

Learning and Education Through the Advancement in Reading

The Reading Corner 2nd Issue

Written by Patricia J. Lear, M.Ed. Learning Specialist/Diagnostician

My child is still having trouble reading in her school program. Is she dyslexic?

Finding the correct reading and language program is as important as finding the correct educational center to teach a program to your child. Last month I discussed what to do if your child can't read and how to establish a relationship with your school. If after the school has made changes and you still do not see significant progress it is time to look for a reading specialist outside your school system. This move will help you determine why your child is having so much difficulty and determine if your child is dyslexic and why. Remember, children get up in the morning wanting to be like everyone else. Children want to be successful. The child who is having difficulty needs different tools to succeed. Different tools mean the student needs a different program, or a different delivery of a program, or both. As a parent you must be a strong advocate to help your child become successful.

What is dyslexia?

We often hear the term dyslexia used in relationship to reading difficulties. The following is the definition of dyslexia that was adopted by the International Dyslexia Association, or IDA board on November, 12 2002:

“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is of neurological origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and /fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and coding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

The word dyslexic, in the simplest terms means difficulty (dis) with interpreting the relationships of the printed symbols (lexic). In simple terms dyslexic means difficulty with reading. Many parents come into the office saying they see so

many different definitions which include terms like reversals in letters and difficulty with sound symbol relationships. These terms were included in other definitions of dyslexia as suspected causes. When a child does not read smoothly or recognize words in a timely manner, the definition points to a possible neurological problem. I caution parents not to become alarmed about the neurological factor. We all have strengths and weaknesses. It is true we become less concerned when our children don't play baseball well, or jump rope as well as the neighbor's child, but it all has to do with how our brain develops. The unfortunate part is that when our brain doesn't allow us to read well, like other children, the problem is due far more concern than not being able to throw or hit a ball over the fence.

Can dyslexia be corrected or remediated?

Reading problems, difficulty in reading or dyslexia can be corrected (remediated or fixed) or compensated for with the correct approach. Compensation teaches a child to go around their problems. One program does not fit all and it is important to remember that children have trouble for different reasons. There are many positions on why children can't read. At my center, we investigate to determine the reason for the difficulties in order to choose the correct program to begin corrective instruction. With the correct programs the child can begin to respond to instruction and build the skills and confidence to read. When a child has difficulty in reading, spelling or writing the problem needs to be addressed immediately. Reading problems left uncorrected will continue to interfere with learning, education and self-esteem.

My child has good language skills and still can't read. Why?

We are born with the ability to learn our language naturally, to understand and speak without difficulty. On the other hand, reading is system that is not learned naturally and must cases must be taught. The systems that are developed for the classroom are not bad systems but do not address the learning deficits of many children. The definition of dyslexia goes on to say the difficulties my result from phonological deficits. Often you will hear the schools speak of adding phonics programs or changing a child's phonic program. The school is addressing the phonological deficits the child may be experiencing. Your child's understanding of the pattern of their phonics program is the building block of reading and should be mastered with relative ease. If after another program is introduced and the child is still not grasping the needed skills through first grade intensive intervention should begin immediately. By the age of six a child, if properly instructed should be fluent in their phonics program. Intensive means progressive, one on one instruction in the correct program by a reading/language specialist. Phonics is the building block of sounding out words, spelling and helping to build language skills to promote comprehension of the written word. Promoting comprehension leads to better communication skills, learning, education and a better picture of our self-concept.

By the end of first grade, a child should be able to

- ✓ read one-syllable words that are arranged in order, in a sentence
- ✓ use phonics to sound out words he doesn't know
- ✓ recognize irregularly spelled words that follow the rules of the phonic system, such as are, said, you, have and push
- ✓ spell all the words he can read using the phonic system
- ✓ count the number of syllables in a word
- ✓ break apart and put together the sounds in word
- ✓ read, remember and retell what has been read in sequence
- ✓ read, write, and understand simple instructions
- ✓ read out loud smoothly and in phrases, demonstrating meaning of the language

If after your school has made changes and you do not see consistent progress consider contacting a private learning specialist for a second opinion. The more information you have the more empowered you are to help your child.

Government research has determined that at least 20% of children need highly individualized programs in order for them to be successful and meet their full potential. Some need one-on-one instruction. The learning specialist will work with you, your child and your school to develop a specialized program where you will see progress watch your child gain self esteem become a successful and independent.

If you have additional questions about the content of this month's ***The Reading Corner*** please contact me at leareducationalcenter@juno.com or call me at the Lear Educational Center at 610-252-0965. We will make every attempt to answer all questions submitted. Look for more information about reading and related subjects in the next issue of ***The Reading Corner*** or visit on line for information and links about reading issues at <http://leareducationalcenter.com> . Thank you so much for your interest in your child's reading development. Reading is the primary means to learning and education. Let's all help to see all children reach their full potential while supporting learning and education through the advancement in reading.

