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ABSTRACT

This guide for parents of children with dyslexia begins with case summaries of several children who exhibited reading and other academic problems that were later diagnosed as dyslexia. Misconceptions about dyslexia are refuted, and developmental problems in the areas of auditory perception, visual perception, and language processing are discussed. Activities to strengthen each of these three areas are listed. Problems arising from having dyslexia are explored, especially the problem of poor self-image. The emotions that parents often experience in dealing with the child who has dyslexia are examined. Some of these include denial, guilt, martyrdom, anger, and acceptance. Subsequent chapters focus on the hope that comes from perseverance. Suggestions are offered for parents who want to help their child develop a positive self-image and a sense of security. Suggestions are also offered for helping the child to perform better in school by developing his or her organizational skills, homework skills, and test-taking skills. The final chapter recounts the outcomes for those children whose case summaries were presented in the first chapter. An appendix offers positive phrases parents can say to praise their child, time management forms and checklists, a sample of teacher rules and requirements, a self-concept assessment form, and suggested classroom modifications. (JDD)

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# BEYOND THE RAINBOW

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A Guide for Parents of Children with Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities

# Beyond The Rainbow:

A Guide for Parents of Children With Dyslexia  
and Other Learning Disabilities

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## INTRODUCTION

Most of us will stop whatever we are doing to gaze at a rainbow. We admire the breath-taking beauty of the array of colors. We may remember it as God's promise that the earth would never be totally covered by water again. Part of the attraction may be the fact that rainbows are not an everyday occurrence. We may also compare the rainbow to life's journey, beginning at one end and ending at the other, in search of the pot of gold that is at the end. Did you ever wonder what lies "Beyond the Rainbow"?

This book was written by a concerned parent and two teachers who believed that parents need to gain an understanding about dyslexia and other learning disabilities. We hope, by sharing information with you, that you will be able to better understand and help your child.

This book was written because a parent found answers to questions about her child's difficulties in school. She wanted other parents to gain the same understanding about their child. The parent shares feelings and insights gained as she experienced confusion and frustration when her child could not learn in the traditional way. The two teachers share information gained through many years of education and experience in working with children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Explanations of specific disabilities and suggestions to help your child are included.

We hope, that after reading this book, you will be able to help your child experience the success found "Beyond the Rainbow!"

Sincerely,

Dr. Patricia S. Dodds  
Nancy T. Robeson  
Paula Z. Rosteet

This book is dedicated to our parents who have always encouraged us to excel, to our husbands and children who patiently encouraged us during our endeavor and to the children and parents whom we have had the privilege of teaching and counseling.

We thank the following for reading, editing and offering suggestions: Dr. Kevin Jones, Dr. Ray Clark, Liza Newman, Jim Parker, Betty Maple, Sue Morris, Richard Turner, and Liz Savell. Their comments have been extremely helpful.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE BEGINNING

### How Fortunate We Are ... a Perfect Child

The first sound of a heartbeat brought hope.  
The first feeling of movement in the womb brought joy.  
The first view of the newborn brought peace.  
The first cry brought empathy.  
The first smile, laugh, and squeal brought excitement.

Responding to name, waving bye-bye, and imitating pat-a-cake brought encouragement.  
Crawling, walking, and talking brought the thrill of learning.  
Sitting alone, jumping on both feet, skipping, and hopping on one foot brought anticipation of a future football star or ballerina.  
Being potty trained, riding a tricycle, tying shoelaces, learning nursery rhymes, and cutting with scissors all brought a promise of competence.

--Nancy Robeson

### Allison's Story

*"After achieving all these things and many more within four years of life, one would think she would be able to handle education very successfully. This was what I thought.*

*Let me tell my story about Allison. She is my daughter. She is dyslexic.*

*I had a vision of what my child would be when she grew up. From the time she was in my womb I started making plans for her future. I wanted to teach her everything I knew, everything I believed, and everything I felt. At the same time, I wanted more for her--to know a little more, to believe a little stronger,*

*and to feel a little deeper than I.*

*At the very moment she was born I began a nurturing process. I passed on to her all the wonderful things I had learned and experienced. Simultaneously, I too was learning. I experienced her joy when she took her first step. I experienced her laughter as she chased an elusive butterfly. I shared her sadness when her favorite toy broke and her tears of pain at her first skinned knee.*

*The first day of school arrived, and there was much activity at home. My emotions were at a peak. My daughter was ecstatic and a little frightened. I had shopped for weeks to find the perfect outfit. I had tried to prepare myself emotionally to urge my child on and not myself become a weeping willow. I had called everyone who was close to me to inform them of the big day. I felt I had accomplished more than I could possibly have dreamed. I do not think that I could have been prouder of anything in my life. To see that I had gotten this far, and produced such a loving and intelligent child, was simply miraculous.*

*Nothing would keep me away from the first day of school. I would definitely drive her to her destination. I would meet her teacher and check out the gym, cafeteria, and office. I hoped that all of this would be up to my standards. Nothing prepared me for the actual day.*

*While I was driving to school, I tried to fit everything I had taught my child in the last five years into five minutes. "Be polite, mind your manners, remember to say thank you, remember to raise your hand, and don't talk with your mouth full." I also reminded her of the most important thing--that I loved her very much and was very proud of her.*

*We arrived. I walked Allison to her classroom and was amazed at the sight that greeted us. The room was colorfully decorated, the desks were neatly arranged, and the kindest eyes were at the door to greet us. I had no qualms about leaving my child in the hands of this kind and gentle person. Allison kissed me good-bye, took the hand of the teacher, and walked away. At that moment I felt that I had lost a part of myself. My baby had grown up; she would be able to*

*manage the day without me. I turned away and cried tears of sadness and joy. In spite of mixed emotions, one thing was certain: from that day on, nothing would be the same. As I continued down the hall, a blanket of warmth embraced me. I walked a little straighter and smiled a little more. I felt that I had given and taught my child everything she could possibly need in order to become a 'shining scholar'.*

*After the excitement and the newness of the first few weeks wore off, we fell into a routine. My child brought home many new things. I was amazed at her willingness to learn. I tried to encourage and help her whenever I could. Sometimes I found myself pushing a little too hard, but I only wanted what was best for her and to see her succeed.*

*When Allison began kindergarten, she absolutely loved it. She was one of those children who loved to go to school each morning. As the year progressed and things became more difficult, she was not quite as enthusiastic about school. I realized that this was not unusual behavior, but I also wanted to make sure that there was not anything specifically troubling her.*

*I scheduled a conference with her teacher. I was told she was doing fine. Sometimes she had difficulties with shapes and letters, but it wasn't anything that should trouble me. She would write some of her letters backwards. She would write her whole telephone number backwards. She could not remember her address or her birthday. While I was concerned about these things, I was reassured by her teacher telling me that this was normal for some children. She said that every child matures and develops differently. It might take Allison a little longer to master these skills. This all made perfect sense to me.*

*I walked away from the conference feeling better, but in the back of my mind I still had doubts. I prayed that the teachers were sure of what they were saying.*

*As we got further along into the school year, Allison seemed to do well. Her report cards were good. For the most part, she was an average student.*

*While she excelled in certain areas, she needed improvement in others. Areas consistently marked on her report card were, 'Never completes her work' and 'Does not work well in a group activity.' She almost always had trouble arranging pictures in a sequence. She was never quite sure which way to make a 'b' or 'd'. At a certain point, I really felt that there was something wrong and that I must do something about it.*

*I visited the school, and, once again, I was reassured that she was doing fine and there was nothing for me to worry about. I had the impression that the teachers thought I was an overly concerned mother. I realized that, as a first time mother, at times, I was over-zealous. But I still felt that I knew Allison better than anyone else.*

*When the kindergarten year came to a close, Allison was promoted to first grade. Even though I knew she was still experiencing problems, I was pleased on the whole. I really hoped that she was prepared for first grade.*

*The summer went beautifully. We spent many hours enjoying the great outdoors. Allison was involved with T-Ball at our local YMCA. She visited her grandmothers and cousins and went on several mini vacations with her family. We had a wholesome, happy time. I tried to read to her whenever I could. While I did not want her to forget any of the things she had learned in school, I did not want to make her summer a reenactment of the classroom.*

*Whenever there were rainy or uneventful days, my daughter and I would sit at the kitchen table and play games or go over some of her classwork. While she loved to play games, she was not remotely interested in anything that reminded her of school. Yet, I wanted her to stay refreshed on school subjects. When I gently pushed her to do schoolwork, it was very difficult for both of us. I was concerned, but I wasn't sure how to deal with the situation. Looking back now, I realize this was an early warning signal of what was to come.*

*As the summer came to an end, we were looking forward to first grade. I think we were both optimistic. One of the wonderful things that Allison had*

*gained from her kindergarten teachers was the feeling that she was special and had accomplished a great deal. The teachers made the children feel good about going into the first grade. I felt that this was 'real school' and that my daughter was both 'mature' and 'developed' enough to be fully prepared for the year. I felt that this was going to be a fun year full of learning, playing, and growing. Allison was excited about being in first grade." (Paula Rosteet)*

## Notes



## CHAPTER 2 THE THUNDER

### Allison's Story Continues

*"Allison started school with great enthusiasm and confidence. This did not last long. After the first six weeks, she did not want to get up for school. She always had some kind of ailment. Either her stomach, her head, or her throat hurt. She was always miserable, did not laugh as much as she used to, did not want to play outside as much, and was generally very unhappy. Whenever she would try to do her homework, she would become angry. She hated everything. When I asked her about school, she would say it was fine and not comment any further. I was very persistent in asking about each day. I wanted her to feel excited and happy about school. After a certain point, she started giving me the answers I wanted. Anytime I would question her after this, she would tell me wonderful stories about her day. I did not realize until later that that was exactly what they were---stories. Instead of allowing Allison to express her true feelings, I was forcing her to repress them. She had learned to pretend that everything about school was all right.*

*I had conferences with her teacher. She always had good reports. Allison seemed to be well adjusted and well behaved. When I expressed my concerns over her behavior at home, her teacher informed me that this was not the case at school. In fact, she said that Allison displayed quite opposite behavior at school. I knew that my child had a very active imagination. Sometimes she would tell little stories that were easy to detect as fictional. I went as far as to inform her teacher of this. I do not think her teacher believed me. She assured me that she felt my daughter was not doing this at school.*

*Out of my desperation to discover why Allison was exhibiting the behavior we saw at home, I talked to her teacher many times. I even volunteered in Allison's class once a week to see if I could detect any problems at school. I could not understand the difference in Allison's behavior at home and at school. Her*

*teacher did not understand either. The teacher verified that Allison had difficulty with certain skills but assured me they could be corrected. From the teacher's point of view, she had, on the one hand, a wonderful student for whom she cared deeply and on the other a child's mother who seemed overly concerned. The mother was at school all the time and gave a totally different picture of the child's personality. I am sure the teacher was puzzled and frustrated trying to deal with me.*

*Three months into the school year, I realized that things were not getting any better at home. Allison no longer told me everything was going great at school. She was learning new words but was not having an easy time remembering them. We would sit down and go over her reading words, and one hour later she could not recognize any of them.*

*During those times I was annoyed with her. I would tell her that if she would concentrate a little more, she could learn anything. I also felt that she was not giving one hundred percent. She would cry and tell me she could not do it. I was sure that she could. I told her that I wanted her to do it.*

*About this same time a friend's son was having some of the same problems. His teacher had suggested that he be tested for dyslexia. Although I had heard of dyslexia, I had never thought that it would be a part of my child's life or mine. Now, I was beginning to wonder. The similarities in these two children led me to think that Allison might be dyslexic. Maybe I should look into it.*

*I scheduled a conference with my daughter's teacher. It was agreed that she would be tested before the Christmas holidays. I was glad that something was finally being done.*

*When Allison was tested, her reading was at a kindergarten level. She was in the first grade and fourth month of school. She was nearly one year behind in her ability to pronounce and recognize words." (Paula Rosteet)*

## The Thunder in Other Lives-

Like Allison and her mom, many other children and their parents have experienced "thunder" in their lives. The following stories relate true experiences of some of these children before they were tested.

Please keep in mind that these stories, along with Allison's story, are not intended to give the impression that parents, teachers, or school administrators do not care about children. In most cases, they have done their best to help the children. Many times it is difficult to decide what to do. Remember one of the many purposes of this book is to give you better understanding of dyslexia and help you recognize it as a learning problem.

### Amanda's Story

Amanda's parents came to me during the spring semester of kindergarten. They were totally frustrated. She could not remember her birthday or phone number. Amanda was not consistent in recognizing the alphabet or remembering nursery rhymes.

Her parents kept telling me they knew she was smart. They were determined that she would learn the things she could not remember. They worked with her for hours at night. The more they worked, the more they became upset.

Her parents were also angry and worried because they had been told that Amanda would be in the low group in the first grade and would probably have to repeat first grade. This was based on Amanda's not having mastered the readiness skills set for kindergarten. Her parents felt that Amanda had not been taught properly and that there was something wrong with the kindergarten program. I knew that for many children it was an excellent program.

I suggested that, through the summer, they should set aside a limited time each day to work with Amanda in a positive manner. I gave Amanda's parents

some games and asked that they read many stories to her. They called me often during the summer. I would give them other suggestions designed to help Amanda learn. When I realized that Amanda was not learning as quickly as she should with the suggestions I had given, I admitted that she definitely had a problem. I told them I would check Amanda for specific problems which might determine if she should be tested for the dyslexia program. When I tested her, I was able to show that she had average intelligence, but some weaknesses were apparent in auditory memory (remembering what is heard) and in visual memory (remembering what is seen).

Her word recognition level was pre-kindergarten. She had no concept of word pronunciation or recognition. She did not know any letter sounds. She was then tested for the dyslexia program.

### Greg's Story

Greg was a fifth grader. His mother had been concerned all through elementary school. His teachers said he was doing fine. They did not see any problems. He was struggling with the grade-level reading book, but he was holding his own. His teachers said Greg was doing the best he could, but his mother felt this was not the true picture. They would spend hours at home every night trying to get all of his homework completed. He could not even think of anything to write for his writing assignments. His handwriting was very messy, while his spelling looked as though he was trying to create a whole new language.

Greg tolerated school but had frequent headaches which kept him at home. He really didn't think he was good at anything. He had almost decided that if he couldn't do things right, he should not bother to try.

Greg's parents had been in constant touch with his teachers. They had tried to get Greg to list, bring home, and complete assignments. He was punished for not doing this. His parents could not understand why he did not remember directions.

When the parents could not get the teachers to agree that he needed to be tested for dyslexia, they wrote a letter to the school district requesting that he be tested. That letter had to be honored, so he was tested. At that time Greg was a fifth grader with a 2.9 (second grade, ninth month) word recognition level.

### John's Story

John was tested in the summer before the seventh grade. He could never remember his homework and did not turn in assignments. His parents felt the teachers had not tried to help him or had not explained math problems to him. His mother wanted him to be tested for dyslexia because of complaints of his never remembering math processes and producing illegible handwriting.

When John was tested, he had a 6.7 (sixth grade, seventh month) word recognition level. This was only a few months behind his grade level, but he had more severe problems in other areas.

He was down on himself and thought there was no reason he should put forth any effort. He thought everyone was against him. He demanded to be the center of attention even if it meant engaging in inappropriate behavior. He answered every question even if he wasn't asked. He was not a pleasant child to work with because he thought he was always right.

### Charles' Story

Charles spent more time in the principal's office than in the classroom. His parents knew that basically he was a good child, but at school he just looked like trouble to everyone. I saw in him an extremely smart student, with a track record of being a trouble maker. He hardly had a chance for a successful education.

Charles' mom had read about dyslexia; she realized that Charles had many characteristics that were related to dyslexia. He had poor memory for directions and homework assignments, handwriting difficulties, and problems paying attention. Although he was very verbal and could have made a hundred on any test he could have answered orally, he hated writing reports or doing work that he could not do in his head.

His home life had not been stable. His parents had divorced, remarried, and were on the verge of a second divorce. He had been in several schools during his eight years of education. Inappropriate coping skills, as well as bad behavior, aggravated the problem.

Charles' mom requested that he be tested for the dyslexia program. The testing showed a very high intelligence, but also several dyslexic problems.

### Liza's Story

Liza was a college student who came to me for educational therapy. She had passed the state's basic skills test, graduated from high school, and completed one year of college. Her grades were passing except for one English class in college. She had definitely developed the coping skills needed to survive despite her difficulties. She had an enormous amount of determination to succeed.

When I screened her for educational therapy, she had characteristics of dyslexia. In contrast to her high level of accomplishment, she was working with a word recognition level of 3.5 (third grade, fifth month). Her written language skills were extremely weak as well.

