

Dyslexia Australia

4-B La Senda Crt, Springwood, QLD 4127

Ph: (07) 3299-3994

www.dyslexia-australia.com.au



Years ago I was looking through the TV guide and my eye was caught by a movie review. The outline in the TV guide read:

“This is a story of a man and his dyslexic son lost in the wilderness. In spite of his dyslexia the boy finds help and saves both their lives”.

I thought how sad, why can't they say that the boy saves the day BECAUSE of his dyslexia.

You see, there is nothing wrong with us. We just learn differently. The standard methods of teaching reading does not match our visual processing style.

Research indicates that dyslexics have difficulty sounding out or decoding words. These difficulties are labeled as central auditory processing disorder, language based disorders, non-specific learning disability, poor working memory, ADD...and the list goes on.

The most recommended remedial help is to force the children to sound out or decode words using a phonic approach and other auditory techniques. When this doesn't work then they are sent to speech therapy or occupational therapy. When this doesn't work they are sent to resilience programs that teach the child how to cope. Then as a “last resort” they are put on drugs. These solutions perplexes me to no end. Why, when it is common knowledge this is an area we have difficulty processing, we should be forced to continue learning this way and then be taught how to cope?

To give you a simplified analogy, imagine taking your baby to the doctor because he/she is failing to thrive. The doctor tells you that the baby is unable to efficiently process the milk formula. Would the doctor recommend that you continue using the same formula AND force the baby to drink more? I am sure the doctor would recommend changing the milk formula.

By continuing to offer the same learning strategies and therapies our children will continue to fail to thrive. Our children will continue to have poor self esteem and their achievements will be limited. More importantly, children will feel responsible because in directly or in-directly they are being told they have a disability, disorder, or problem.

Dyslexia becomes a disability when you teach our children that learning can only come through hard work. You tell them to concentrate on these tasks; and when our most creative and spontaneous thinkers find themselves unable to comply, we ply them with repetitive exercises, tricks and mind-bending drugs because there is a lack willingness to look at non-auditory alternatives.

Dyslexia Australia

4-B La Senda Crt, Springwood, QLD 4127

Ph: (07) 3299-3994

www.dyslexia-australia.com.au



Dyslexia is not a lifelong disability, but a form of intelligence that deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Funding should be allocated and directed to approaches that work with our abilities and/or processing styles rather than continue to fund reading programs and research that work against us.

Dyslexics must be allowed to learn by working with, not against, their visual processing style. By working to our strengths we are creating the solution. Working with our weaknesses is perpetuating the problem and creating a disability. In other words, we must allow our children to succeed because of their dyslexia not in spite of their dyslexia.

Brenda Baird
Dyslexia Australia
September 2009

Sources for this article are:

<http://www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz>

http://learningpeople.typepad.com/the_learning_people/2008/10/dyslexia-a-summons-to-eco-learning.html