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INTRODUCTION

If you've picked up this book, you've probably been rudely awakened to the fact that getting your dyslexic child educated is not going to be easy. You're probably wondering how you'll ever come up with the extra time, energy, and money it's going to take to give her what she needs to have the future you want for her.

You may be barely coping with all of the issues involved with raising a child with dyslexia and you just want to help her survive school with her self-esteem intact, while holding on to your own mental health, too.

And since you want her to be happy and successful in life, you've probably realized that the only way that's going to happen is if you take matters into your own hands.

That's a wise choice.

The truth is that most school systems are broken when it comes to dealing with dyslexia. They can't and don't respond to the needs of the individual. They don't utilize screening systems to notify you if your child is exhibiting red flags around learning. And often, they're not using the right programs that have been scientifically proven to work for kids with learning disabilities.

Special education doesn't help either. They often do an inadequate job of educating dyslexic students. Teachers, administrative staff, special education staff and even school psychologists are typically not educated about dyslexia in general, much less how to educate dyslexics. Making matters worse, schools often resist parents' efforts to get services and resources for their children because they don't have the funding to hire enough trained staff.

Many schools are not diligent enough to acquire research-based curriculum that will properly remediate and educate a dyslexic child. They often push each kid through like every other, even if they end up reading at a third grade level in high school.

I tell you this right up front because being straight with you about it will save you from wasting huge amounts of the time and resources you really don't have to spare.

Now the good news.

In this eBook, you'll find tips and resources to 15 common issues that parents like you want help with. I'll help you get started in the right direction and help you avoid the sandtraps on the journey of helping your child to learn.

Over the years, I've had to become an expert on the topic in order to help my daughter succeed. Kylee was diagnosed with dyslexia, auditory processing disorder, ADHD, and dyscalculia, yet now I'm proud to say that she is excelling in school — and has even achieved straight A's! — due to many of the insights and methods I share with you in these pages. Kylee feels good about herself and has gotten to a place of seeing her dyslexia as a gift. She's begun to appreciate her own amazing talents and thinks of herself as having a cool, unique brain that she's proud of. We've come a long way and you can too!

In fact, I've made it my life's mission to help people find the best methods and solutions so that those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities or differences can succeed, with self-esteem intact, and with a future they can feel excited about.

As a parent, you're looking for a curriculum that fits your child's learning style, techniques that help your child retain information, and support and knowledge as you navigate this often long and difficult journey.

The valuable information I've included here will help get you started in the right direction, help you save time and money, reduce your confusion, and help you build confidence that you can conquer these challenges.

It will shorten the learning curve for *both* of you — you and your amazing child.

* * *

Please note: I do not receive any compensation for the product recommendations I make here. These are strictly products that I have found to work for dyslexic students.

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THE JOURNEY BEFORE YOU

To begin the journey, it's helpful to know that the types of challenges that students with learning disabilities have fall into eight general categories:

- 1. Reading and comprehension
- 2. Writing and composition
- 3. Language comprehension and verbal skills
- 4. Mathematics
- 5. General knowledge
- 6. Attention
- 7. Memory
- 8. Organization and time management

Look familiar?

As you can imagine, the entire range of resources, strategies, and curriculum that it would take to address all of these areas for all children is huge. So I'm starting you off with common, important tips and tricks to get you moving in the right direction. If you want my help to take you on the next steps forward, see my contact information at the end of this eBook.

In these pages, you'll get on your way to:

- figuring out the best place to get your child educated
- making decisions about hiring tutors, homeschooling, and private schools
- learning about after-school curriculum
- finding the right curriculum, resources and teaching strategies to help your child succeed
- maintaining your child's self-esteem and mental health

I'm excited for you that you've found this book to smooth your journey and to help you shorten the path to your child's success and happiness.

1. FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

By the time parents finally figure out that their child is dyslexic, their child has usually gotten behind by one or two grade levels in school and his self-esteem has already plummeted. So parents are forced to consider what is the best schooling option for them. Where are they going to fit that they're not bullied or wind up with their self-esteem destroyed?