### Mark's Story

Mark, an adult, saw my educational therapy sign. The word *dyslexia* caught his eye. He said he had read some information about the subject. He

thought he might be dyslexic, but he needed more information in order to gain a better understanding of it. He wanted to know the cure for dyslexia. I assured him that dyslexia is not a disease and that he could get help. He really felt that he was intelligent, but had been told all his life that he was lazy and worthless. Mark said he was very verbal and had been able to talk his way through his business career, but he was now ready to read and write better. Mark had a difficult time organizing his thoughts and reading. He had quit school, but had gone back and gotten his G.E.D.

I talked to Mark for a long time and recommended that he be screened for dyslexic characteristics. His screening showed that he had dyslexic characteristics. His word recognition skills were fourth grade level.

In Chapter 8 you can read the outcome of these stories, which we have called, "Beyond the Rainbow".



Authors are (left to right): Dr. Patricia Dodds, Nancy Robeson, and Paula Rosteet. Dr. Patricia Dodds has taught dyslexic students for more than 30 years. She is a consultant and has designed dyslexia programs for school districts including Goose Creek Consolidated School District in Baytown, Texas. Nancy Robeson has taught for over 17 years with 11 years of experience teaching dyslexic students in Goose Creek CISD. She has established an educational clinic and private school. Paula Rosteet is a parent of a dyslexic child. She has assisted with therapy for dyslexic students.



## CHAPTER 3 THE RAIN

### What is Dyslexia?

**Help!** My child is dyslexic!

I always thought that dyslexia applied only to children who saw things backwards or only to children who could not read.

These are common misconceptions about dyslexia. Here are others that you may have heard:

Dyslexics are stupid.

Dyslexia is caused by a poor environment.

Dyslexia is a contagious disease.

There is no help for dyslexics.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the above statements. The following pages will help you recognize misconceptions about dyslexia and understand some of the problems that a dyslexic child faces. Recommendations are included after the discussions of specific problems.

Dyslexia refers to the inability of an individual of normal to superior intelligence to acquire reading skills on a level that is equal with his intellectual ability. It is basically a disability or dysfunction in brain processing during the learning of language: reading, writing, and spelling.

There are specific sensory dysfunctions that are found in individuals with dyslexia. Included are those in the areas of visual perception, auditory perception, sequencing and memory. These problems appear to be the underlying causes of dyslexia. The manner in which a person processes visually, auditorily, and motorically seems to distinguish those with dyslexia from those without dyslexia.

What does all of this mean? It means that a dyslexic person may be able to hear, but may have trouble remembering what he hears. He may have 20/20 vision, but not be able to attach meaning to symbols. These are just a couple of characteristics of dyslexia.

Dyslexia (dis lex e a) is neurologically based and developmental in nature. In other words, the problem is the way the brain interprets and processes what is seen, heard, or felt.

Development in the specific areas of auditory perception, visual perception, and language processing stops before it is complete. All of the characteristics of dyslexic school children are seen in younger children. It is normal for children six and under to write some letters backwards. It is normal for a four or five-year-old to remember only one or two-step directions. A problem arises only when the development of these areas stops before it is completed. Not only do these areas need to be developed, but each child must be taught using his unique strengths and employing specific methods designed to enable the child to learn to his full potential.

In order to help you understand about dyslexia and other learning disabilities in more detail, the following section will describe specific areas of sensory perception and the characteristics of children with specific disabilities in those areas. Other characteristics often seen in children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities will also be discussed.

All children with dyslexia will not have problems in all areas. In fact, it is most unusual for all the specific problem areas to show up in one child. It is not unusual, however, for one or two specific problems to be evident in individuals who would not be said to have dyslexia. The problems that are seen can range from difficulty with certain tasks to total inability to do them. Some of a child's dyslexic problems may be masked because he has figured out a way to cope in that particular area.

One term that will be used throughout this book is "multi-sensory". Multi-sensory means using more than one sense when teaching or learning. It is often referred to as the VATK (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic) method. This method involves seeing, hearing, feeling, and touching all at the same time. By using multiple senses, information is introduced into several areas of the brain simultaneously or consecutively. All effective methods used with dyslexic children utilize more than one sense.

## AUDITORY PERCEPTION

**AUDITORY PERCEPTION** refers to how the brain processes what is heard. Some specific areas of auditory perception that may cause problems for a child, if underdeveloped, are as follows:

**AUDITORY SEQUENTIAL MEMORY** is the ability to remember in the correct order what is heard. A child with sequencing problems has a very difficult time in getting and being organized. He also has a difficult time in breaking down a large task into small steps. He does not know where to begin.

An example of sequencing difficulty is when a child is told to go clean his room. An hour later he is standing in the middle of the floor just looking or playing. He does not know where to start.

The following characteristics are often seen in a child with auditory sequential memory problems:

- \_\_\_ Cannot follow several directions in order
- \_\_\_ Cannot name the days of the week in order
- \_\_\_ Cannot tell you the months of the year or the order of the months
- \_\_\_ Cannot sequence events of a story
- \_\_\_ Cannot sequence events or directions

*Activities* to strengthen auditory sequential memory:

1. Have your child retell stories - "The Three Bears" or "The Three Little Pigs" are good for younger children. The older children can listen to stories that are read aloud and recall the sequence of events in the story. (\*Adults can retell vacation trips, news events, sports events, or daily activities.)
2. Lead your child in playing "I Went Shopping" - You begin by saying, "I went shopping and I bought a \_\_\_\_". You name something for the blank. Then your child repeats what you said and then says the same phrase including what he bought. This continues until each player has had a turn, or if using the alphabet as a guide, until every letter of the alphabet has been used. Variations to this game are: "I'm going to California, and I'm packing my bags and taking \_\_\_\_." Also, "I found my grandmother's treasure chest and in it I saw a \_\_\_\_." (\*Adults can play this with their children. Adult variations can be "I am going to a party and I'm taking \_\_\_\_." "I'm going fishing and I'm taking \_\_\_\_.")
- 3.\* Tape different kinds of environmental sounds. Have your child listen to the tape and then recall, in order, the names of animals that were heard.
- 4.\* Give oral directions for making an art project or a pattern, such as stringing dyed popcorn and cranberries, or making a paper snowflake.
5. Begin a nursery rhyme or a familiar story. Tell the first part, and let your child complete the phrases of the rhyme or the events of the story. (\*Adults can use familiar historical events.)
- 6.\* Emphasize the before-and-after concept with letters of the alphabet or numbers in order. Ask your child what comes before and after a given number or a certain letter..
- 7.\* Give a series of numbers like 20, 30, \_\_, 50, have your child tell you what is missing.  
(The \* activities are also suggested for older children or adults.)

**AUDITORY MEMORY** is the ability to remember what one is told. This may be short term (immediate) or long term (next day, next month). If a child cannot remember what is said to him, he will find it impossible to follow several directions given at one time. The following characteristics are often seen in a child with auditory memory problems:

- Cannot remember what you tell him
- Cannot name the days of the week in order
- Cannot tell you how many days there are in a week even if he can say them
- Cannot tell you the months of the year
- Cannot tell you his address or phone number
- Cannot tell you his birthday
- Cannot recite the alphabet without singing it
- Cannot remember directions at home or at school
- Forgets supplies or homework
- Has short attention span when listening

*Activities to strengthen auditory memory:*

- 1.\* Help your child practice following directions - At first, the directions need to be short and simple. Start out with one step and increase steps as they find success. Directions on how to do things and for drawing symbols are useful. ("Simon Says" is a good game.)
- 2.\* Play "I am Thinking of"- Your child names an object. You or another child will name the first object and a new object. This continues as the players repeat what has been said and then add a new object each time.  
Example: Your child says, "I am thinking of a boat." The second child says, "I am thinking of a boat and a car." The third child says, "I am thinking of a boat, a car, and a truck." This process continues.
3. Help your child learn nursery rhymes or poems.
- 4.\* Repeat a series of numbers to your child. Begin with 3 numbers and increase

as they find success. Have your child repeat the series of numbers to you. Repeating the series of numbers builds memory.

5.\* Help your child learn the alphabet and repeat it without singing.

6.\* Read a story aloud to your child. Then ask your child questions to recall details of the story.

**AUDITORY CLOSURE** is the ability to put the parts of what is heard into a meaningful whole when interference or distraction makes some parts difficult to hear. A child with this problem finds it hard to complete a partial sentence that is said aloud to him. He has a great deal of difficulty in drawing meaning from what he has heard. He takes things literally. When trying to sound out a word, he may be able to say each sound, but when asked to put them together, he will come up with a word that is not even close.

The following characteristics are often seen in children with auditory closure problems:

- Cannot understand what he hears
- Cannot focus in on the one speaking
- Cannot blend sounds together for words
- Cannot write notes when listening to a speaker

*Activities* to strengthen auditory closure:

1.\* Give sentences for your child to complete. "John went to the store to \_\_\_\_\_." Give the beginnings of poems or rhymes and let your child complete them.

2.\* Since completion of anything oral is the key factor, have your child complete riddles.

3.\* Have your child complete unfinished stories. Read the beginning of a story to your child, then have him create an ending.

4. Play "Put it Together" - You break a word down into sounds "c" "a" "t". Have your child tell you what it is. He can also break down words for you to guess. (Do not put an "uh" with the sounds. Cat is not "Cuh" "ah" "tuh". It is "k ah t".)

**AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION** is the ability to tell the difference in spoken words that sound alike. This can cause all kinds of confusion when a child "hears" one word for another. One way to understand what the child is experiencing is to remember a time when someone has told you something and you heard something completely different. You wonder how that could happen. There may have been noise or something that distracted your attention. Now think about how it would affect you if this happened to you often, even without outside noise or distraction. Life would be confusing.

The following characteristics are often seen in children with auditory discrimination problems:

- \_\_\_ Gives answers that have nothing to do with what he was asked
- \_\_\_ Does not recognize similar sounds as in rhyming words

*Activities* to strengthen auditory discrimination:

1.\* Have your child listen to words that are the same or different, rhyming words, loud/soft sounds, high/low sounds, near/far sounds, vowels, initial sounds, middle sounds, and ending sounds. When your child is listening to these, he should try to determine the difference or likeness.

2.\* Hide a metronome or ticking clock and have your child find it by following the noise.

3. Using magazines, have your child find pictures that have certain sounds in

common such as beginning, middle, ending, blends, and vowels. Paste them on cards. Have your child name the pictures and identify the sounds.

4.\* Make a card with four pictures. Three of the pictures should have one common characteristic that has to do with sound. Let your child decide which of the three are alike and how they are alike.

5.\* You may purchase Lotto Bingo from a local toy store. It is a game that deals with initial, ending, vowels, and other sounds. Play it with your child.

6.\* Give a sound orally and have your child write down the letter for the sound.

7.\* You will need an electric music board and a blindfold. Blindfold your child and play one of the instrument sounds on the board. He should guess which instrument you played.

8.\* Tape record different sounds. Have your child name the source of the sound.

9.\* Have your child play musical chairs. The chairs are arranged in a row side by side facing in alternating directions. Have one fewer chair than the number of players. The music begins and everyone walks around the chairs. When the music stops, everyone tries to find a chair. The person who does not get a chair is out of the game. The game continues until there is only one person left.

10. Tell a specific story using a certain word over and over. (You will need to tell the group what the special word is before they begin.) Example: The Three Pigs. Everytime the word pig is said, your child will raise the right or left hand. This can be any story. (\*Adults can choose a familiar word used in a news report. As they listen to the evening news, they can count how many times the chosen word is used.)

11. You may play this with your child and several friends. Give several children the name of environments that animals live in, like the jungle or the water. Each child should have the name of a different environment. The names of animals are



called. Each time the animal is found in the specific environment, the child raises his hand or steps forward. You may keep score.

12. Give your child oral questions to solve:

Name everything that is \_\_\_\_\_ (Specific color, size, or shape.)

Name things that live in a house. Name things found in a kitchen.

(\*For adults use higher level categories like certain coins, tools, or sports.)

13. Play "Mother Cat and Her Kittens" with your child and friends.. One person is chosen to be Mother Cat. All of the others are kittens. The kittens hide while mother counts to a certain number. Then she tries to find the kittens. The kittens give her clues by mew ing.

14.\* Blindfold your child. Then, while he sits blindfolded, you move around the room talking and making noises. Your child has to tell you where you are standing in relation to where he is sitting.

15.\* Give your child directions using prepositional words. Give oral directions using in, on, above, behind, or any other prepositional words.

**SOUND/SYMBOL ASSOCIATION** is the ability to associate letter sounds with the letter symbols. In order to figure out new words, a child needs to be able to "sound out" those words. It is impossible to memorize the spelling of all the words in the English language; therefore, the ability to use phonetic skills is necessary. Approximately 85% of the English language is phonetic.

The following characteristics are usually seen in the child with problems in sound/ symbol association.

- Cannot sound out words
- Miscalls basic words (may remember the wrong words)
- Has difficulty learning spelling words
- Cannot give the correct sound for the letter
- Cannot remember sounds for combinations of letters.

*Activities* to strengthen sound/symbol association:

1. Using 3-D letters, have your child trace the letter and say the sound. This needs to be repeated several times.
2. Have your child make the letter from clay and trace it, saying the sound.
3. Show your child a picture of the letter and of an object that begins with that sound. Have your child trace the letter with the index finger on his dominant hand, make the sound, and name the word.

## VISUAL PERCEPTION

**VISUAL PERCEPTION** is how the brain processes what is seen. What is seen must be blended with previously learned or meaningful visual experiences. This can present very complex problems if specific areas have not developed. If those areas have not been developed by the age of seven or eight, someone must intervene and help to develop them. If there is no intervention, the adult will continue to have many of the problems experienced as a child.

**VISUAL SEQUENTIAL MEMORY** is the ability to recognize and remember the order of things seen. Many dyslexics are terrible spellers. Those who have visual sequencing problems, cannot look at a word and recognize whether it is spelled correctly or incorrectly. Often the same child will take forever to get dressed and then likely leave something off.

The following characteristics are often seen in children who have visual sequential memory problems.

- Does not remember all of his assignments
- Does not remember how to do something that has been shown to him
- Cannot remember or write the alphabet in the correct order

- Difficulty in spelling words
- Writes letters for a word in the wrong order (although they can spell the word orally)
- Cannot read and follow directions for building or creating something
- Miscalls words by reversing or putting the letters in the incorrect order
- Has difficulty with written math problems
- Cannot remember the order of events he has read
- Writes letters incorrectly
- Cannot complete dot-to-dot pictures
- Cannot put things in order according to specific characteristics
- Cannot complete a pattern of beads or other objects
- Cannot remember the number or letter that come before and after a given number or letter
- Cannot stack rings on a peg correctly
- Cannot write his name with the letters in the correct order
- Cannot sequence numbers
- Cannot reproduce letters or numbers in a given sequence
- Cannot sequence pictures in order to tell a story

*Activities* to strengthen visual sequential memory:

- 1.\* Have your child complete stringing bead patterns.
- 2.\* Have your child complete block patterns.
- 3.\* Have your child follow a process by reading directions for recipes, models or constructing block buildings. He can write his own directions to create a process.
- 4.\* Read a story to your child or have him read a story. He can draw 4 to 5 pictures to represent the story. Let him place the pictures in the right order to tell the story. (Adults can read news articles.)
- 5.\* Using 3-D alphabet letters, have your child place the letters in alphabetical

order beginning on his left side.

6.\* Have your child use letter cards to spell words.

7.\* Obtain worksheets that have scrambled letters for words or scrambled words for sentences. Have your child complete the worksheets.

8.\* Have your child take folded paper and make snowflakes or airplanes.

9.\* Have your child complete dot to dot pictures.

10.\* Comic strips are excellent for sequencing. Cut them apart and glue them to cards. Have your child rearrange them to tell the story. Encourage him to write a story for the comic strips.

11. Have your child do mat weaving activities.

**POSITION IN SPACE** is the position in which something is perceived. When there is a dyslexic problem, letters or words are "seen" one way one time and a different way the next. This is the area where "seeing backwards" is evident. The problem is that the child does not see backwards all the time. (If he did, he would have no problem.) One time the "b" looks like a "d", the next time it can look like a "p" or "q". This does not affect just reading and writing. It affects his whole world. The child with position in space problems is a toucher. He touches everything trying to anchor his world. He will slide his hand along the wall when walking and be fussed at for doing it. Sometimes the words will "fall off" the book, jump, and even disappear. A six year old described his position in space problem as: "The words look like they are floating on water. If I could just freeze the water, it would be okay."

The following characteristics are usually seen in the child with problems in position in space.

