soon as possible

Finding a tutor who uses the right method and is well-trained is the most important decision you will make. Tips on “Finding a Tutor” are included at the end.

Or use the Barton Reading & Spelling System to tutor your own child.

For learn more, go to: www.BartonDemo.com

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3. Request the online registration for Learning Ally and Bookshare

So you can get textbooks and literature books as audio files.

4. Start homework accommodations now.

See item #4 in the report.

5. Share the report with your child's teacher and principal.

Ask them to start providing the classroom accommodations.

6. Over the next few months, learn as much as you can about dyslexia

You need to become an expert in this condition

It is a lifelong condition

You are the only person who will be with your child for his entire life

If he gets the right type of tutoring

And accommodations until his skills reach grade level

He will be able to succeed in school – and in life

It is your responsibility to ensure that he gets those things

And that you proactively advocate for him, which means

You work behind the scenes to prevent problems from occurring

To do that, you need to become an expert in this condition

A great place to start learning is: www.BrightSolutions.US

Or read this book: Overcoming Dyslexia by Dr. Sally Shaywitz

If you have any questions about dyslexia, now or in the future

Contact Susan Barton

She is the founder of Bright Solutions for Dyslexia

She consults with and advises parents – for free

408-559-3652 Susan@BrightSolutions.US

If you have questions about this information, you may also contact your screener:

Theresa M Jurisch, Dyslexia Consultant

612-293-9346

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How to Explain Dyslexia to the Child

It is the **parents'** responsibility to explain dyslexia to their child. But they need to do it in an age appropriate manner.

For children in Kindergarten through fourth grade, you could say:

The testing showed why reading and spelling are so hard for you.

It showed that you're very smart – but we knew that already.

It also showed your ears don't hear sounds very clearly. That's why it's hard for you to "sound out" a word when you're reading.

That's also why it's hard for you to spell. Good spellers don't memorize the letters. They just listen for the sounds. But you aren't hearing sounds very clearly.

So we're going to find a tutor who can help your ears become more sensitive to sounds. Once your ears get more sensitive, reading and spelling will become a whole lot easier.

You can also read this book to them while they following along and look at the lovely illustrations:

I Have Dyslexia. What Does That Mean?

by Shelley Ball-Dannenberg

Written by the parent of an 8-year old daughter with dyslexia, this beautifully illustrated book provides a much-needed tool to explain dyslexia to a child -- as well as to their siblings, friends, teachers, and relatives. Written in an upbeat positive manner, it explains why regular reading and spelling instruction did not work for that child (and the success the child has already started to experience, thanks to getting the right type of tutoring), as well as the child's many gifted areas.

Although Shelley Dannenberg is now a Certified Dyslexia Testing Specialist and a Barton tutor, she has not forgotten her own daughter's confusion and worry when she was first diagnosed, and Shelley's book, written from her daughter's point of view, will bring comfort and relief to many children -- and their parents. Available from Amazon.com.

For older children, use the word dyslexia – and explain what it means.

(**Before** your talk, print the list from this website: <http://www.dysadd.com/symptoms.html#famous>.)

The testing showed that you have dyslexia – just like me (or just like your dad).

Dyslexia is something you inherit. It runs in families.

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It means you're really smart, but your brain processes sounds differently. That makes it difficult to hear sound clearly. That's why it's hard for you to "sound out" a word when you're reading.

That's also why it's hard for you to spell. Good spellers don't memorize the letters. They just listen for the sounds. But you aren't hearing sounds very clearly. So you have to try to memorize the letters, and memorizing is hard when you have dyslexia.

So we're going to find a tutor who can help your ears become more sensitive to sounds. Once your ears get more sensitive, reading and spelling will become a whole lot easier.

By the way, lots of people have dyslexia – about 1 in 5. In fact, many famous people have it. Let's see how many people you know from this list.

By the way, we're also going to ask your school to stop counting off for spelling mistakes while you're being tutored.

And we're going to work to get them to shorten your homework assignments so you'll have time to meet with a tutor at least twice a week – without having to give up your favorite activities.

But once you're able to read and spell as well as everyone else, you'll have to go back to doing the same amount of homework as everyone else.

Any questions you'd like to ask?

For a list of more than 200 famous people with dyslexia, go to:
www.dys-add.com/symptoms.html#famous

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Telling a Child About Dyslexia

Susan,

I wanted to take a moment to say "Thank You."

I attended your training last summer and became a certified tutor in March. The first day of your training answered a lot of questions that I had about one of my daughters, who is a twin.

I've know something was not quite right since preschool. Her kindergarten teacher blamed her difficulties on lack of attention and said she "just didn't care about her work."

She developed vocal and motor tics that year. I asked all three of our school psychologists to observe her. They all agreed it was anxiety induced.

I took a different position in the district and moved them to another school. At our first parent teacher conference in first grade, her teacher listened attentively to my concerns, which were shared with tears. She looked puzzled and told me how sweet and funny my daughter was and that her difficulties were due to a lack of effort and carelessness.

I knew better! Nobody saw what I saw at home...the frustration, tears, and selfdegrading comments. I felt helpless when she watched in disgust as her twin sister completed homework with ease or picked up thick chapter books to read for enjoyment. Tearfully, she would ask, "Why am I the dumb one?" I prayed every night for help.

The first night of your training, my prayers were answered! As I listened to you, I relived the conversations I had had with each teacher. There was no more wondering if I had messed up somewhere along the way as a parent...my daughter is dyslexic!