It's important to quickly get over the illusion that the typical public school system is going to successfully close the grade level gap for your child. They're not designed or trained to do so. Countless people spend time, energy and money fighting the school and still end up with a child years behind in reading, spelling, writing, and sometimes math.

Please don't wait for something to change in the school before you get help for your child. Your best choice is to take matters into your own hands. While some of the schooling options may be inconvenient or more expensive, in most cases, it will be the best choice. It will be less painful in the long run. Self-esteem is incredibly important to your child's wellbeing. In the long run, poor self-esteem can lead to much bigger problems than not being able to read or do math. It is wise to plan and make decisions to support your child building a healthy self-image.

But which one is best for my child?

Finding a school that is a great fit for your child can require sifting through lots of variables and options. Many dyslexics have a long list of educational needs, yet parents have limited time and money to direct to the cause. Many parents cannot afford to do it all at once.

Public schools

Most public schools are places where dyslexic kids get emotionally damaged. The most damaging piece of dyslexia is being humiliated, teased and bullied at school. I urge you to make your child's mental and physical health a top priority and then tackle the educational piece one baby step at a time. It's a healthy strategy that works best.

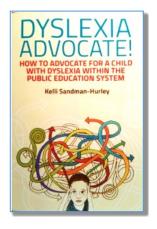
To find success within the public school system, you'd need several things to be working for you. First, you most likely need to get outside tutoring to help your child learn reading, spelling, and writing. Second, the school would need to successfully provide

classroom accommodations and the setting should be one that doesn't humiliate your child.

If you find that you have to keep your child in a public school, there's an excellent book by Kelli Sandman-Hurley that will help you advocate for your child with dyslexia in the publc education system. It teaches parents how to coordinate with their child's school,

and how to advocate for the right services and support for their child.

When you're considering a new school, call them up and see if you can get a tour. Try to get a sense of the culture and attitudes they have there. Look for clues and signs that the school cares more about their students than they do about academic standards. Also try to set up a meeting with the principal and find out what they usually do when they have children with dyslexia. What reading intervention programs do they have? Is the school willing to provide some simple accommodations in the classroom? Get answers to these



questions, but more importantly, pay attention to the tone and treatment you receive. You'll want to get enough information that tells you that your child can survive emotionally in their environment.

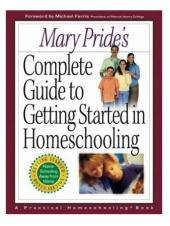
Book resource: Dyslexia Advocate! How to advocate for a child with dyslexia within the public education system, by Kelli Sandman-Hurley

Homeschooling

Homeschooling is your best option, if you can swing it. Research shows that students

make more progress when they're homeschooled than even a private school specializing in dyslexia. Homeschooling is recommended until your child has improved enough to close the gap in grade level reading, math and writing, or longer, if preferred. It can take anywhere from 1-3 years to close the gap. The most effective homeschooling options use evidence- based curriculums. Each state has its own laws regulating homeschoolers so you should review the ones in your state.

Book resource: The Complete Guide to Getting Started with Homeschooling by Mary Pride is a great place to start.



Online resource: Visit the HSLDA website at <u>www.hslda.org</u> and check out homeschooling laws in your state.

Montessori School

The Montessori School, The Waldorf School, and some small private schools come highly recommended by many dyslexia experts. Teachers in these settings usually care more about your child as a person than they care about his grades. They are often more flexible and more willing to make accommodations for your child to succeed. Some of these schools even allow you to hire private tutors to come in and work with your child during the day. However, you would still need to supplement with outside Orton-Gillingham-based tutoring for reading and spelling.

The Waldorf School will only be a good option if you plan to get outside Orton-Gillingham-based tutoring for reading and spelling, and your child has already been through a writing intervention program. Typically these schools require a lot of writing.

Private schools for dyslexics

Private schools are often the most expensive educational option for your child. If your child is already behind in reading and spelling, it may take three to four years in a private school for dyslexics to begin to close the knowledge gap in those skills. Financial aid is sometimes available.