\_\_\_ Reverses symbols at times

- \_\_\_ Transposes numbers when writing and reading
- \_\_\_ Sees symbols or words backwards sometimes
- \_\_\_ Cannot distinguish between b,d,p,q
- \_\_\_ Loses place on page
- \_\_\_ Has a very difficult time copying from chalkboard
- \_\_\_ Loses assignments
- \_\_\_ Cannot find what he is looking for
- \_\_\_ Cannot work puzzles appropriate for age
- \_\_\_ Gets lost easily
- \_\_\_ Gets to class without materials
- \_\_\_ Is unable to attend to task
- \_\_\_ Miscalls basic words
- \_\_\_ Cannot recognize body parts
- \_\_\_ Cannot remember left and right
- \_\_\_ Forgets where to start reading or writing
- \_\_\_ Has great difficult in computation if math problem involves more than one-digit.

*Activities* to strengthen position in space:

1. Have your child complete block patterns using pattern cards.
2. Have your child identify left and right on self, others, and objects.
- 3.\* Using positional words, give your child the following commands: jump over, climb on, sit beside.
- 4.\* Have your child play follow the leader. He is to do whatever the leader is doing.
5. Using pegboards and colored pegs, have your child make a mirror image.
- 6.\* Have your child play with a ball: roll, throw, kick, and catch.

7.\* Have your child walk backward, throw backward, and fall or sit backward on a trampoline.

8.\* Provide your child an obstacle course that includes climbing and crawling.

9. Provide your child puzzle books with activities for identifying likenesses and differences.

10. Using pattern blocks or colored tiles, have your child build a design. Then have him build another design just like it. An extension of this activity is to use only one color of pattern blocks or tiles.

**SPATIAL RELATIONS** means to perceive objects in relation to other objects. A child with spatial relations problems will bump into things because he cannot judge distances. Spacing in writing will not be correct. Words may run into other words or spaces may be left in the middle of words. Such a child gets attacked by other children because he is always bumping into them or their desks. This is also the child who reaches for a glass and knocks it over, not because he is careless, but because he cannot judge distances. He may intend to sit down and miss his chair. He is not acting silly or trying to get attention. He has misjudged where the chair is in relation to himself.

These characteristics are usually seen in children with spatial relation problems:

- Cannot remember the left or right side of something
- Cannot copy accurately from a chalkboard
- Cannot copy a given design
- Cannot write within a given space and space letters correctly
- Cannot walk on a straight line or beam
- Miscalls words when reading
- Cannot work puzzles appropriate for age
- Cannot do pattern block designs
- Cannot reproduce shapes or symbols in correct relation with others
- Cannot paste things accurately on paper

*Activities* to strengthen spatial relations:

1. Have your child look at pictures and tell where something is in the picture in relation to something else in the picture. Example: The car is in front of the house. The boy is beside the man.
- 2.\* Have your child complete puzzles appropriate for age.
3. Have your child paste things on paper.
4. Have your child retell stories using hand and finger puppets.
- 5.\* Have your child create objects with clay.
6. Have your child complete lacing cards.
- 7.\* Have your child copy patterns using blocks.
8. Have your child cut pictures from magazines, then he cuts the pictures apart for puzzles.

**VISUAL DISCRIMINATION** is the ability to note differences and likenesses among geometric forms, letters, and words. It means being able to perceive the shape, size, and positional aspects of an object; for example, distinguishing a circle from a square.

These characteristics are usually seen in children with visual discrimination problems:

- \_\_\_ Cannot copy from the chalkboard
- \_\_\_ Miscalls basic words
- \_\_\_ Cannot match objects
- \_\_\_ Cannot sort objects by categories
- \_\_\_ Cannot recognize common objects

- \_\_\_ Cannot discriminate objects by color
- \_\_\_ Cannot classify food groups, shapes
- \_\_\_ Cannot put objects in order by size, length, or width
- \_\_\_ Cannot match letters
- \_\_\_ Cannot match symbols
- \_\_\_ Cannot recognize similarities and differences of visual materials
- \_\_\_ Cannot classify by size and texture
- \_\_\_ Cannot classify by color, shape, size, or combination of elements
- \_\_\_ Cannot match 3-D letters of alphabet with printed letters to form words
- \_\_\_ Cannot pick details out of a picture

*Activities* to strengthen visual discrimination:

- 1.\* Have your child do worksheets showing pictures that have differences and likeness.
- 2.\* Have your child sort objects.
- 3.\* Have your child find specific objects among hidden pictures.
4. Have your child use attribute blocks for sorting and classification activities.

**VISUAL TRACKING** is the ability to follow an object with the eyes. Difficulties arise when eyes are not tracking together. A child may track with the left eye for something on the left, up to the midline, and change to the right eye for something on the right side. The child literally changes eye at the midline. Some children cannot cross the midline with their eyes. They will move the book, paper, or their body to compensate for not being able to move their eyes from left to right. Many of these children move their head instead of their eyes. This takes a lot of energy. When their eyes do not track smoothly they may lose their place, as well.



These characteristics are usually seen in a child with visual tracking problems:

- Cannot keep place on line when reading
- Cannot follow moving object with eyes without moving the head
- Moves body when writing
- Has problems with depth perception
- Keeps book or paper to one side of the body

*Activities* to strengthen visual tracking:

- 1.\* Have your child follow moving objects with his eyes. Using a ball on a string, swing the ball slowly in front of his eyes. His eyes should follow the movement easily without moving his head.
2. Have your child follow the end of a pencil. You hold the pencil and move it from right to left, around in a circle, and diagonally. Move it very slowly when beginning. He should follow the pencil without moving his head.
3. Have the child hold the pencil and do the above.
4. Have your child follow mazes and paths with his eyes.
5. Have your child play computer games that require following objects with his eyes.

**VISUAL MOTOR COORDINATION** means being able to coordinate the movement of the eye with the movement of the hand. Poor eye-hand coordination results in poor handwriting, not being able to color within the line or being able to trace a line. It is most important for a child or adult with this problem to remember to let the eye lead the hand.

The following characteristics are usually seen in children with visual motor coordination problems:

- \_\_ Cannot draw geometric symbols
- \_\_ Cannot copy accurately
- \_\_ Has illegible handwriting
- \_\_ Cannot find two objects in a picture and connect them with a line
- \_\_ Cannot complete simple designs
- \_\_ Cannot string beads
- \_\_ Cannot do lacing cards
- \_\_ Cannot draw lines within a confined space
- \_\_ Has trouble threading a needle, will usually needle the thread
- \_\_ Cannot complete a maze
- \_\_ Cannot complete dot-to-dot drawings
- \_\_ Cannot cut and paste pictures
- \_\_ Cannot put simple toys together
- \_\_ Cannot hit a nail with a hammer
- \_\_ Cannot do paper folding activities
- \_\_ Has trouble catching or hitting a ball
- \_\_ Cannot trace over a line or around a pattern

*Activities* to strengthen visual motor coordination:

- 1.\* Have your child complete lacing cards.
2. Have your child cut out and paste pictures.
- 3.\* Have your child do block building activities.
4. Have your child snap, button, or zip clothing.
- 5.\* Have your child trace stencils.
- 6.\* Have your child complete mazes.
7. Have your child outline all pictures before coloring.

8. Have your child to dot-to-dot exercises. Teach your child to place pencil or crayon on the beginning dot, then look at next dot and keeping his eyes on this dot, draw the line to it. In this way, he will draw straight lines.

9. Have your child learn to sew with a needle and thread.

10. Have your child do plastic canvas handicrafts.

11. Encourage your child to do crewel or embroidery.

12. Have your child complete paint by number pictures.

**FIGURE GROUND** is the ability to visually distinguish the foreground from the background. My favorite example of a child with this problem is Rex Wayne. After showing him an eight inch cow and asking what the picture was, he told me it was a bird. I asked him to show me the bird. He did! In the two-inch tall tree behind the cow was a 1/16 inch bird. He missed the cow, but not the bird. Words written on pictures drive these children wild. They cannot screen out the unimportant things. In fact, they focus on the unimportant things and miss the important ones.

The following characteristics are usually seen in the child with figure ground problems.

- \_\_\_ Cannot sort objects into categories
- \_\_\_ Cannot find or trace symbols that are hidden within a picture
- \_\_\_ Cannot find or trace shapes in a picture
- \_\_\_ Cannot copy from the chalkboard
- \_\_\_ Cannot find hidden words among other letters
- \_\_\_ Cannot find hidden pictures within a picture
- \_\_\_ Is disorganized
- \_\_\_ Appears careless in work
- \_\_\_ Is unable to recognize words

- \_\_\_ Cannot select one thing from a group
- \_\_\_ Cannot find page or place on page
- \_\_\_ Is unable to solve familiar problems when presented on a crowded page
- \_\_\_ Does not notice capital letters, periods, commas
- \_\_\_ Cannot pick out important details
- \_\_\_ Skips pages and sections

*Activities* for strengthening figure ground:

- 1.\* Use hidden pictures. Inexpensive books can be purchased that include hidden pictures. Your child needs to locate the hidden object and trace it with a pencil to get the complete picture.
2. Using a coloring book, have your child trace a certain part of the picture.
- 3.\* Using a picture with something wrong (for example, object upside down), have your child point to what is wrong and tell about it.
4. Using magazines, have your child cut out objects and categorize them by their color, size, shape, or material of which they are made. (\* For adults, use picture cards and sort them.)
- 5.\* Have your child sort objects from a group. Use a mixture of different kinds of beans, beads, etc.
- 6.\* Have your child find all rectangular shapes (tables, doors), circles (clocks, tops of lamp shades) squares, and other shapes in a picture of a room. Find colors in a room.
- 7.\* Have your child find articles. Tell your child to get something from another room, off a shelf, or from someone else. If he cannot locate it, help him by asking questions about how he can find it.

8. Place several objects in a box and have your child pick out the one you name.

**VISUAL CLOSURE** is seeing things as a whole unit (a picture or a word). It is the ability to fill in the missing parts in an incomplete picture. Visual closure difficulties can prevent a child from completing a visual symbol or image. A child with this problem cannot deal with poorly reproduced worksheets.

These characteristics are usually seen in children with visual closure problems:

- \_\_\_ Cannot complete a partially drawn picture
- \_\_\_ Cannot complete puzzles for appropriate age
- \_\_\_ Cannot complete simple designs
- \_\_\_ Has difficulty with spelling
- \_\_\_ Does not say the entire word
- \_\_\_ Has difficulty learning to read
- \_\_\_ Leaves out problems or parts of worksheet
- \_\_\_ Does not complete assignments
- \_\_\_ Cannot copy his name

*Activities* to strengthen visual closure:

- 1.\* Have your child use workbooks that contain incomplete pictures. These can be purchased at a low price.
- 2.\* Have your child make designs using pegs and pegboards.
- 3.\* Using a set of 4 to 6 pictures, your child can tell a story or explain something in a sequence. Remove one picture from the group. Have your child tell which picture is missing.
- 4.\* Have your child complete puzzles appropriate for age.
- 5.\* Have your child complete dot-to-dot pictures. Encourage your child to guess what the picture will be.

6.\* Have your child complete hidden word puzzles.

7.\* Take a full picture from a magazine or coloring book. Cut the picture diagonally. Glue the left side of the picture on a piece of paper. Then have your child draw the right side of the picture with or without looking at the right side of the magazine picture.

8. Have your child complete color by number activities. Before he begins, have him tell you what he thinks the picture will be.

**VISUAL MEMORY** is recalling what has been seen.

These characteristics are usually seen in children with visual memory problems.

- Cannot remember words by sight
- Cannot transfer the spelling of words learned from the spelling test to written material
- Copies one letter at a time from the chalkboard
- Cannot remember the place when copying
- Cannot write the alphabet
- Cannot remember the vocabulary words
- Cannot remember what he has read
- Cannot remember names of letters
- Cannot remember names of numbers
- Cannot draw geometric symbols from memory
- Cannot reproduce letters from memory
- Cannot recognize or reproduce his name
- Cannot reproduce patterns from memory
- Cannot draw a man
- Cannot remember what he has seen

### *Activities to strengthen Visual Memory:*

- 1.\* Using three to six blocks, beads or chips of different colors, line them up in a row. Have your child close his eyes while you remove one of the items. When he opens his eyes, he is to name the missing item. Also, line them up and let him look at the blocks. Then remove the blocks and have your child duplicate the pattern. Use a small number of objects at first and, as your child finds success, add more.
- 2.\* Show your child designs on a sheet of paper. Let him study the sheet for a few minutes. Then remove the sheet and have your child make the same design on his sheet of paper.
- 3.\* Show your child a tray of three to ten objects. After a few minutes have him close his eyes and you remove one object from the tray. When he opens his eyes, have him tell which object is missing.
- 4.\* Show your child five pictures which can be (or may not be) related in some way. After studying the pictures and he closes his eyes. You can remove one picture. The child opens his eyes and tells you which picture is gone.
5. Your child may play this game with the family or friends. Have the group stand in a circle. One person is chosen to stand in the middle. Let him close his eyes while one person silently leaves the room. He then opens his eyes and sees who is missing.
- 6.\* Encourage your child to use the multi-sensory method of seeing, tracing, and saying aloud what you are learning. This will strengthen memory for spelling words, math facts, telephone numbers and anything you have difficulty remembering.
- 7.\* Use worksheets form Visual Memory workbooks to help your child.
- 8.\* Play the ABC Travel Game. While riding in a car, everyone looks for a word that begins with the letter a. When it is found, they say the word, then they look

found at the beginning of words.

9. Encourage your child to use the Fernald Method (VATK) to learn new words. The multi-sensory process explained in the book, Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects by G. M. Fernald, published by PRO-ED, Inc. 1988, may be used to learn any new thing. It is effective even if one is not dyslexic.

10. Have your child use screen wire and place paper over it. Let him write the word on the paper with a crayon. Remove the wire. He will have a bumpy word that helps with tactile learning (touching).

**DIRECTIONALITY** is the ability to tell left from right. The child or adult may never learn to distinguish his left from his right, but he does learn to cope. Still it is never automatic. Some will wear their watch on the left wrist and look to see which is their left before giving verbal directions. When told to turn left, they may go right. One should never follow the verbal street directions a dyslexic gives. Instead one should watch to see which way he is pointing. We are not born knowing that we read or write from left to right. This is a learned ability. It is a lot harder to achieve that ability when one cannot remember which is left.

These characteristics are usually seen in children with directional problems:

- Cannot remember where to start when writing
- Writes letters from bottom to top
- Reads words backwards
- Miscalls letters (b,d,p,q)
- Draws circles clockwise
- Does not understand left and right positions
- Does not know right from left sides of his body
- Does not begin on the left to read
- Does not begin on the left to write
- Does not correctly follow directions with positional words like up, down, left
- Gets lost even when going to a familiar place



*Activities* to strengthen left to right progression and directionality:

- 1.\* Have your child print words using a green marker for the first letter (go/initial sound) and the red marker for the last letter (stop/final sound).
- 2.\* Have your child make words from clay letters.
3. Draw around a child's left hand, cut it out and tape it on the left top corner of the desk.
4. On strips of paper, use a pin and punch out the letters of a word that is difficult to learn.. Have your child trace the word with his index finger.
5. Put a star on the left side of your child's paper showing where to begin.
- 6.\* Cut out pictures of things on the left or right side of something or people facing left or right. Have your child glue these on sheets of paper labeled left and right.
7. Using a calendar, show your child how the days of the week begin on the left.
8. In order to remember the left hand, give your child a ring or star to put on his left hand.
9. Also give your child different color gloves to distinguish left from right. Green color can be used for left and red for right.
10. Play "Simon Says" or "Hokey Pokey" with your child. Give him instructions to raise right hand, left leg, etc.
11. Have your child follow these commands and others:

Take your right/left hand and touch your left/right shoulder and then your left toe.

Raise your right/left hand and touch your left/right arm.

Put your left/right hand on your right/left elbow.

Put your right/left hand on your left/right leg.

Cross your left/right leg over your right/left leg.

Touch your left/right ear with your right/left hand.

Touch your left/right eye with your right/left hand.

Put your left arm and right arm down.

March starting with your left, then right foot.

Move a ball or object across the floor using one foot or the other.

12.\* Squeeze a ball with left hand. Pick up objects with left hand.

13.\* Draw lines from left to right.

14.\* Place objects in a straight line left to right.

15.\* Begin with running or jogging steps with right foot, left foot, skip forward, turn left, right and continue with variations of directions.

There are other characteristics that are seen in learning disabled/dyslexic children. They help to identify the LD /dyslexic child. A short description of each will be given.

**MIXED DOMINANCE.** Most people have one dominant side of their body. They will be right handed, right eyed, right footed and right eared. Many

children and adults with learning problems have mixed dominance. Some people without any learning problems will have mixed dominance, also. We note this characteristic is present but do not try to change it. Often, the only problem seen is some clumsiness. Such a person may tend to trip over his own feet at times. He may also find it difficult to shoot a rifle.