Our flight from California arrived late that night, so I didn't get to speak to the girls until the next morning. I was sitting at the foot of the bed when they woke up. After sharing stories of their week long adventure with dad, they asked about the training. White binder in hand, I explained that I learned about dyslexia. They were both very curious and interested in everything I shared. I came to the "Warning Signs" page and read aloud the list. Less than half-way through the list, Makensie bolted upright and said, "You mean I'm not stupid, I'm dyslexic?" Susan, this was a moment I'll never forget. We hugged and cried. We had our answer.

Sheila Blandford attended the assessment training this past summer. Makensie was her test subject. I read the report with tears of joy! We've met with all of her teachers to make them aware of her needs and to inform them that she is not the only one sitting in their classroom struggling in silence.

I've been asked by friends and former teachers "Aren't you afraid you'll damage her selfesteem by telling her she is dyslexic?" Each time, I smile and tell them that it's a gift. I no longer blame myself and she no longer feels stupid. I have the diagnosis and treatment. I have begun tutoring her with your program. I don't have the words to convey our gratitude! I was sent to your training for a reason...you delivered the answer to our prayers!

Gratefully,

Tina Wray Certified Barton Tutor & parent of a dyslexic child -- Danville, KY

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Finding a Tutor

Now that your child has been diagnosed with dyslexia, one of the MOST IMPORTANT tasks is getting your child the right type of tutoring. Not every private tutor, or every school system, uses the right type of program, has had right type of in-depth professional training, or uses the program “with fidelity” – as it was designed to be used.

Most children with dyslexia need to be taught using an Orton-Gillingham-based program.

It differs in what is taught and how it is taught. Its specific sequence minimizes the need for memorization. It is a phonics system that is simultaneously multisensory, structured, explicit, and systematic. It's designed specifically for children with dyslexia.

There are several versions of Orton-Gillingham (O-G) systems, each designed for a different educational setting. Any of them will work as long as it is an Orton- Gillingham system. For a list of the most well-known O-G systems, go to: www.dys-add.com/lrnmore.html#ogsystems

It requires training to properly teach an Orton-Gillingham method.

Try to find a tutor who is **certified** in an O-G method. This means that the developer of that system has tested the knowledge and procedures of that tutor and verifies that the tutor knows how to use their system properly.

Because each piece of an O-G system is there for a specific reason and each segment builds upon a previous skill having been mastered, **do not hire** tutors who say they do not use any one system; that they pick and choose items from several different systems. They will most likely leave out some critical steps.

If there is no certified tutor in your area, try to find one who is **well trained**. Ideally, the tutor would have been trained either by the developer of the O-G system (live or on DVD), or by one of the developer's certified trainers.

That non-certified tutor should have a **long track record of success** and be able to provide a list of references of students who have made significant improvement. Call and talk to the references.

The tutor needs to present the material at exactly the right pace for the student.

Since each concept builds upon the last, mastery of each concept is required. If the concept is not yet mastered, additional instruction time is needed until it is mastered.

One-on-one tutoring in a quiet setting is ideal for this type of pacing. It is the fastest way to close the gap between what your child needs to know and where he is right now.

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Some O-G systems are designed to teach more than one student at a time. Be aware that teachers of small groups face more difficulty with pacing. They can go no faster than the slowest student in the group.

And if any student is absent, nothing new can be taught to the other students in the group.

So to make the fastest progress possible, get one-on-one tutoring.

A student must receive at least two hours of one-on-one tutoring each week.

More than two hours a week is fine. But once a week is not enough for new skills to "stick."

Also, sessions that last less than 45 minutes do not allow for the intense practice that is needed to make a new concept automatic.

Here is a list of questions to ask before you hire a tutor.

Research has shown that the **single most important factor** in a student's educational success is the knowledge and skill of his or her teacher or tutor, and that fact is even more critical when a student has dyslexia.

Not every private tutor, or every school system, uses the right type of program, has had right type of in-depth professional training, or uses the program "with fidelity" – as it was designed to be used.

So before you hire anyone, be sure to ask:

Do you use an Orton-Gillingham system?

If they don't know what Orton-Gillingham is or means, they are *not* the right tutor for your child.

Which one?

If they claim to use bits and pieces of several different systems, they are *not* the right tutor for your child.

It doesn't matter so much *which* Orton-Gillingham program they're using as that they are certified.

For a list of the most well-known O-G systems, go to: www.dys-add.com/lrnmore.html#ogsystems

How did you get trained in that O-G system?

Anyone can buy the materials, but it takes special training to learn how to use them appropriately. A tutor should have gone through special training by the developer of the program (live or on DVD) or attended multi-day training classes given by one of the developer's certified trainers.

Are you certified in that system?

Certified means not only has the tutor has gone through special training by the developer of the program (live or on DVD) or by one of the developer's certified trainers, but the tutor has also passed the developer's rigorous testing process. The developer has verified that tutor is using their program "with fidelity" – as designed.

How long have you used it?

Preferably a certified tutor will have been using a OG system for 6 months to a year before becoming certified.

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What is your background?

Backgrounds vary

What is your payment plan?

Do they expect payment month by month or lesson by lesson?

How do you handle a missed lesson?

Will the tutor charge for a missed lesson, regardless of the reason?

How many students do you tutor at a time?

Best tutoring is done one on one, when done at school sometimes there is a small group.

Where will tutoring sessions take place?

Are they willing to travel to your house?

Why did you become a certified tutor?

A personal story of how dyslexia has touched their life, or they have an education background and found this to be more rewarding, is typical.

How do you handle a child who can't sit still? A child who struggles to focus? A child who has challenges remembering?

Looking to see that they have dealt with different challenges or they have a plan to work with a child no matter what the issue.

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Certified Tutor -- Screener -- Community Education