After-schooling

After-school tutoring can be helpful to fill in the areas where the school is failing to teach your child sufficiently. You can tutor your child yourself or hire a tutor. The curriculum should be dyslexia-specific, evidence-based material. I recommend that your child spend an hour a weekday plus two hours on Saturday and Sunday to help get their education back on track.

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2. READING AND SPELLING

Dyslexia is the result of a neurological difference in the brain in which several neural systems, used for reading and spelling, are not activating. While the general public often confuses the two, dyslexia and intelligence are unrelated and very different. Quite the contrary: many dyslexic people are very bright, extremely creative and have achieved amazing things in life. But having dyslexia does make learning to read and spell more difficult. It can also impact other subject areas students are trying to learn.

As a parent of a dyslexic child, it is best to make sure that your child is being taught with a research-based, Orton-Gillingham (OG) -based reading and spelling program. OG is the gold standard for teaching reading. It is an explicit and structured approach to learning that is consistent with scientific research about how dyslexic children should learn to read.

The OG-based program uses a multisensory approach that encourages your child to physically form, tap, and vocalize the sounds they hear and see as they write them. The combined behavior of both writing and saying the learned sounds provides motor, auditory, and visual feedback to the brain that builds a stronger memory of those sounds and helps to connect them to the words.

If you're hiring a tutor, make sure they are using the OG program, and that your child is spending the recommended amount of time with it each week. Ideally, the instructor has been trained and qualified in the method, and works with no more than three students at a time. The program should continue until finished without extended breaks.

Home Tutoring

If you want to teach your child yourself, you have a few options to consider. They come in various price points, the time to completion can vary, and a couple of them can be done at home. They can take anywhere from one to three years to complete, or more, depending on certain factors. Here are a few good ones:

Barton Reading and Spelling System

This wonderful program is designed for dyslexic students. To be able to tutor your own child, you have to pass a 10-minute tutor screening. Your child will also need to complete their student screening to see if she'll first need to do a preliminary program before starting the Barton program.

The program starts simple and gets more complex as your child improves and learns. It also provides ways for you or an instructor to see if your child understands the concepts or needs more practice. Most dyslexic children need a minimum of two hours of one-on-one tutoring every week. It's ideal if you can do Barton five days a week, spending no more than one hour per session. Young children may only be able to handle 30 minutes.

If you live outside the U.S., you can get Barton Reading programs in a digital version to avoid huge shipping costs.



Website: www.bartonreading.com

Phone: 408-559-3652

Email: Info@BartonReading.com

All About Reading and All About Spelling

This program isn't as thorough as Barton, but it might be a good fit for those who are only mildly dyslexic. Some parents have had success and some haven't with this program.

Website:

www.allaboutlearningpress.com/all-aboutreading/

Phone number: 715-477-1976



Reading Horizons Online Instructional Software

After completing an OG-based reading intervention program like Barton, this is a good supplementary program to help your child practice the skills he's learned and increase his fluency. It generally takes 40–60 hours (six months to a year) to complete, and it's recommended to practice 30 minutes a day for 4 to 5 days per week. Reading Horizons states that on average students are given the tools they need to be able to read and they often improve by two grade levels.

Reading Horizons offers two packages to choose from, based on the age of your child: **Horizons Discovery** is for ages 4 – 9 and **Reading Horizons Elevate** is for ages 10 and up.





Website: http://athome.readinghorizons.com/

Phone number: 715-477-1976

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3. KEYBOARDING SKILLS

Many students with dyslexia also have *dysgraphia*, an inability to write coherently. Holding a pencil, organizing letters on a line, putting ideas into language — all of these tasks can be difficult to accomplish. Handwriting itself can be slow and even painful from using too much pressure on the hand.

That's why typing programs can be a godsend for many. I recommend two typing programs that work for dyslexics. But before starting any typing program, make sure your student knows all 26 letters of the alphabet.

Here's my blog post with more information about these two programs:

Blog post: www.seetospell.com/typing/teach-dyslexic-child-typing-skills/

Type to Learn 4: Agents of Information

Most students will be able to type at least 25-35 words per minute by the time they've gone through the lessons a second time. This will help them accomplish their school assignments much more easily.