**PERSEVERATION.** Perseveration is difficulty in shifting from one activity to another. An extreme example can be seen in a child who keeps on writing off the page. They get "stuck" on one thing. They may give the same answer for every problem. Once they go into this "mode", usually, the way to get them out generally is to move them physically to something else.

**HYPERACTIVITY AND SHORT ATTENTION SPAN.** Hyperactivity is seen when a child is so active that he cannot stay still. There are many children who are very, very active, without being hyperactive. Hyperactivity or hyperkinesis is a medical condition and should be addressed as such. For example, no one can sit still when trying to do something he cannot do, but if a child cannot sit still while watching his favorite TV program, he should be examined for a possible medical problem. A child of six can attend to a task for 15 to 20 minutes. (Adults do not do much better.) No one task should be longer than 15 to 20 minutes. Children need to move. Keep that in mind when working with your child. Keep harder tasks to even shorter periods of time.

A child might have a short attention span without hyperactivity. A child with a short attention span may not be able to focus on one thing for more than a minute or two. This is seen in only a small portion of learning disabled children and can cause serious problems. When working with such a child, try to minimize distractions and help the child to focus on what he is doing. Start with very short periods of time then slowly expand the time period. A kitchen timer is excellent to use.

**RETRIEVAL PROBLEMS** or "Now you know it, now you don't." The dyslexic or learning disabled child can learn something and do it perfectly day after day and then suddenly not be able to do it anymore. It is in his brain; he

just cannot find it. This can be understood by comparing memory to a huge filing room. Something is learned and then filed away to be retrieved whenever it is needed. A dyslexic or LD child will file it but cannot go back and retrieve it. It is there, but he does not know where. By using multi-sensory methods, the child is able to file it in several places and thus has a better chance of retrieving it when he needs it.

Teachers find, after many years of teaching and observing children with dyslexia, dysgraphia and other learning disabilities, that using the tactile-kines-  
thetic (touch and movement) methods enable children to retrieve and process words more easily. The child has been taught that, when he comes to a word he does not recognize, he should start writing it with his index (pointing) finger, and often the word will come to mind.

**CONCEPT OF TIME.** Many children with learning disabilities have difficulty in learning to tell time. The digital watch has been a life saver. Kids may still not really have the concept of time, although they can read the numbers off of a clock. Children at the elementary age slowly develop a sense of time. If you ask a six year old how long he has been working on a worksheet, he may tell you two minutes or two hours. He really does not have the concept of time. This is normal. However, when a sixteen-year-old does not know if it has been two minutes or two hours, it can cause problems, especially when he is taking tests or doing other activities that have a time frame.

People with a poor concept of time are consistently late. They may not be rude or careless, but simply cannot judge how long it will take them to do a task, such as, getting dressed or driving a certain distance. This problem bothers other people more than it bothers the one with the problem.

**FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS.** Many children with learning disabilities will have fine motor problems which interfere with holding a pencil, writing, drawing, playing a piano, or typing with speed. When writing, the child with fine motor problems will move his whole arm instead of just the fingers or

hand. Some children with poor fine motor skills will have excellent gross motor skills, be well coordinated and even outstanding athletes. In turn, some children with excellent fine motor skills have major problems in large muscle coordination. They draw and write beautifully, but are very clumsy on their feet.

There are children with problems in both areas. The parents need to encourage as many physical activities as possible to help the child develop better motor control. The child should not be pushed into an organized sport if he does not want to participate. Encourage individual activities, such as, swimming, climbing trees, walking straight lines, running, jumping, and hopping. Find something that the child enjoys and encourage and praise him in his efforts.

**DYSGRAPHIA.** Dysgraphia is the inability to express one's self in writing. A child who cannot copy from the chalkboard may not be dysgraphic. If he can write a sentence that expresses his thoughts, then he has a visual perceptual problem and not dysgraphia. The dysgraphic child may be able to copy anything without a problem. However, his handwriting will deteriorate when given a dictated sentence. His handwriting, spelling, and syntax (putting words in the correct order or using the correct tense) will become much worse when he is trying to express his own ideas or knowledge on paper, because of his difficulty in trying to retrieve and organize thoughts.

**SPELLING.** There are good spellers and bad spellers. The majority of dyslexic children are bad spellers who probably will never become good spellers. Their spelling ability may be improved by teaching them spelling rules, but they will always need a dictionary, spell-check, or secretary to correct their spelling errors. Making 100 on a spelling test does not mean a thing if one does not spell words correctly when writing a letter.

When practicing for a spelling test, do not have your child spell the words out loud. Spelling is for writing; therefore, if you want to check your child, have him write the words. Saying and writing are two different processes which, with dyslexic or dysgraphic children, may never meet. The Fernald Method ( page 96) should be used when studying spelling. Just writing the words twenty five times really does not help.

**SCOTOPIC SENSITIVITY.** Scotopic sensitivity exists when certain bands of light cause a person to see distortions. About 25% of dyslexic children have this problem. Improvement can be achieved by using colored overlays that are, in effect, filters or colored lenses. The lenses or colored overlays do not solve the problem of dyslexia. They do solve one of the problems a child may have. If you are interested in obtaining more information about this subject, see the Appendix for the address of the Irlin Institute.

**CREATIVITY.** Most dyslexics are very creative. They seem to be right-brain thinkers in many ways. This makes school much harder for them because the American educational system is very left-brained. Everything must be done in a logical, sequential way. A right-brain thinker does not bother with sequence and logic. All information is processed at once, and the answers just pop out. This drives some teachers crazy. The right-brained person cannot explain how he got the answer. Most great inventions or discoveries were not really arrived at through logic and sequence. The idea or solution just popped into the inventor's mind. They are global thinkers and learners. They have wonderful ideas for stories, but writing detailed sentences to support those ideas is difficult for them.

A dyslexic child can do many things with his hands. If you have something that needs to be put together or fixed, find a dyslexic kid and, nine times out of ten, he can do it better and faster than you. As a parent, discover and encourage your child's talents and marvel at his creativity.

## CHAPTER 4: THE STORM

### Living with Dyslexia

When a child has experienced some of the problems that were discussed in Chapter 3, more problems arise. The major problem is a poor self-image. As a result of the reactions of parents, teachers, and classmates to one or more of the symptoms, a child may see himself as anything but "normal". He will begin to believe that he is stupid, lazy, worthless, or crazy.

The first step is to convince the child that dyslexia, not he, is the problem. For some reason, in recent years, it has been very "in" to avoid labeling children. We find, however, that a child would prefer to blame a known condition or label such as dyslexia, rather than to have blame placed upon himself as a bad person. The label "dyslexic" usually provides great relief to worried youngsters and parents who have known something was wrong and have not been able to identify the problem. A complete diagnosis must be made. Without a proper diagnosis, the specific methods and materials for the child cannot be identified and used. A watered-down curriculum or remedial reading will not solve the problems of a dyslexic child. That is like putting a band-aid on a cancer. Band-aids can come off.

Second, the child and the parents need to know exactly what the problems are and how they affect the child. Many parents have known for a long time that something was not right, while they have been told by teachers and doctors that there is nothing wrong with their child. He just does not try hard enough, or he will not pay attention. Most children and parents are relieved to find out that there really is a problem and exactly what it is.

Third, it is much better for the child's self-image to be labeled dyslexic than to be labeled stupid, obnoxious, lazy, stubborn, or belligerent. The "blame" can be removed from the child and placed where it should be--on the dyslexia.

Many times, the parent's first suspicion of a problem is triggered by the child's feelings. If you hear any of the following complaints several times or see an overall pattern developing, be alerted to a possible problem. Be aware that all children will make these statements at some time or the other. The parent should be concerned when it is obvious that a child feels this way most of the time.

- I am stupid
- I hate school
- Everyone treats me differently
- I try, but I just can't read
- I am all alone
- It will be wrong; so why try
- The teacher always picks on me
- I don't care
- I am a failure
- Everyone makes fun of me
- I can't do anything right
- I am trying; I know I am
- I hate myself
- No one likes me
- I don't feel good this morning
- Everyone is always on me about something
- I am never right
- I must be crazy

As a parent you should share your concerns with your child's teacher. Unfortunately, many teachers have not had the proper training to enable them to recognize characteristics of a child that has a learning disability. The teacher may see and not realize that the behavior is indicative of a learning disability. You may have to help educate the teacher. You know your child better than anyone. One thing you must keep in mind: you have to be realistic in your expectations of the teacher and your child.



Teachers have a tremendous work load. At times, all teachers feel completely overwhelmed. It may take some time for the teacher to start making adjustments in teaching styles and making modifications for your child. The classroom teacher cannot solve all of your child's problems. He must have therapy to develop processing skills while he is learning to read and write. Even with excellent therapy you will not see immediate results. Many times there is an immediate change in attitude; this is due to relief on the part of the child. He can stop feeling guilty and rotten about himself and let someone help him with the dyslexia.

If after a period of time the teacher is still demanding that a child do things that he is incapable of doing, then you must intervene on behalf of your child. Do not approach it in anger. Be calm, rational, and knowledgeable about your child's problems and needs. A teacher's job is to teach every child and help him reach his maximum potential. There is usually a big discrepancy between the child's obviously bright mind and his classroom performance. This is very frustrating to a teacher, particularly if the teacher is untrained in regard to intervention strategies. It is the teacher's responsibility to change teaching strategies to meet each child's needs. All second grade students do not wear a size two shoe; likewise, all dyslexic children do not learn in the same way. Adjustments must be made by the teacher.

You will find there are more good teachers than bad. The problem lies in the fact that so much pressure is put on teachers to raise test scores. Teachers have also have lacked staff-development training in the area of learning differences. There are teachers who will do anything to enable all of their students to learn. They willing make modifications for your child. (See appendix II for modifications teachers may implement.) Unfortunately, you will also find teachers who have forgotten what their job is. If you find your child in a room with a teacher who tells you that she does not have time to individualize or that she has too much to cover to teach it in a different way, get your child out of that room. The emotional damage that may be done takes longer to repair than does solving the problems of dyslexia. Sometimes the emotional damage cannot be repaired.

Be alert to your child's emotional state. Some of the statements that dyslexic children have heard from their teachers are:

- I give up; you can't learn anything.
- You are just lazy.
- You never begin your work.
- You never stay on task.
- You never finish anything.
- You are just stubborn.
- You just sit and daydream.
- You could do your work if you wanted to.
- You have a bad attitude.
- You never listen.
- You never keep up with us.
- You never know the page number.
- I am surprised you even know your name.
- If you don't pay attention, I will punish you.
- I don't know what I am going to do with you.
- Why do you act like a two year old?
- Why do you always want to go to the nurse?
- Do you need glasses?
- Did you bring your brain today or did you leave it at home?
- How many times do I have to tell you the same thing?
- Your desk, locker, and notebook are always a mess.
- Do you expect me to hold your hand and do everything for you?
- You are worthless.
- You will never amount to anything.

For a child who is doing the very best that he can, this type of statement received repeatedly can scar him for life. He will feel worthless. This feeling will linger for many years, perhaps forever.

If a teacher tells you she does not know how to help your child, ask her to talk with the LD or dyslexia teacher. Offer to share this book with her/him.

Explain your child's problem and what he needs.

There are many wonderful teachers. With help and understanding, they will assure your child a feeling of success and worth. Work with them in a positive way.

Usually, grade retention is considered to be the solution for children who cannot keep pace in the regular classroom. Although some children may need to repeat a grade, consideration should be given to screening for learning disabilities. Maturation is a very real consideration for some kindergartners and first graders having problems. Many children, especially boys, are not ready to read at six. Some also have not developed the fine motor control that is essential for writing. The age of six is not magical--turn six and read. Each child is an individual and develops at his own pace. Many schools and educators seem to have forgotten this. You cannot make a child walk before he is physically able to walk. The same is true of reading and writing. It has little to do with intelligence or age.

A determination needs to be made as to what is causing problems. If a teacher or a parent suspects the problem may be more than maturation, then the child should be tested for learning disabilities, including dyslexia.

There are some parents who have no idea that their child will experience problems in school. When the problems start, they need to blame someone. The child is often blamed. If you find yourself saying any of the following on a regular basis, **STOP!** Be alerted that there may be a problem and the problem is probably not the child.

- There is nothing wrong with my child except he is spoiled.
- I know he is smart; the teachers aren't teaching him.
- Why do I even bother to send my child to school if I have to teach him at home?
- He is lazy.
- I know my child better than anyone; if he makes up his mind to do something he can do it.

- He basically has his own set of rules.
- He is so disorganized; you should see his room.
- I explain and explain homework, but he still does not understand.
- I know my child knew the spelling words before he left home, but he failed the spelling test.
- I get angry when I try to help my child with homework.
- I tell my child that we will sit there for hours or days until he decides he is going to do it right.
- He never remembers his homework assignment.
- I saw him do his homework, but he lost it before class.
- Teachers get paid for teaching, so why don't they teach?
- He never does what I tell him.
- I just do not know why he does what he does.
- I do not know what to do.
- Why don't you care about your grades?
- Why are you driving me crazy?
- Don't you ever listen?
- Are you dumb?
- Can't you ever figure anything out on your own?
- You only remember what you want to.
- You are irresponsible.
- You just do things to get attention.
- I don't have time to spend hours helping you with your homework.

If you have said several of the things just stated to your child or about your child, you are now feeling very guilty. You are allowed to feel guilty for five minutes, then stop. After this, you may only feel guilty if you continue to make such remarks to your child. Parents with dyslexic children are frustrated when they do not know why their child will not or cannot do what is expected of him. Once the problem is identified, questions can be answered, and the frustration will be diminished. You will be able to understand your child much better.

How do you find out exactly what is causing your child's problems? Have

your child's vision and hearing checked. If they are fine, you will then need to ask for testing for learning disabilities, including dyslexia. This may be done through special education or a dyslexia program. Schools and states vary in the way this is handled. If you cannot get testing by the school system, seek a qualified professional outside the system and pay him/her a fee. It may be worth a fortune in terms of happiness and success later on.

During this time you may be feeling very much alone. Seek out parent support groups. If you cannot find a support group, start one. Since research suggests ten to twenty percent of the population has dyslexia, there are a lot of other parents out there experiencing the same frustrations and fears as you. Sometimes talking to other parents of dyslexic children will give you the strength to cope and better understand the world of the dyslexic child. It will help you to understand that your child, with help, can reach his full potential.

### Preparing for the Future

Every individual needs the encouragement that comes with success. We humans, almost from the day we are born, will strive for attention, smiles, and praise. Some would even say we cannot live without these vital "perks."

Yet a dyslexic child in the regular classroom may find himself helplessly forced to sit through years of virtually incomprehensible lessons. His only feedback for his valor during this entrapment may be complaints, poor report cards, more complaints, and punishment on the grounds of laziness. As if sitting through all those hours of meaningless endeavor were not punishment enough!

To add to his predicament, his fellow pupils fail to hold him in high esteem since he obviously is unable to follow the lesson or contribute his rightful part to the common learning experience.

No wonder he may begin to express, and act out, his sorrow, rage, and desperation by wayward behavior, threats to harm himself or others, or actual destructive or foolish acts. No one understands his plight or what torment he goes through. No one understands his great need for confirmation of his intelligence and value.

After a certain period of time, if he has still not received understanding and specialized help, he may reach a state where life has quite lost its meaning. At this point, complete school failure, dropping out, and/or drugs, drinking, and delinquency may occur.

It is essential that children (or adolescents or adults) who are having this type of failure experience, be tested for dyslexia and that they receive appropriate training based on the test results. It is also vital that the problem be detected and treated as early as possible. Children are growing. They do not have unlimited opportunity to grow into confident, wholesome adults. And for wholesome growth to occur, one's life should contain, on balance, more reward than punishment. That is, one should believe that good behavior will meet with sufficient reward (including inner satisfaction) to yield at least some form of happiness or contentment.

Youngsters must be given understanding, hope, and a chance to win the respect of their peers. They must be given a chance to equip themselves for a vocation of their choice and the self-respect that derives from being a full-fledged member of society at large. In our democracy these appear to be basic human rights of which no child should be deprived.

Many children are suffering today because of unrecognized, untreated dyslexia. Their achievements are falling behind grade level, and the social punishment is painful. Perhaps, in twenty years or so, our schools will be more aware of and better equipped to handle the special problems of dyslexic students. By that time, the fields of science and education may better understand the basis of learning disabilities.

In the meantime, our plea is for vigilance and sensitivity on the part of parents, classroom teachers, and all those whose goodwill compels them to relieve suffering and promote wellness and joy, especially in children.

## CHAPTER 5 THE LIGHTNING

### Emotions

In our human experience we are sometimes confronted with complex and baffling problems which eventually have to be dealt with. It is no easy task. Finding out that your child is dyslexic is such a situation.

While it is wonderful to finally have identified his or her specific problem, it is not always an easy thing to deal with the news at a deep emotional level. Coping with the fact that your child is dyslexic can sometimes be as traumatic as the problems you had before the diagnosis.

*"When I found out about Allison, I went through different stages of dealing with her problems. At the time, I didn't realize they were specific stages. I just felt that I had been securely strapped in on an emotional roller coaster having nothing but downhill turns. Later, I found out that most parents go through these same feelings and stages that I passed through." (Paula Rosteet)*

### Denial

*"At the beginning, when Allison's teachers were telling me she was doing fine, I wanted to believe them so much. I knew they were well trained. I took for granted what they told me, because I assumed they were more knowledgeable than I. It was also more comfortable to pretend that a problem did not exist. Not realizing it, I had entered into a denial stage." (Paula Rosteet)*

Denial is an easy thing to do. If we deny something, then we do not have to deal with it. Many parents never pass the first stage in the process of accepting the fact that their child has a learning difference. They say to themselves, "How could my child, who I thought was a perfect creation, have a flaw? The diagnosis must be wrong or the teachers have confused my child with another child."

By denial, I tell myself that the problem either does not exist or will go away. The fact is, however, that a dyslexic problem will never go away on its own accord. If it is ignored, it can snowball into something that will be a lot harder to deal with later--something like discouragement, dropping out of school, delinquency, vocational maladjustment, or drug abuse.

Denial may allow us as parents to feel better temporarily. It may also allow us to put off the trouble and concern of dealing realistically with the situation. Meanwhile, the youngster may be suffering, and precious time is passing when he could receive the help he needs.

In the denial stage, there is much blame that goes around. The teachers tend to blame the child's conduct. The parents blame themselves, their spouse, their ex-spouses, or the teachers. The child may blame himself. With all the blame going around, it is no wonder progress is not made.

One parent, who was also a teacher, did not want her child tested for dyslexia. She was afraid her son would qualify and be labeled as a dyslexic for the rest of his life. She felt that he would not be able to get a decent job and would face much ridicule. As a result, he never got help, because his parents could not face the problem; they stayed in denial.

Another parent couldn't get anyone to listen to her. She knew her child had problems. He could not remember sounds of the letters, follow directions, or understand what he had been told. The parent was at school continuously trying to get her child out of the lowest group. She was afraid he would be labeled a potential "repeater" before the end of the first month of the first grade. She did not want him to be considered for retention so early into the school year without having a chance. She was finally able to get him tested.

It was discovered that he scored high on the intelligence test, but had definite learning difficulties. The parent now had the best information but continually sought further advice, not willing to accept the fact that her son's problem had been correctly diagnosed. She remained in denial.



As parents, we must realize that not all teachers accept test results. If the teacher does not have the knowledge of or understanding of dyslexia or learning disabilities, she may not accept that your child has these problems. Teachers too can be in denial.

One teacher was approached after one of her students was tested for dyslexia. The test showed some characteristics of dyslexia. The teacher would not accept this. She believed that there was nothing wrong with the child except that he was lazy. She was not willing to do anything until the student could prove to her that he was putting forth an effort by finishing his work. Because of her lack of knowledge, she was incorrect in her judgment. If such a thing should happen to your child, you should consider guidance from the administrator in charge of the Learning Disability or Dyslexia Program.

After being diagnosed, one student was able to get into a dyslexia program. However, he would not participate in any of the activities that the dyslexia teacher had for him to do. He absolutely refused to cooperate. He did not want to be different. The student himself was in denial.

A common denominator in all these stories is denial. All these people closed their minds to accepting the cause and/or any possible help. It is sad to think that these people may never get out of this mode of thinking. It is even more tragic that if they ever do come around, it may be too late to avoid failure and misery.

Hopefully, not all people stay in denial. I believe that denial is an inborn coping mechanism in humans. We start at an early age denying things. Remember when your mother questioned you about the missing cookies? Your first response probably was one of denial. It is a perfectly normal response and nothing to be ashamed of. The shameful part comes into play if we do not eventually persuade ourselves to face the difficulty and get beyond this stage. It is absolutely necessary to overcome our inclination toward denial if we are going to cope with any problem situation.

We must be in tune with our children's feelings. The way they express themselves at home about school can be an alarm to alert us that there may be a problem. When a problem exists, even before the parents or teachers realize it, our children have their way of letting us know. Since they are not quite sure of what is wrong, they express themselves the only way they know how. (See the complaints commonly expressed by undiagnosed dyslexic children on page 48.) Unfortunately, it is easy for parents and teachers to attribute these expressions to immaturity or poor attitude. We reply to them with expressions like those on pages 47-50.

*"I made some of these assessments about Allison in the beginning. At first I was ashamed to admit this, but I later realized this was a normal reaction."  
(Paula Rosteet)*

Undiagnosed, untreated dyslexia is extremely puzzling and frustrating.

### Guilt

*"After discovering that Allison was dyslexic, passing through the tendency to deny, and knowing there was no denying it, I thought I would be able to obtain the information I needed to help her, and we would get on with our lives. Surely, I could do this without any emotional upheaval.*

*However, the more I learned and read about dyslexia, the worse I felt. I wanted to know whose fault it was. Did I do something to make my child this way? Did I not spend enough time reading and doing puzzles with her? Was there something wrong with my or my husband's genes? What did I do wrong? Why did I feel guilty?*

*I was in the grip of powerful feelings. Tears came frequently as I worried about Allison's future and how it might be compromised. She was so small and helpless, so tender and vulnerable as she faced her uncertain tomorrows. We had been entrusted with her care. Perhaps we had failed her." (Paula Rosteet)*

Guilt is a painful feeling of self-reproach resulting from a belief that one has done something wrong. Like denial, guilt is a defense or coping mechanism that we all use. It is natural to feel guilty about some things we have done. Guilt is useful when it causes us to turn to more useful or adaptive behavior.

It is harmful, however, to get stuck in guilt feelings, think less of ourselves, and withdraw from our social activities and aspirations. Excessive guilt is paralyzing and is something we must always rise above in order to get on with life. We must forgive ourselves for not having a perfect record.

Our children need to be reassured that they are not a burden. They need to know that they are loved, and they need to know that they can grow up normal and happy, "just like everyone else."

Some parents feel guilty because they reason that the child's dyslexia may have been inherited from them. In this case, they should at least take comfort in the fact that they did not intentionally give it to their child and would have done almost anything to prevent it.

Many parents at this stage may come to realize that they had a similar problem. These parents should be especially grateful that help is available today. More than likely, no special help was provided to dyslexics when they were growing up and wondered why they "were so stupid."

Getting beyond guilt feelings is not easy, but it can be done. Remember that dyslexia is no one's fault. It is just a fact of life sometimes.

### Martyrdom

*"In the process of getting over my own guilty feelings, I constantly assured myself that Allison actually would receive help. I went to school many times. I questioned Allison's dyslexia teacher in between classes. I walked with her down the hall or to her car, trying to get the answers I so desperately needed. At*

*this point, I would have done anything to help "fix" Allison's problem. I was in a state of over-commitment or martyrdom.*

*Martyrdom was a stage in which I felt as though I would dedicate my entire life to my child. Nothing would stop me from helping her find success. Everything in my life had to take a "back seat" to this problem, including the rest of my family." (Paula Rosteet)*

At this stage, money is no longer a consideration because we want help to come immediately. We, like other parents, would go any distance or spend any amount of money for help. If necessary, we would go deeply into debt. It is almost as though we could not do enough to help our child.

At this point, caution is called for. We may tire our child by having him tested too much or having him receive special help too often. We need to remember that our children need a chance to run and play free, of worry and concern. They need time away from an educational environment.

At this stage, it is very easy to become over-sympathetic and over-protective of our children. What we have to remember is that dyslexic children will face the same hurtful and frustrating problems as other children. They may be ridiculed for the very fact that they are dyslexic. Other children who are not dyslexic are ridiculed because they are fat, smart, skinny or wear glasses. The facts are not always easy to live with, and some children are cruel enough to disparage others in an effort to improve their own self-image.

Learning to deal with this is part of growing up. We want to protect our children, but we have to be careful how we do it. Children pick up on sympathy from parents very quickly. If they see that we will come to their aid in every minor conflict, then they may take advantage of it, but in the long run their self-image may suffer. We have to let our children fight some of their own battles in order to develop competence and independence.

It is fine to be empathic; in fact, we need to be in order to understand and

help our children, but it is important not to stifle their normal growth process.

*"Recently, I was at school speaking to Allison's teacher. My daughter seemed to be having problems with friends on the playground. Her teacher was very aware of the problem and was in the process of doing something about it. She did not know, however, that Allison was coming home crying every afternoon. I felt badly for my daughter. Her hurt tugged strongly at my heart. I wanted to call these other children's parents. I was tempted to speak to the children myself, because I wanted the hurt to go away. After speaking to her teacher, however, I realized that these are the kind of things that happen everyday between first-grade children. Their behavior did not happen because Allison was dyslexic. It would have been very easy to give too much sympathy to my daughter, but it may not have been the best thing for her." (Paula Rosteet)*

Sometimes there is a waiting period to get into a program. One parent who had her child tested for dyslexia was so desperate for immediate help that she brought her daughter to a nearby clinic to have the child retested. She went to great expense to determine the same results that the initial test had found: her daughter was dyslexic. The clinic informed her that the best program in the area was the one that her daughter was waiting to start at her school.

One child knew that he was dyslexic. His parents and teacher had talked to him a great deal about it. Many times he had seen his mother talking on the phone to other parents. He was very perceptive and would listen to some of these conversations. He was also very aware that his mother over-sympathized with him. He began to use his dyslexia as an excuse for everything he didn't feel like doing. Dyslexia should not be used as an excuse to avoid responsibility.

We may all be guilty of being over-sympathetic and over-zealous, and over-protective at times. This is not a crime. Before we do anything too extreme we should take the time to evaluate the situation and decide what would most benefit all those involved. We should love our children but remember that too much sympathy and too many material things are not always best for their growth as persons.

We should also remember that dyslexia is not a problem that happened overnight, nor will it be overcome overnight. It will require time, patience, perseverance, and the right plan of action.

## Anger

Anger is a condition that can prevail through all the denial, guilt, and over-commitment or martyrdom stages. It comes and goes but is very pervasive. It can make us so desperate that we are not able to be rational.

It is no secret that we experience displeasure when our world is knocked out of kilter. We would much rather have everything running smoothly. We feel that dyslexia is a form of "mistreatment" to our child. A real injustice! It does not seem fair that we or our child should have to deal with this when others do not.

Our anger makes us want to fight back at the cause of this feeling. But what are we fighting? Whom are we fighting? How can we fight back at a supposed cause or reason since we do not know specifically what that cause is? This is precisely why we do fight back and become so angry. We do not know what to be angry at, so we choose everything. Being angry at everything is quite futile and irrational. It is the same as fighting God, the devil, and the cosmos, and we humans are not up to that. It is better to be rational, constructive and persevering.

*"I verbally attacked Allison's dyslexia teacher. I felt very strongly that Allison had not made any improvements. I went so far as to tell her teacher that I wanted to pull her out of the program. I could not understand how "the stupid books" that she was bringing home in her multi-sensory program could possibly do her any good. They might even confuse her more." (Paula Rosteet)*

Another parent verbally attacked her child's classroom teacher, dyslexia teacher, and the principal. She even took her complaints to the school board. Expressing her complaints in the form of anger did not get her anywhere.

One student was so angry that he went through a complete personality change. He was no longer the sweet, well behaved boy that his parents and teachers knew and loved. He lashed out at everyone. He began to get into fights at school and argued with his parents constantly. His conduct grades rapidly went from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. He was so frustrated with the situation that he gave up trying anything constructive. He decided that if he had a problem, then he would really be a problem. If he was going to be bad, he would be very bad. He needed special help.

Anger rarely solves anything. There may be no other feeling as counter-productive as undirected anger. If you approach someone in this mood, the person at the receiving end is likely to lash back in anger or turn you off in the first few sentences. You probably will be neither heard nor helped, and you may feel ashamed when you calm down and realize what you have done.

It is generally better to deal with anger in such a way as to dissipate its energy without attacking another person. One can go out for a walk or a swim, take a long, warm bath, or get a good night's sleep, and then, when a calmer state has been reached, attempt to deal more rationally with the issues and problems.

### Acceptance

*"After I was able to overcome the painful feelings of guilt, martyrdom and anger, I was finally ready to reach the final step of acceptance. I felt like my body and emotions had previously been used as a garbage dump. All the negative feelings had continually piled up. At times I felt as though I would never see order again. However, as I educated myself and grew with my child, these ill feelings slowly began to fade. I saw the light, and I saw hope as I dug through the disarray. Finally, I was able to return my life to normalcy. Oh, what a feeling! There is nothing that can replace the feeling of serenity and inner peace that came when I finally accepted the fact that Allison is dyslexic.*

*As I finally accepted, Allison did too. She worked at the program, she gained confidence, a positive self-image and knowledge. Nowadays, the sound*

*of Allison reading as she follows me around the house while I do chores is one of the sweetest things I have ever heard. She is not doing homework all this time, nor is this our regular reading session. This child is reading because she loves to read.*

*She reads signs, she reads the newspaper, she reads the labels on cleaning products, and she reads everything that comes into her line of vision. She loves to read, and--more importantly--she loves herself." (Paula Rosteet)*

It is exciting to see people having gone through the initial stages and reached a point at which their lives and emotions can settle down, and they can go on to more normal living. One parent exclaimed excitedly to her son's dyslexia teacher, "I see it clearly now. My child is smart. He does learn in a different way, but he is finding success now." She was thrilled with the first 100 on a spelling test. She also related that he was a different child at home and even liked going to school.

When students accept the fact that they are not stupid and they can learn with some extra help, it does not take them long to get on the right track and start making good grades. The acceptance of the situation is the beginning step toward success.

As you can see, acceptance is a wonderful thing for parents and their children. Acceptance is like the finished diamond in its purest form. We have to work hard at chipping away all the undesired materials. When someone mines for diamonds, he may have to chip away at sand, coal, or rock. His search and labor are made worthwhile by the opportunity, maybe just once, to find the perfect diamond.

We, as parents, have to be willing to experience all the negative emotions and learn to cope in a way that will be productive for ourselves and our children. We have to reach that diamond of acceptance. We have to care enough, because we may only have one chance, and it is so important.



*"It is the easiest thing in the world to become a parent, but harder to be a good one. For me, the success Allison has found is worth more than all of the hardships it cost." (Paula Rosteet)*

## The Me That No One Sees

I'm the type who likes to joke and clown around.  
I love to eat and hunt with a good hound.  
I like sports and I love girls.  
I'm kind of short, but yet tall because  
I've got so many friends and I like them all.

But the true me is what people don't see.  
The me that can hardly write or read.  
The me that no one sees.  
I'm the one who sees things funny and  
The one who spells things funny.  
But you see when I was six or eight,  
Doctors said I'd never graduate from the first  
And never see the eighth.

But I worked and struggled everyday,  
And just took it day by day.  
I cried and hardly ever laughed,  
But see I finally passed  
And here I am today working to graduate  
Still taking it day by day.

Aaron Bork  
Age 15

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RAY OF SUNSHINE**

#### **Perservance Brings Hope**

Essentially, what we have hoped to achieve up to this chapter is to provide a guide to those of you facing your own or your child's learning difficulty. Hopefully, after reading this far into the book, you have more knowledge, a deeper understanding of procedures of coping with the situation, and a list of activities you may use to promote success in dealing with the difficulty.

Yet, we feel there is a still more important aspect that needs to be dealt with. It is the emotional and spiritual attitude that will allow you to see a "ray of sunshine" after every storm of confusion and doubt.

A ray of sunshine is what you really hope to see whenever it has been raining for days and days. When you are so bored with being in the house and feel your children need to get out and get a little bit of sunshine, you start looking for the first ray of sunlight. When you see it, you are so excited that you start getting the children and yourself ready to walk outside and enjoy the fresh smell and the warmth of the sun.

When you see the ray, you know that good times are ahead, and you can resume plans for that picnic or event that was rained out. The same can be true in our lives. When things get bleak and you are exhausted from trying, even while you rest, you need to start looking for that ray of sunlight to pick you up and get you moving again.

#### **Self-Image and Self-Concept**

It is important for a parent to know that children are influenced by their parents' private moods and attitudes at least as much as by those they present to the public. Each adult has a self-concept comprised of beliefs about himself and his own ability, dependability, likability, and competence. One's self-concept

probably starts in childhood as a self-image, a picture of oneself in the imagination, which compares with other children. A child asks himself, "Am I attractive like Kim? Am I smart like Jason? Can I stand up in class and speak like Kelly? Am I popular? If not, why not?" Then he experiments with ways to improve himself so as to improve his self-image. Many of his experiments may involve superficial things like clothing, music, and jokes.