To get started, you have to 'set up' your student learner. Their Tech Support will help you through the process if you call them at: (800) 321-7511.

The program begins with two lessons in keyboard awareness followed by 34 in typing practice. There are four activities to complete in each lesson plus one final challenge. The student has to complete these activities before the system will let him move on to the next lesson.

Find the product on Amazon: Type to Learn 4



Keyboarding Without Tears

This program was designed for K through fifth grade students, but middle-school students also enjoy using it. It can be a good option if your dyslexic student has completed at least one year of an OG-based reading and spelling program.

Keyboarding Without Tears teaches prekeyboarding, keyboarding, digital citizenship, and general computer readiness skills. It can be used on PCs, Macs, Chromebooks, iPads, and other tablets. It's a 36-week program for your child to practice 5-15 minutes per day.

You'll start your student at the grade they are currently in. Read the introduction for that grade.

Website: www.kwtears.com

Customer service number: 301-263-2700





4. ADDING AND SUBTRACTING

Children with dyslexia often have a hard time memorizing random facts and information. Many try to memorize math facts for years but still don't retain the information.

You can teach your dyslexic student to add and subtract without having to rely on memorizing the addition and subtraction facts.

Touch Math

If your child is having a difficult time memorizing addition and subtraction facts, Touch Math is an alternative way of learning to add and subtract.

This product teaches students how to add and subtract by using dots on the numbers, give visual clues. For example the number 2 has 2 dots on it. When a student wants to add two numbers, she'll count by starting with the largest number, saying its name, and then using the touch points (dots) on the smaller number.



Call their customer service to order their free teacher training materials. You can also go to their homepage and click "Free Training" in the menu bar. Then click on "Request Materials" and fill out the form to have free training materials sent to you.

Before beginning subtraction, the student needs to be able to count backwards. If your child can't do that yet, teach it to her and have her practice, starting with 18, and going down from there.

Website: www.touchmath.com

Customer service number: 800-888-9191

Free practice sheets: Go to www.touchmath.com. On the home page, scroll down and click on the "Sale & Samples" button on the right-hand sidebar. Click on, open and print the samples you want to try out.

Free video about how to add with Touch Math: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uWT5i4PRN8

Free video about how to subtract with Touch Math: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW42AEW8mM4

5. MULTIPLYING AND DIVIDING

Dyslexic students have a hard time memorizing random information and that makes memorizing multiplication and division facts very difficult to master.

Times Tales

Times Tales is a product that works wonderfully for dyslexic students, helping them learn how to multiply and divide much more quickly and with less repetition. It uses a picture and story method to hook the information into long-term memory. Some students need to work on one story (fact) at a time. Some students might need some extra time to learn to link the character with the number. But with practice and persistence, most dyslexic students can master their facts using this method.



Website: www.timestales.com

You can either purchase the DVD or get a downloadable version that works on desktop PC, laptop and Mac. The DVD comes with a spiral bound flipbook that is very helpful for additional review. If you're getting the download version, you might want to order the flipbook too for extra practice.

6. TELLING APART 'b' AND 'd'

Dyslexic children often confuse the letters 'b' and 'd' since one is the mirror image of the other. Here's a way to help them distinguish between the two by using their left hand to shape the letter 'b' and by associating it with an image of a balloon. They can remember that a balloon flies up, just like the thumb of the left hand points up to mimic the letter 'b.'



Blog post: <u>www.seetospell.com/spelling-</u> tricks/does-your-dyslexic-child-confuse-the-letters-b-and-d/

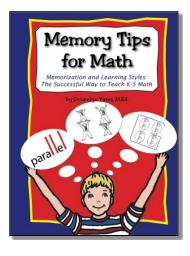
7. MEMORY TOOLS FOR MATH

Memory Tips for Math

This fun book from Memory Joggers is helpful for dyslexic students because the book gives them memory clues with the help of rhymes, stories, pictures and acronyms. These help kids learn math procedures and vocabulary in a way that helps them stick in their long-term memory. The pictures and rhymes also make learning more fun for all students.