This is normal, and the process continues throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, but by the time adulthood is reached, a positive self-concept ideally is based on ability to assume responsibility and relate to others in a positive manner more than on dress, appearance, clever talk, and the latest fads. For that reason, we refer more often to "self-concept" in adults and to "self-image" in children.

In the child's mind, a parent has an image, not a concept, since the child cannot yet understand adult responsibilities and relationships but can imagine your appearance and attitudes. He knows how you are, not how you reason about your behavior. He needs your encouragement, and he needs the security of a good home. Ideally, he should think of you as competent and content so he can believe in the reality of those qualities and try to achieve them as he grows to be an adult.

### **A Child's Mental Health**

A child needs a good self-image in order to have confidence in himself. While he needs to believe in his own strength and ability, his self-image may have been threatened by the realization of his difficulties. However, in the last analysis, children value themselves to the degree they have been valued. Interaction with others—even the cooing and baby talk that caretakers usually do as they cuddle a child in the first few months of life—communicates the child's importance and his right to participate fully in the human community.

Hopefully, your child has had a lot of healthy interaction. If you have been able to show him that he is of great value in your eyes, chances are that he will also

consider himself important enough to pursue his own success as a person.

Not that the road will be simple. A child needs the courage to strive even when the road is hard. Try not to fill his mind with fear and doubt. Instead, help him believe that God loves and values him and things will come out right in the end. Try to give him the determination and courage to persevere until hope dawns as a ray of sunshine out of the dark, somber clouds.

### A TRUE STORY

"I am not dyslexic, nor do I have a learning difficulty, but I have faced many obstacles along the way. By sharing my story with you, I hope to enable you to see that no matter what the obstacle is--dyslexia, a physical problem, a psychological problem or an emotional problem--with perseverance it can be overcome."

"My life started out in a very peaceful way. I was born into a family where love and security were abundant. When I was only a few months old, however, I became very ill. This was a difficult time for my parents and for me. I have been told that my parents were informed on my first New Year's Eve that if I could make it through the night, then I would probably live. Many prayers were lifted up for me that night. The next day, they saw the ray of sunshine. They knew I would live."

"My grandfather nicknamed me "Sunshine" when I was very young. My grandmother would say, "Honey, you are just a ray of sunshine." At that time, I never really thought about what a compliment it was. I just thought it was their special name for me. Now that I am older, I realize that the nickname "Sunshine" and the expression, "You are a ray of sunshine," have been extremely meaningful in my life."

"As I grew, I was very fortunate to have parents who guided me well. We had our problems, but we lived by faith and learned early in life that there would be many blessings waiting for us if we trusted God and lived daily for Him. We were blessed with the things we needed and a few extras through the hard work of both my father and my mother. We were taught love, understanding, responsibility, the value of money, and how to manage it."

"But of all the things we were taught, I believe one of the most important was to be caring of others and to realize that not everyone has been as fortunate as we were. As a very young child, I remember going with my mother to take food and clothing to people who were in need. I always volunteered to bring the Christmas tree to school each December, and I would regularly try to help my classmates and friends. In other words, caring, loving, and empathy for others were developed at a young age without my ever realizing how important they would be in my life later on."

"At this stage, I was a blue eyed, brown haired, little girl with lots of love for her family, friends, dolls, and favorite cat. I enjoyed life, because my family loved me and told me so."

"I loved every day of school and was well taught by my first-grade teacher, Miss Stephens. I had a difficult time learning to read in the first grade because of an eye-fusing problem, but I was grown before I realized it. At the time, I never knew anything was wrong, because no one made a 'Big Deal' out of it. Although my parents and teachers knew that I had a problem, they accepted it and did something about it, while enabling me still to feel good about myself (keeping a good self-image). They knew that I was intelligent and could be helped."

"Even though at that time there were no specialized teachers to help children with certain problems, there were caring teachers and parents who could and did make wise choices. By protecting me from negative thoughts and fears without knowing what was ahead, they were preparing me and giving me strength to face severe difficulties that I was to encounter later. "I continued to work hard at my studies and did well all through school. In addition, I continued to enjoy

helping others, whether with work or just listening to them express their thoughts."

"When I reached high school, I became very ill with unbearable headaches, tiredness, and an overwhelming desire to sleep around the clock. I suddenly gained about thirty pounds. After consulting several doctors, we were told that no cause could be found. I really did not know what to do, nor did my parents. I had to give up many activities at school and church. Frequently, I was not sure how or whether I would make it through the day. My parents helped me as much as they could."

"I am not exactly sure how I survived high school and made good grades, but I do remember it took a lot of prayer and determination on my part. I knew I could not quit, no matter how difficult it was or how tired I became. I graduated from high school still knowing I was ill but not knowing what was wrong."

"The summer following high school graduation, we contacted an internist that a close friend had recommended. This was my first ray of sunshine in determining the nature of my illness. I was put on medication, and I began to feel better."

"Although the root of the problem was not identified, I chose to move ahead with my life. I went away for my first year of college but had to return home because of my persistent health problems. I attended college in my home town my sophomore year. It was during this time that I was in an automobile accident. X-rays of my skull were made due to a head injury. Upon reading these, my doctor was very excited to find what had been wrong with me all this time. I had a non-malignant tumor of the pituitary, a gland at the base of the brain which regulates all the hormones in the body. It was indeed a rare and confusing illness."

"I had two months left of my sophomore year of college, and I was not at all well. The doctor recommended that I take cobalt treatments. It just so happened that a radiologist in my home town had recently purchased a cobalt machine and could give treatments. Had it not been for this, I would have had to

travel at least a hundred miles for each treatment and would not have been able to finish college that year. I took the treatments five days a week for five weeks."

"Was it time to say, 'I give up!?' No! I knew that I had to try and try again to keep moving in the right direction. I had treatments, college classes, and even final exams during this period. My teachers were very helpful. It took more determination than ever, but I passed the courses for that semester. It was probably the most difficult time in my life."

"I was told by my doctor that the treatments might arrest the growth of the tumor, but if the tumor continued to grow, I might not have long to live. I was also told at this time that I had a decision to make: I could give up, or I could decide to keep on living despite what was happening to me. I think you can guess what my response was."

"I went off to school my junior and senior year and learned not only information to be used in teaching but also more about how to cope when circumstances are not what you want them to be. I graduated after four years of college."

"Within the next two years, I began teaching, married, and moved to Pasadena, Texas. I found that, when I was teaching, I would get so involved with other people and their problems that I forgot about mine."

"I intended to work toward a master's degree in Gifted Education until I was offered a position teaching Special Education children. I believe this was a definite direction from God. I found my life blessed again in the opportunity to be a dyslexia teacher. I thoroughly enjoy teaching children with learning difficulties, and this has been the most wonderful experience of my life."

"There have been many "rays of sunshine" in my experience: my parents, sister and brother and their families, my husband's support, my two wonderful sons and their enthusiasm, my friends, and colleagues."



"Why am I telling you this? Even now, my life is not all good moods and blessings. I have periods of time when I have real difficulty dealing with the physical problems the tumor left within my body. I have times when it is more than an effort to do what I have to do. In the past there have been many times when I searched desperately for a sign or ray of hope, and each time I persevered and kept looking; the 'ray of sunshine' finally came shining through."

"My life has been a positive one despite severe problems because I have lived by faith and tried to look on the positive side. I feel good about myself. I feel confident in what I do, because I believe in what I do. I stay busy helping my family and others."

"I am telling you these things because I know, without a shadow of a doubt, you also can find "rays of sunshine" if you will just look and persevere."

### The Dyslexic Child

If your son or daughter is dyslexic, he needs specific training by specialists, and he needs it as soon as possible. The parent who suspects his child may be dyslexic should request and insist that the school district provide testing at a very early date. If dyslexic problems are detected, the parents should expect and demand that the child receive specific training in a timely manner, going outside the school system, if necessary, to find a well trained tutor.

Children's mental and spiritual growth takes place rapidly. Years must not be allowed to go by before your child gets specific training for his dyslexic problems. Dyslexic children sometimes feel left out, confused, and helpless. They provide fertile ground for the beginning of conduct disorders and delinquency. If a child comes to see himself as a helpless loser, and an incompetent clown, or unwanted excess baggage, he may finally seek and find an area where he can excel and find acceptance--alcohol and drug abuse, for example. If he does

not go that far, he may drop out of school, fail to equip himself for a suitable vocation, or get into unhealthy relationships because of his unhappiness.

However, it does not have to come to that. The dyslexic child may have been misunderstood and considered lazy or stupid. Suddenly, when diagnosed correctly and put into appropriate training for his dyslexia, he feels himself understood and appreciated again. (He is not lazy or stupid, just dyslexic.) Teachers and other children may have been ignoring him because of his inability to keep up, and suddenly he is getting much needed attention again. He may have been under extreme emotional stress from trying to do classwork that was beyond his ability, and suddenly he finds himself able to accomplish most of the tasks his teacher requires, and he receives her praise and encouragement. He can relax; tension in his body and mind dissipates. His self-image changes from helpless loser to clever, industrious dyslexic who's going to lick this problem and find success.

The possibility must be mentioned that testing may reveal that your child has a problem that is not dyslexia. He/she could have vision or hearing problems or mental retardation, for example. Whatever the nature of the problem, it is vital that you get correct information and concern yourself with helping your youngster in every way possible.

In the book, The Furies and the Flame by Ingrid Rimland, published by Arena Press, a division of ATP, 1984, one mother told the story of her struggle to obtain an education for her severely retarded son. Readers are inspired by her love, her courage, and her determination when faced with tremendous odds against success, and the results she obtained after many years of perseverance.

Every human being needs a positive self-concept or self-image if he is to appreciate himself and others adequately. He needs to meet with success some of the time if he is to find the courage to keep on striving.

## **Suggestions for Parents Who Want to Help Their Child Develop a Positive Self-Image and a Sense of Security**

### **Provide a secure environment:**

1. Make sure your child's health, eyesight and hearing are normal. Have check ups regularly.
2. Prepare healthy meals for your child. Also, try to make sure he has plenty of rest and exercise.
3. Try to have a peaceful household where a child feels he can come home and not be faced with complaining or problems. When problems do occur try to work them out without exhibiting a lot of anxiety.
4. Establish rules in your home and be consistent in enforcing them. Discipline the child when behavior is inappropriate. Emphasize that the behavior is bad, not the child. Administer the punishment as soon as possible after the behavior. Never punish a child when you are angry.
5. Reward him through praise when he shows good behavior or accomplishments (not necessarily perfection). Discuss the difference in bad and good behavior and how he feels in both situations. (It is better not to bribe him with money or gifts for good behavior.)
6. Be in control of your home. The child needs to know who is in control at home. He needs to have choices, but at the same time he does not need to be in control of the family.
7. Be organized within your home. Have a set time for waking up, going to bed, doing homework, and other activities. Make a daily and weekly schedule of your child's time. The schedule should include specific times for waking, sleeping, homework, and other scheduled activities as well as free time just to do what he chooses within the home (watch television, play a game or maybe just sit

and relax). Accomplishing this may take some trial and error experiences. Adjust the schedule until you feel that the time is equally distributed so there is about the right amount of time for every activity. You may have to sacrifice time from some "wants" to meet essential needs such as sleep, meals, homework, doctors' appointments, church, etc.

8. Set a certain time for homework. Remember that during this time everything shuts down so there will be no interruptions. If someone in the family is not participating in homework, then they should have something to do that is quiet. (More discussion about homework in Chapter 7.)

9. Try to send your child to school in a happy mood. It is difficult for a child to concentrate on classwork at school when he has faced "big" criticism before he left home.

### **Love, accept, and appreciate your child.**

1. Try to show patience.
2. Tell him you love him. Give him hugs. Say "Thank you." Express words of praise for accomplishments. (See Appendix 1.) Show positive feelings in the expression on your face. Show empathy when needed. Avoid negative remarks which ridicule or shame him.
3. Accept his imperfections. Nobody is perfect.
4. Do things that make your child feel special. Also, help him to realize that everyone in the family is special. Prepare his favorite meal or have a special day of activities he has chosen. Send your child a thank you note for something special he has done. You might consider having "secret pals" among your family members. Let each member choose a name of another family member. For one week, do nice things for the person you chose. At the end of the week, each reveals the identity of his pal.

5. Support your child in the activities he chooses, even if he is not the star. Never tease or make him feel ashamed in front of his peers or other adults.
6. Send a "You can try" message to your child. Put a note in his lunch box.
7. Tell him he is smart. Help him accept that he is smart even with learning differences. Help him realize he can do some things better than others. Discuss with him how it feels when he does accomplish something. Motivation to keep on trying comes from internal satisfaction that "I can do some things right." Internal satisfaction is a key to success. If a child knows that he is intelligent, though different from others, he can learn to do his best, whatever the circumstances.
8. Help him deal with rejection by peers and adults.
9. Provide him with opportunities to share. Sharing builds good relations with his peers and siblings. He needs to be a leader or win some of the time, but he also needs to know when to be a follower and how to accept losing.
10. Try to spend a few minutes alone with your child each day. It doesn't have to be a long period of time. The quality of the time can be more important than the quantity of the time spent.

**Be a good listener; help your child express his feelings.**

1. Listen to him without judging. Have good eye contact. Listen with interest. Help him express what he is thinking. Praise him when he expresses himself appropriately.
2. Develop an open line of communication when he is young so he will communicate when he is older.
3. Encourage him to share his ideas with the family, because he needs to realize

his ideas are important. Teach him he can share his ideas with others and learn from others as they learn from him.

4. Look for special abilities and provide activities that deal with those strengths.
5. Share your feelings with your child, explaining what caused you to make mistakes or what helped you find success.
6. If your child is reluctant to, or cannot, express his feelings verbally, encourage him to write how he feels on paper. It can be in the form of a poem, story, or it can be just thoughts. Even if the thoughts are negative, it is important that they be honestly expressed and understood empathetically by the one who reads them.
7. If your child has difficulty in sharing his feelings or expressing his feelings on paper, let him draw pictures or make things of clay to help him express his thoughts. Then you can ask him to "tell about his creation." (Refrain from asking "What is it?")
8. Emphasize being oneself. Discuss strengths.
9. Discuss the good experiences of the day.
10. Answer questions in complete sentences, thereby giving your child a model of good verbal expression.
11. Discuss television programs. Discuss the pros and cons of the programs.

### Teach responsibility

1. Have a "you can try" attitude more than a "let me do it for you" or "he cannot do that" attitude.
2. Assign responsibilities. Make sure when you give your child something to do,

he understands what you expect of him. Give short, precise instructions for clarity. Have him repeat the directions you have given him. It may be necessary at first to write down what you want him to do and have him place a check beside the job when it is completed. You may need to take him through it step by step.

3. Provide various types of responsibility that offer opportunities for simple problem solving.
4. Rotate responsibilities so one child will not feel he always gets the worst jobs.
5. Always make sure that your child has some responsibilities that are easy in order for him to experience success quickly. Go from easy to more difficult assignments when appropriate.

### **Broaden learning experiences**

1. Take family trips locally to enrich your youngster's learning experiences. When possible, take him on trips to interesting places outside of your area.
2. Take him to the library and expose him to learning through books.
3. Play games requiring imaginative thinking and problem solving.
4. Promote activities which develop special abilities or interests such as art, sports, hobbies, and music. Allow time in the schedule for fun activities.

### **Be a guide, not a doer**

1. Allow your child to try and figure out what he is supposed to do. Then, if he cannot, guide him through the assignment. Help him to understand without doing the work for him.
2. Allow your child to make choices when appropriate. If a child never makes

choices, he may remain passive and never develop the skill of decision making. He needs activities to discriminate differences and similarities. Include your child in some of your decision making when appropriate.

3. Teach him how to solve problems by starting out with simple projects and building to more complex problems when needed. Example: How to make a sandwich, build a model or do another activity appropriate for his age.
4. Encourage him to choose a new hobby. Have him read about the hobby.
5. Use jigsaw puzzles, building models, and board games to motivate him to engage in problem solving activities.
6. Suggest that your child express his ideas by drawing. Many dyslexics are wonderful artists.

#### **Be a good model**

1. Show him respect so he can learn to be respectful of others. If you call him by disparaging names, he may feel you do not think he is worthy of being called anything good. He will probably give you as much respect as you show him.
2. Give him experiences that will build trust, in order that he will make the correct choices when he needs to be trusted.
3. Be a good model of daily behavior to your child. What you show him in your behavior will likely have more effect than what you tell him he ought to do.
4. Teach him values and beliefs that are important to you. Teach him to be honest with himself and others.
5. Express your feelings verbally and patiently, to model the correct way to express emotions. Avoid dumping excessive negative feelings of yours on your child. If you are experiencing such feelings, find an adult who you can talk to, or



better yet, seek professional counseling.

6. Take care of yourself.

7. Model good problem solving behavior by having your dyslexic child diagnosed and taught by specialists. Give him support as he undertakes this task, which is so important for the child who is different.

### Parental Mental Health

If you, the parent, or other family members are experiencing high levels of stress, it will be much more difficult to provide the encouraging environment your child, especially a dyslexic child, needs. Stress may result from financial, relationship, or health concerns from your own lack of self-confidence, or your depression. Irritability, short temper, anxiety, lack of energy, excessive use of alcohol or drugs (prescription or otherwise) and/or a feeling of being out of control could signal that you need help with your emotions.

You should start by having a physical exam to determine whether there are physical causes. Then consider your self-concept and whether you are feeling good enough to guide your child in a positive way. A Self-Concept Check List has been included in this book as Appendix 9. If you take this "test" and make a low score, seeking help from a professional counselor would be an excellent move. You may find such persons at tax-supported facilities, non-profit organizations, crisis hotlines, churches, or in private practice. Such counselors may be referred to as psychotherapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, guidance counselors, and pastoral counselors.

You might also consider group therapy for your family. This style of treatment brings the entire family into sessions and seeks to improve the ability of the members to understand and support one another.

The following is a tribute to all parents who do their best for their children,

to those parents who strive to help their children achieve, and to those parents who never give up trying.

### **Blessed are the Parents**

**Blessed** are the parents who try to provide a structured environment for their child, because the child learns security and a place of refuge.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to love, accept, and appreciate their child, even if he is not perfect, because their child learns worthiness and builds a positive self-image.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to be good listeners and who try to give their child opportunities to express himself, because their child learns how to express his thoughts appropriately.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to provide opportunities to learn responsibility, because their child learns to be responsible, to make correct choices and to solve problems.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to provide experiences to broaden their child's knowledge, because it enriches understanding and helps apply knowledge.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to guide instead of doing, because their child learns how to learn and gains independence for learning.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to be good models for their children, because they will see their own good attributes in their children.

**Blessed** are the parents who try to provide pleasant memories for their children, because their child has a good foundation on which to build his life.

**Blessed** are the parents who try.....

**Blessed** are the parents whose children listen to them.

--Nancy Robeson

## CHAPTER 7

### The Rainbow

#### Working Together and Special Help

This chapter is the completion of the rainbow. As the colors of the rainbow blend to give it beauty, a child's home life and school life must also blend to produce the person he wants to be. Everyone that touches his life influences and molds him into what he will become. Success in a child's rearing is the result of the child, the parent, and the teacher working together with the correct priorities in mind.

First, the child must realize that specific changes need to be made in order to be successful. This means that he must be willing to make some sacrifices in his life. It may be giving up an elective at school to have special help or giving up free time at home to receive specialized therapy. He must be willing to work with his specialized teacher and his parents in order to fill in gaps of unlearned skills and to change some old habits.

Second, the parents must make changes in their lives by setting priorities. You, as parents, must accept the fact that your child has certain learning difficulties although he is intelligent. Keep in mind that you may also need to make sacrifices of time and money to enable your child to get the vital help he needs in order to succeed.

Third, the teacher is essential in assuring your child's success. Although the teacher has your child only part of the day, she is a very strong influence on his life. She needs to provide a structured, positive environment where your child can find success. If she is not willing to do her part then the child will not be totally successful. While the teacher is responsible for more than one child, a master teacher is willing and able to cooperate and make individual modifications to help your dyslexic child achieve success. Work with your child's teacher. Encourage her by showing your support and appreciation for the things she is doing to help

your child succeed.

In completing the rainbow, it is important to blend certain necessary elements in order to achieve academic success. These elements will now be detailed with suggestions for the parent and the student.

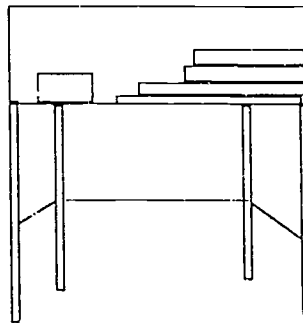
### Organizational Skills

Difficulty in beginning tasks, procrastination, and problems in locating items are indications of poor organizational skills. As a parent you will need to guide your child in preparing for school and becoming more organized at home. The following suggestions deal with organization at school and at home.

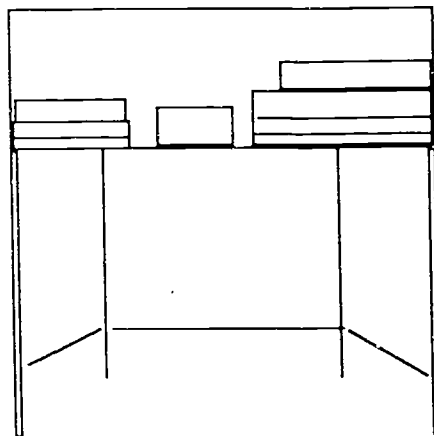
#### At school

1. Your child needs to have the required materials for each class when he enters the classroom. Some teachers provide a list of class requirements and materials. This sheet is usually sent home, signed by parents and returned to class. You should copy this sheet and keep a copy of it at home. If your child is not provided with such a sheet then he must write down what he needs for each class.
2. Your child's desk needs to be free of clutter and his books and materials need to be easy to locate. Here are two suggestions for arranging his desk.

Books on the right and supply box on the left. He needs to stack his books from the largest (on the bottom) to the smallest (on top).



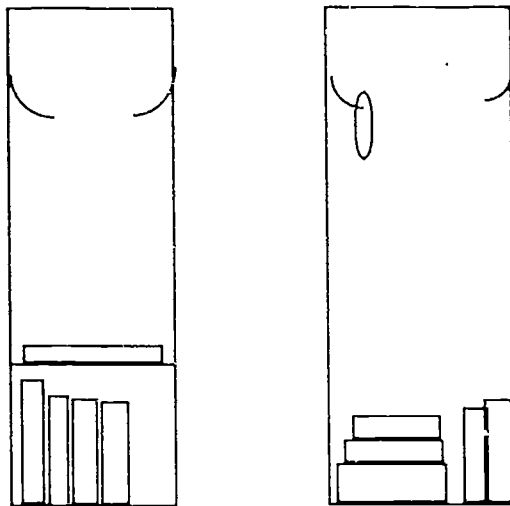
Books on the left, notebooks on the right and supply box in the middle.



Notice there are no loose papers. Everything has its place.

3. If your child is in a higher grade and has to contend with a locker, he will need to keep it free of clutter and know the combination. It is important to write down the combination and keep it in a safe place. Make it a place he can remember.
4. Book bags, books, and materials need to be arranged in the locker. Some people prefer locker shelves. Larger things can go in the bottom of the locker. A plastic bag can be hung on a hook for small articles. If your child prefers a book bag, be sure he keeps it organized and free of clutter. He needs to organize the books he carries in a certain fashion and label the bookcover on the side and front with the class period and the subject. If your child prefers carrying a notebook, he needs to organize the sections in the notebook in the order of his classes. Be sure your child has the materials needed for each class. The locker should be cleaned out regularly.

Here are some examples for lockers:



5. Your child should keep an assignment sheet. He must decide on a place to put the assignment sheet and keep it in the same place all of the time.

#### At home

1. Help your child make a time schedule of all the activities he does within one day or one week. Make sure specific times are set aside each day for fun, homework, and other responsibilities.
2. He should get all needed materials together each night and put them in a certain place for the next school day. Decide what clothes are to be worn and get them together.



(left to right) Paula Rosteet, parent, Nancy Robeson, teacher, Allison Rosteet, dyslexic child, and Dr. Patricia Dodds, educator and consultant.

3. Materials needed for homework should be in the homework space. A pencil, pen, paper, dictionary, reference books, etc. need to be in the room or on the table. This will save time and energy and promote concentration.

## Homework Guides

### At school

1. Your child should have a homework folder. This can be a pocket folder. On one pocket write "To Do" and on the other pocket write "Completed". It would be a good idea to keep the assignment sheet in this folder. (See Appendix for an assignment sheet.) Within the folder your child will need a place for papers that need to be signed by parents or teachers.
2. Make sure your child has a class schedule, a calendar for deadlines, and an assignment sheet. There should be a copy of the calendar at home.
3. Your child needs the phone number of a reliable classmate to whom he can ask questions about assignments.
4. He must keep all homework papers that are returned in order to study for tests. He should have a special place at home to keep the papers so they will be at hand when he needs them.

### At home

1. A positive attitude by the parents is extremely important.
2. Establish any rules that are necessary and be consistent. Remember to be firm, but loving. Discuss your role within the homework setting. Stop working when you become irritated or frustrated with him. Also, do not let him manipulate you.
3. Only one parent needs to work with their child at any given time. The parent



needs to leave his role as a parent and become a teacher during the homework session so as not to become as frustrated as a parent might. When working with your child, spend more time praising him for what he has done correctly, and minimize the time you must spend criticizing him.

4. One of the most important requirements for doing homework is to have a place to study: a table or desk, chair or stool of the right height, good lighting, tools and materials, and a quiet atmosphere.

5. Your child will need a specific time to do homework. A time management sheet (see Appendix) needs to be developed for your child and his daily and weekly activities. The number one priority for the schedule is homework. You can allow twenty-minute sessions with a five-minute break after each twenty minutes. This may vary from child to child, but if you are consistent with the session and break time periods, you should find that your child concentrates more and is able to get more done in a shorter period of time.

6. Encourage your child to complete the most difficult assignment first. If the assignment is long, have your child break it into parts. If it is a long-term assignment, divide it into parts and do a portion each night. Always keep the calendar handy to monitor deadlines.

7. Guide instead of doing the work for your child. Your child needs to learn how to work without dependency on an adult. If your child always has a parent sitting with him and helping through every part of each assignment, then he may also expect the teacher at school to give him an equal amount of attention. It is better to encourage independent work.

8. Instead of explaining the homework to your child, have him try to explain it to you. If he cannot, then you go over the directions with him. Have him write down the necessary steps to accomplish the task. Then he can use his notes as a guide when he does his work. Also, be sure that you use short, concise directions, because your child will get lost in lengthy explanations.

9. If neither you nor your child can understand the homework, then have your child call a classmate. If your child still does not understand, have him write down questions to ask his teacher at the beginning of the next class period. Write a note to the teacher stating that you did not understand the assignment and ask for an extension of time to complete the assignment.

10. Check your child's homework even if he says it is correct. If you find mistakes guide your child in correcting them. Do not do the work for him.

11. When he completes an assignment insist that he put a check under "completed" on the assignment sheet and then put the work in the proper place to take to school.

12. Use a timer.

13. Get things organized for the next day before bedtime.

### **Test Taking Tips**

Preparing to take a test involves many hours of learning and studying. The following suggestions need to be shared with your child. We will look at taking notes, memorizing, studying for a test and then suggestions for taking the test.

### **Taking Notes**

Your child needs to:

1. Listen to the teacher with a purpose. Have an understanding of the subject matter being covered.

2. Use an outline form for taking notes:

Outline: I. Main topics

A. Subtopics

1. Details

List key words, special points, and phrases.

3. Use symbols for commonly used words:

+ and      X example      \* important

> more than      < less than      t the

Use numerals for number words.

4. When writing notes and a word or phrase is missed, draw a line at the baseline and go on taking notes. Go back later and fill in the blanks.

5. Tell your child to ask someone in his class who takes notes if he can have a copy of their notes. Your child will still need to take notes in class, but he may want a backup to check his notes. If possible, buy NCR paper and give it to his partner on which to write notes. That way he can just get a copy. NCR paper is a carbonless carbon paper.

6. It is best to recopy all notes the same day he takes them so that the information will still be fresh in his mind. Highlight, with markers, important facts. He can use different colors to symbolize different facts.

7. Explanations or answers can be learned by talking aloud to himself or someone else.

8. Points that are not clear should be checked with another student or his teacher.

9. Be sure to put the correct date on all notes.
10. Your child can also take a tape recorder to class. He may need to ask his teacher if it is okay so she will understand why it is there. He will still want to take notes but use the recording as a checking tool for things he missed.

When taking notes from reading material your child needs to:

1. Find the purpose of the author. Read and take notes with that purpose in mind. Look at the layout of the book and each chapter. Find where the contents, index, glossary, and other important parts are located.
2. Take notes of chapter headings, subheadings, and bold print. Your child may need to purchase the book so he will be free to highlight it. Some schools offer highlighted books. If he is highlighting his own book, he ought to use different colors for major points, vocabulary, definitions, and important facts.
3. Summarize paragraphs.
4. Write down key points of chapters and paragraphs.
5. Skim or read fast for general ideas. Read slowly for details.
6. Make a list of words he does not know and look them up in the dictionary or glossary.
7. Understand and apply meanings to different situations or problems presented in the book.
8. Make note cards on books or write in a spiral notebook.

## To Memorize

Make sure he understands the material he is trying to memorize. He should understand the procedure, purpose, or meaning. He needs to read aloud, tracing or underlining with the index finger on his writing hand and look at what he is trying to memorize. Then he needs to recite it aloud to someone. He can also write and say aloud what he is learning.

## Studying for the Test

1. Make sure your child's notes are organized and written clearly. He needs to understand what he has written. I helps to type notes.
2. Your child should write possible test questions. They can be written on index cards. He can write the question on the front and the answer on the back. Use these cards to review for the test.

## Test Taking Tips

1. Your child needs to read instructions for the entire test first.
2. Your child needs to budget his time for taking the test.
3. He should decide what question to answer first.
4. He needs to block out any distraction around him.
5. He needs to read each question several times before answering.
6. Your child should think the answer through before he writes his answer. He needs to mentally define what needs to be said, including period of time, events, setting, important people, similarities, differences, and any key phrases that can be remembered from his notes that pertain to the question. He should be specific with his answer.

7. He should write his answers as clearly as possible.
8. After completing the entire test, he should check for errors.
9. Usually the first answer that comes to mind is correct. He should not change any answers without a good reason. He needs to be confident about his responses. Keep in mind that sometimes other questions give clues or answers to previous questions.

### **Important Tips for Different Types of Test**

**True/False** tests are usually the most difficult for students with learning disabilities. For most true/false tests there are certain key words that will give a clue to the answer. Keep in mind the following:

The words "only, never, always" usually pertain to false questions.

The words "often, sometimes, probably" usually pertain to true questions.

For **Multiple Choice** tests read the question and try to answer before looking at the choices. Usually one answer is clearly wrong. When he is not sure which is the correct answer, he should use the process of elimination to decide between the other two or three choices.

For **Matching** tests your child needs to first do the items he clearly knows. Then he should attempt the others.

For **Essay** tests your child may be given a choice of questions to answer. Before the test he needs to make sure he understands the following terms that are often used for essay questions:

evaluate	summarize	contrast
explain	justify	similarities
describe	define	interpret
prove	compare	illustrate
discuss	assess	utilize
enumerate		

When taking notes your child should listen for these terms. He should ask the teacher to clarify them when necessary. He should look them up in a dictionary, ask questions, and practice using them until he is sure he understands and can respond correctly to each of them.

### **Suggestions for Parent Involvement at School**

It is vital that parents become involved with their child's school. They need to join parent support groups and attend their meetings. They may want to volunteer their services at school by helping the teacher with other students or with clerical tasks. If so, they should be careful to do the work the way the teacher suggests, not some other way they may prefer.

Remember that a child's education depends on three people: child, teacher and parent. As a parent, you need to realize you share that responsibility. You need to read notices from the school, go to open house and attend other meetings. Also confer with your child's teachers. As a responsible parent, you should express a positive attitude about school and send your child to school every day and on time.

Most teachers are interested in your child's educational needs. They do not mind you visiting the classroom or talking with you. Some schools require a conference with parents more often than others. Anytime that you have concerns about your child's progress, call the school and arrange a conference.

These are some suggestions you will want to think about when you are

considering a conference with a teacher:

1. Write down what you want to say to the teacher.
2. Write down what you want to ask the teacher.
3. Consider these questions:

What is the ability level of my child?  
Is my child working to his ability?  
On what level is my child working?  
What is he doing in certain subjects?  
May I see some work he is doing?  
Does he get along well with other children?  
How does he relate to the teacher?  
Does he participate in class?  
Is his behavior satisfactory?

Consider these questions that the teacher may ask the parent:

How is the parent/child relationship?  
Does your child have any health problems?  
Does your child have any responsibilities at home?  
What type of discipline is used at home?  
How is homework done at home?

4. Remember that the teacher has more than your child to teach. She deals with many other parents and their children's needs.
5. Avoid any negative comment or attitude that you might have. Give the teacher the opportunity to explain her reasoning for doing something a certain way.
6. Be on time for your conference. Leave promptly when the goals of the



conference have been met.