Book on Amazon: www.amazon.com/Memory-Tips-Memorization-Learning-Styles/dp/1430303042

Website: www.memoryjoggers.com/



8. DAYS OF THE WEEK IN ORDER

Many people with dyslexia find it hard to memorize the order of fairly common information like the days of the week, months of the year and the alphabet. Because

there is less than average brain activity in some areas of the brain, the normal flow of sequential information into longterm memory is disrupted, making it harder to memorize. But research shows when other parts of the brain are utilized, then learning the order and sequences of things becomes more doable. My daughter had great success with this. I taught her a song to memorize, then we changed the lyrics of the song to reflect the days of the week. She worked on memorizing the new words. After some practice, and a lot of fun, she had them down.



Here's my blog post about using music to help your student memorize the days of the week in order:

Blog post: <u>www.seetospell.com/remembering-sequences/teach-kids-dyslexia-order-days-week/</u>

9. MONTHS OF THE YEAR IN ORDER

Since sequences and orders of things are more difficult for dyslexic people to learn, using music to memorize gives students a huge assist.

Melodies and rhythms also encourage repetition, which in turn helps memorization. Processed in the right hemisphere of the brain, music can play a powerful role in helping memory. When we set ideas or words to music, they are easier to remember because we access the right brain.

Here's my blog post about using music to help your student memorize the months of the year in order:



Blog post: <u>www.seetospell.com/remembering-sequences/teach-child-dyslexia-months-</u> year-order/

To get help teaching your child to work with a calendar, and understand concepts like 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' see my blog post here:

Blog post: <u>http://www.seetospell.com/learning-calendars/fun-tips-teaching-dyslexic-child-months-year/</u>

10. LEARNING GRAMMAR

Here's a fun way to help your student learn grammar. With video and music, the

Schoolhouse Rock videos help your child commit the rules of grammar to long-term memory. They have a video for the eight parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. For best results, focus on only one part of speech at a time. Then have him watch the video as many times as it takes to get the concept down.

Watch Schoolhouse Rock videos on YouTube for free. Or purchase them on Amazon:

YouTube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkuuZEey_bs

Find the product on Amazon by searching for: "Schoolhouse Rock: Grammar Classroom Edition"

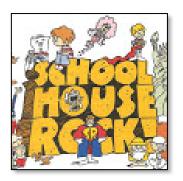
11. PRACTICING GRAMMAR

You can help your student get practice with the eight parts of speech with the Basic Level Winston Grammar Program (Complete Set).

My daughter did really well with this program. Abstract concepts like those in grammar usually elude her, but this did the trick.

It's simple, multi-sensory, and also very "hands on" which works well for visual and tactile learners. The program has small colored cards with clues on them for the parts of speech. Each part of speech is introduced gradually with repetition. Students pull down the cards and put them in order





corresponding to each part of speech. Then they "mark" each part of speech on their worksheets.

Students work through sentences of increasing difficulty, identifying all eight parts of speech, plus all of the different functions.

Purchase at: www.winstongrammar.com

12. LEARNING PUNCTUATION

As you probably know, dyslexic people are not into details! Details like periods and capitals are not easy to remember and manage. That means that dyslexic students have to be taught only one punctuation rule at a time. Start with the primary punctuation marks — periods, question marks, etc. The more advanced punctuation rules are learned best through a writing program for dyslexics.

The COPS method

Here's a useful strategy to help your student write a sentence better. Many dyslexics struggle with remembering to capitalize and punctuate, so the overall appearance of the sentence can be messy. Some letters might go above or below the lines, there may not

be enough space between words, and more.

The COPS method uses the word as an acronym to remind your student what to review after writing a sentence to make sure she's covered all the bases of good punctuation. The acronym stands for:

- C Capitalization
- **O** Organized
- P Punctuation

S – Spelling

Sentence COP

Here's how it works. After every sentence, she writes the letters "COPS." Then she'll go through the letters one by one. She'll start with 'C' and ask herself: *Has everything been properly capitalized?* If so, she'll cross off the 'C.' Then, *Does the sentence look*

organized? If it has regular spacing between words and letters, she'll cross off the 'O.' *Is the punctuation right*? If so, she'll cross off the 'P.' *Am I unsure of the spelling of any of the words*? If she is, she can use a spellchecker to check and correct the spelling. Then she can cross off the final 'S.'

Over time, when students practice this strategy, it becomes a habit to check their work and make sure these items have been done.

Here are the things to look for:

Capitalization

Start all sentences with a capital letter. Capitalize the names of people, places (like cities and states), titles, and things that have specific names.

Organization

Make sure the sentence looks organized with proper spacing between words and letters.

Punctuation

Does the sentence end with an appropriate punctuation mark, like a period, question mark, or exclamation point?

Spelling

Do I need to check the spelling of any word? Use a spelling checker to look up suspect words.

13. AN APP TO HELP READ PRINT

Is your student having a hard time reading worksheets or pages in a book? There are

several simple and easy apps to help him read printed materials more quickly and function better in a classroom. Here's my favorite:

TextGrabber

Use the TextGrabber app to scan, translate and save text that's in printed materials. You simply take a picture of the text and



then you can hear it spoken aloud via VoiceOver. The app works on iPhone and iPad.

Watch this helpful YouTube tutorial to quickly learn how it works:

YouTube Tutorial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPPbwVAS7RM

14. AN APP FOR RECORDING & TAKING NOTES

This is a simple notetaking app that works great. You can type notes, use a stylus, or import a PDF document, and highlight notes. It works on both iPhone and iPad.

Notability

YouTube Tutorial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV7-3MGIF0s



15. WRITING PAPERS BY DICTATING

If you want to make writing a paper a lot easier, you can dictate it into your mobile device. Forget complicated and buggy apps like Dragon! For assignments, outlines, research papers and other written works, this is a better way.

Here's how:

Open up the NOTES app on your iPhone or iPad. Then, instead of typing something, click the microphone icon and speak your thoughts out loud. The microphone transcribes your words into text right there in the app. It types for you!

Then, copy and paste the words you want into an email that you send to yourself. Or copy and paste it right into a Word document. You can edit the document as needed in Word or Google Docs.

BONUS: MEMORIZE HOW TO SPELL SIGHT WORDS

One of the biggest stumbling blocks for dyslexics is learning to spell *sight words*, common words that don't conform to the usual spelling rules, making them especially hard for dyslexics to learn. *My See to Spell* flashcards use visual imagery, story, and humor that give concrete clues and help sight words really stick in long term memory. Besides relying on these flashcards in my own family, tutors,



educators, and administrators use them all over the world to help kids learn to spell these tricky words much more quickly.

Get two <u>free</u> See to Spell flashcards and simple instructions to help your child spell sight words: See to Spell flashcards: <u>Seetospell.com/sample-flash-cards/</u>

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A NOTE ABOUT ME

When she was in third grade, my daughter Kylee was diagnosed with dyslexia, ADHD, APD (auditory processing disorder), and dyscalculia (which affects math). It didn't take me long to realize that the public school system was not going to be much help. A week later, I pulled her out of school. For the rest of the school year, I homeschooled her eight hours a day. I dove into figuring out which teaching methods worked (and which ones didn't!), which curricula I could trust, and how to play to my daughter's strengths. I am super proud that Kylee is frequently achieving straight A's at a darn difficult middle school.

I've spent hundreds of hours on research, thousands of dollars paying experts, and years of on-on-one schooling with my daughter to figure out what works. After many years of research and tons of practice, I have all the pieces a parent would need to help their dyslexic child succeed, from kindergarten all the way through college.

This journey is never easy, but having the right resources can help anyone get through it with less stress and much more success.

Now I coach parents of children with learning disabilities who feel overwhelmed and concerned about their child's education and future. I provide educational resources, information and teaching strategies so that they have relief, hope and a reliable roadmap filled with opportunity.

If that's you, I would love to help you shorten your learning curve and get you connected to the information, tools, resources, and emotional support that you need. If that's something you're interested in, please drop me a line. I would love to connect with you and help in every way I can.

Here's how to contact me:

Email: <u>Shawn@seetospell.com</u> Phone: 602-920-2853 Website: <u>www.seetospell.com</u>

I look forward to hearing from you!