7. Try not to bring your children with you.

If you are not satisfied with answers from the teacher, make an appointment with the principal and ask similar questions.

### Learning Styles

Throughout this book, we have stressed that it is important that we know the individual, the problems he has, and the correct way to teach him. It is important for the parent and child to realize that students learn in different ways. In special classes for dyslexics, the material is presented in a multi-sensory method using auditory, visual, and tactile senses. Thus, each child can use his strongest perceptual sense in addition to the other two.

A parent should help his child be aware of the style each of his or her teachers uses. We hope that each teacher will use multi-sensory methods, but if she only uses one method and it is not the student's strongest, then he needs to be aware of the situation he must cope with. Example: If the material to be learned is presented verbally (by lecturing) and the child is a visual learner, he will have a difficult time understanding and remembering what is taught.

Explanations, descriptions, and suggestions are listed below for the three styles of learning:

**Auditory learners** perceive experiences best through sound. They process most efficiently through the hearing channel. To get the best result they will need to hear information or say it aloud to process the material and retain it in memory. They need to be told aloud the steps of each process or set of instructions. Reading orally to them or having them read aloud to themselves improves comprehension (understanding of what is read).

Consider taping material that needs to be learned and having them listen to it.

Auditory learners have difficulty copying from the board because they omit words or letters. They may form reversals when writing. They will need to point to the words when reading. They need to pronounce aloud what they are reading while tracing with index finger of writing hand and looking at what they are reading for memory.

**Visual learners** learn by seeing something either in reality or in a picture. They process information primarily through their eyes.

They need visual clues along with lectures. They seem to ignore oral directions. They need to make a list of procedures or instructions in order to have a complete understanding. They also need additional time to think of answers. They will have to look at the mouth of the speaker when listening. The multi-sensory method of seeing the material while tracing and saying it aloud is beneficial to the visual learner.

**Tactile Kinesthetic learners** learn by moving or touching. Holding an object, tracing a symbol or sky writing helps tactile-kinesthetic learners process what they are trying to learn.

Movement of the body seems to be necessary, whether it is tapping a foot, tapping a finger on the desk, or touching things within sight. These individuals will learn better by holding and moving objects. This is the reason for providing "hands on" or manipulative materials. Various activities will be needed to keep their attention on a given subject.

A blending of the three previously mentioned learning styles is best for dyslexic or learning disabled children. Many times it takes all three methods together to enable them to succeed in learning and retaining information in memory.

## Fernald Method of Spelling

Parent is to:

1. Write, in cursive, each word on a card or paper large enough to be traced.

Child is to:

2. Read the word as he underlines the word with the pointing finger of his writing hand.
3. Trace over the word with the point finger of writing hand, saying the word, not letters, as he traces.  
\* Words may be broken into syllables.
4. Trace the word three to four times or until he thinks he can write the word.
5. Turn the paper or card over.
6. Write the word while saying it. Do not say letter names.
7. \*\* Look at the word, decide if it is correct.
8. Check, using the card.
9. If correct, go to the next word.
10. If incorrect, go back to step three.

\* *sen...sa...tion*

\*\* This is very important for visual memory. It is a necessary skill needed to edit their own work.

Fernald, G.M., (1988) Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects.  
Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed.

## CHAPTER 8 BEYOND THE RAINBOW

### The Possibilities Are Endless

We can only see things that are present now;  
We cannot see "Beyond the Rainbow".

We may only see a strong willed child;  
"Beyond the Rainbow" he may be a future doctor.

We may only see a disorganized child;  
"Beyond the Rainbow" he may be a future designer.

We may only see a quiet, inhibited child;  
"Beyond the Rainbow" he may be a famous lawyer.

We may only see an underachiever;  
"Beyond the Rainbow" he may be a great scientist.

We may only see a child struggling to read;  
"Beyond the Rainbow" he may be an outstanding teacher.

We may not presently see the total potential of  
a child

"Beyond the Rainbow".

--Nancy Robeson

Given the proper training to enable him to use all his abilities, he may turn out to be the very best of the best.

I screen children for educational therapy, and my heart was truly touched by a 12-year-old boy when he looked at me and said, "Will you please help me? No one else will." Do you think he won my heart? This was a difficult child

because his problems were so complex. He had to have a more structured setting and needed counseling that I could not offer at that time. I am thankful his plea was heard in time for him to find success.

I have seen a child or adult go from a depressed individual, who thought he was worth nothing, to a young man with a caring attitude and the belief that he will be successful. It is not always an easy task to find success, but with determination and willingness to do what needs to be done, success can come.

Sometimes, to make the important difference, a person must change radically: from not remembering assignments to remembering them and from failing grades to passing ones. Wow! To see a human being gain self respect and realize that he is worthy to be successful, while surmounting many problems, is an inspiring experience.

The following stories tell the accomplishments of the students mentioned in Chapter 2. Please understand that success doesn't always come easily, nor can it be measured by one set of standards. Patience, trust, and professional help are required.

I enjoy seeing the shy smiles of delight on the faces of people who have just realized they really can learn or accomplish a task.

### Amanda

A first-grader diligently worked trying to learn to read. She was willing to use the multi-sensory method of learning and was one of the most determined individuals I had ever met. She started in my class in September. Her name was Amanda. She received help in auditory and visual perception with the multi-sensory reading program, and she made progress. At the beginning, her word recognition level was pre-kindergarten.

In March, I retested her, and her word recognition level was 2.3 (second grade, third month). I talked to her teacher about her returning to regular class for

reading. The teacher was not really sold on the idea that Amanda would fit in because she had not had the regular classroom reading program that her peers had been taught. I emphasized that I knew she could read and believed she would find success. The teacher said that she would let her try.

On the day Amanda returned to class the other students were taking an end-of-book reading test. Amanda took the test with the others to see how she would do. Her teacher was totally surprised when she graded Amanda's test. She came to my room and said she could not understand how Amanda could have done such a good job on the test without having been in her classroom until that day. How could she have known all the objectives required for that book's test?

I just smiled and told her that because Amanda knew how to read, she could handle the reading test. I could have put a "Totally Sold on the Dyslexia Program" sign on that teacher's back, and she would willingly have worn it for the rest of the year.

After that time, the teacher had questions about other children who needed help. Amanda was not only promoted to second grade but was placed in a group two levels higher than she was in first grade.

In the third, grade Amanda mastered the TAAS test for achievement. She still has difficulty memorizing something new, but by using the methods she has been taught, she continually finds success.

Remember: dyslexic people are of average or above average intelligence who learn in a way that differs from most of us. Amanda is a prime example. She had struggled in kindergarten, but because of the way she was taught in the first grade through the dyslexia program, she learned successfully.

**Greg**

Greg was in the dyslexia program in the fifth grade and received special-

ized help during the year. He progressed to 5.6 level in word recognition, but I really did not see a change in his attitude about school or himself.

Greg's parents were constantly at school trying to get assignments and figure out why Greg would not do his work. They were too much involved, and it was not a good situation, for Greg was actually controlling them. During the summer his parents sought psychological help to deal with the family dynamics. In therapy his parents came to realize that Greg was really manipulating their lives and not making any progress in learning. These sessions also helped Greg with his self-image.

The next year Greg was in the sixth grade, and changes were made. His parents decided that he was on his own. Sink or swim, he was to control his life and not theirs. They would be there to assist him if he needed help, but they were not there to do his work for him.

It took the first six-week period for Greg to realize that his parents meant what they said. By the second six weeks, he was remembering assignments and remembering to study for tests. As modifications were made at school, Greg learned responsibility. When he made a good grade on the first science test he had passed all year, he was so excited that he wanted the teacher to post it for everyone to see. The first led to many as he had a very successful year.

### John

In John's first year in the program found success with progress of reading word recognition from 6.7 to 8.5. He had days when he tried to dominate the class, but most days were fine. He also had to learn how to deal with teachers who did not always do things his way.

It was a trying year, but he became more responsible. He realized that he could do the work and find success.

His handwriting did improve. It became legible. John had learned the alphabet incorrectly. Apparently, when he learned to sing it as a young child, he thought they said "x, y, d, z", instead of "x, y, and z".

He had experienced six years of total misery but now was realizing that school could be rewarding and successful. He learned how to organize his thoughts and write more interesting papers. John relearned the alphabet, getting the "d" in the correct place. This helped him understand alphabetizing and dictionary skills better.

He passed seventh grade. Eighth grade was more successful. Improvements were made in all subjects. John still had difficulties in math processes. He actually needed to go back through basic math skills in order to fill in gaps in his knowledge. There were some concepts that he had not fully understood, and these were interfering with correct procedure.

John's relationship with his peers<sup>8</sup> was more pleasant than the previous year. Success had come, and it continued.

### Charles

Charles qualified and received help in the program on his campus. He not only found help for his dyslexic difficulties; he found a very loving teacher who believed in him and gave enormous support. The rest of the eighth grade was not easy, because many teachers expected bad behavior. He was already labeled a trouble maker, and even though his behavior changed (for the better), he did not lose the label immediately.

Changing to high school really helped him, as none of the teachers knew him or his record of behavior. He made better grades. He really needed to be in higher level classes because he was extremely intelligent. Often, he knew more about a topic than the teacher. Still he showed a willingness to accomplish tasks.



In a new environment, where teachers did not prejudge him, Charles experienced his first successful year.

### Liza

Liza came for educational therapy for six months. Her word recognition level increased from 3.5 to 7.0. She had been in special classes for children with learning disabilities from second to eighth grade. She decided on her own, in her freshman year of high school, that she would assert herself, try to reach her aspirations, and either sink or swim. Liza was a real trooper! Despite her dyslexia problem, she had passed the assessment test for graduation.

Liza had failed an English course in college and needed to review writing skills. She came to me. We used a multi-sensory method for reading, and I taught her basic skills that she needed for language mechanics. She also learned study skills to use with all subjects.

Liza's second year of college was more successful than the first. She found further success by using the organizational and test taking skills I had shown her. Her grades improved and she was well launched and happy in college. She graduated from a junior college after three and one half years.

### Mark

Mark's reading level increased from 5.0 to 9.0 within the month of educational therapy. He learned phonetic and language rules. He then found that he could write just as well as he could talk. Mark became more successful in his business and more confident about what he was doing. He was honest with himself. It was marvelous for Mark to have his intelligence and worthiness confirmed and to feel that he could be successful.

## Allison

"Allison was screened for dyslexia in mid-December. I received the results of the screening in early January. Allison had an average I.Q., but she had auditory and visual perception problems (two characteristics of dyslexia). I was pleased by the report. At last, we had something to work with!

It was not always easy to cope. It was not always easy to obtain the information I needed.

Through her school, Allison was put into a special dyslexia class for thirty-minute sessions twice a day. She seemed to like it, but had problems understanding why she had to go. I explained that she was special and had the opportunity to learn two ways.

This period called for a big effort on my part, since I wasn't sure exactly what the program was about. I visited the school frequently trying to obtain information. I spoke to Allison's regular teacher and dyslexia teacher many times. My daughter would bring materials home that I simply did not understand.

Looking back now, I realize that I was not expected to know or understand everything immediately. There is a process which we all have to go through -- parents, teachers, and children - to reach a state of informed acceptance. I want to emphasize that you must ask questions, be involved, be confused, and be frustrated before you reach acceptance. Try to handle your feelings in a positive way. Remind yourself that the program your child is in will take time before you see results. Remember that the child is learning in a different manner from what he is used to and may have to relearn things he learned incorrectly at a younger age.

Allison and I went through all the pain, frustration, and hurdles required to achieve success. We worked countless hours on activities to improve her visual and auditory problems.

*Allison did repeat first grade. She scored high enough to be promoted to second, but her teachers and I felt that because of her learning difficulty, she had not had enough time to really grasp the fundamentals.*

*Every child is different. Everyone has his own opinion on retaining children. You must meet with your child's teacher and thoroughly examine the pros and cons of retaining your child. This was not an easy decision for us, but we believe it was the right one for Allison. Remember that your main concern should be your child's educational future.*

*Do not let feelings from the past determine your decision. You may have been held back and feel it didn't do you any good. Be aware that the special educational opportunities available to our child now were not there for you when you were young. It is just a matter of advancement that has occurred in the educational field. As we all grow, we learn.*

*Allison was a well-adjusted first grader. She has continued with her dyslexia program and absolutely loves it. Every day she learned something new. She wrote wonderful stories. She made 100's on her spelling tests and could still spell the words many weeks later. All of her drawings were happy. And of course, she read! Her classroom teacher made modifications in her regular classes that enabled Allison to accomplish all her work.*

*At home, Allison reads everything. Sometimes I have missed the opportunity to read to my four year old because Allison beat me to it. Every night, after saying her prayers, Allison reads to herself and her sister. Every morning, I may find five or six books in or around the bed. Yes, the books may be scattered and opened, but it is a much better sight than the orderly, unopened books on a bookshelf.*

*Of all the projects I have toiled over in previous years, nothing compares to the sense of accomplishment I feel knowing that my daughter can read. She is determined to do whatever it takes to strive for further academic success."  
(Paula Rosteet)*

**Strive to reach Beyond the Rainbow!**

**Remember....**

The first tear of hurt, brings shared pain.

The first implication that something is different, brings questions.

The first realization that things are wrong, brings worry. But...

Knowing that your child's failure will cause grief, brings precaution.

Understanding that your child is intelligent but learns in a different way,  
brings hope.

Excitement for the strengths your child has, brings joy and appreciation.

Understanding that no one has deliberately done this to you or your child,  
brings humility in the face of human imperfection.

Believing that now is the time to begin, brings commitment and formu-  
lation of a plan for change.

Realizing that there is hope for your child to be what he or she wants to  
be, brings determination.

Courageously facing who you are, where you have been, and what lies  
ahead, brings serenity.

Finding the rainbow and passing through it, brings the discovery that ...

Golden success can be found

**" Beyond the Rainbow. "**

## Reference

Fernald, G. M. (1988) Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects.  
Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed.

APPENDIX

The charts in the appendix may be copied and enlarged.

## Appendix I

### PHRASES YOU CAN SAY TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD.

Wow!

Superior.

Excellent idea.

You are exactly right! That is quite an accomplishment.

I am very impressed with your work. Nice going.

I like the way that you did that. Clever thinking.

I appreciate your help. You are super. Thank you.

Super. Neat work. Very interesting. Great!

You have solved the problem. Great observation.

Why don't you share your idea? Good for you.

I appreciate you. That is interesting. Superior work.

Fantastic. The best. Awesome. Terrific. Wonderful job.

I am very proud of you. I can tell you were really thinking.

This is really an improvement. You are making great progress.

Appendix 2

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Today I need to

Completed ( )

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix 3  
**TIME MANAGEMENT SHEET**

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
7-8 am							
8-9 am							
9-10 am							
10-11 am							
11-12 am							
12-1 pm							
1-2 pm							
2-3 pm							
3-4 pm							
4-5 pm							
5-6 pm							
6-7 pm							
7-8 pm							
8-9 pm							
9-10 pm							

Appendix 4

CALENDAR

Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.



## Appendix 6

### Samples of Teacher Rules and Requirements

#### Guidelines for the Class -- \_\_\_\_\_

I. Class Rules. All policies listed in the student handbook apply to this class. Some reminders and additional guidelines follow:

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. You must be in your own chair when the bell rings.
3. Bring notebooks, books, pens, etc. to class each day.
4. Raise hand to be recognized before speaking.
5. You are dismissed by the teacher, not the bell.

#### II. Preparation for Class

1. Bring all necessary supplies to class.
2. Textbooks must be covered at all times.
3. Homework is due at the beginning of the class period.
4. Anything that goes up on the board goes down in your notes.
5. Notebooks: Keep one to contain all notes, handouts, and papers.
6. Study every day. Fifteen to twenty minutes of concentrated effort will greatly enhance your learning of the subjects and will keep you from getting behind.
7. Always bring something else with you to study in case you finish early. This is especially important on test days.
8. Start each class period by reviewing quietly.

#### III. Evaluation: Grades are determined by the following:

1. Home work: written and oral
2. Quizzes: doubled
3. Tests: triple
4. Class participation grade:
  - a. Being prepared for class
  - b. Oral participation in class
  - c. Class behavior

Appendix 6, continued:

#### IV. Absence Information

1. Only excused absences can be made up.
2. Be careful that you do not exceed the number of absences allowed.
3. All make-up work will be done on Monday afternoons (tests and quizzes).
4. It is your responsibility to ask for your make-up work and to get it in on time.

## Appendix 7

Checklist for home:

When I arrive home I need to:	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1. Eat a snack; rest for 15 minutes.							
2. Get the schedule, calendar and assignment sheet to see what I have to do today.							
3. Set priorities on what needs to be done.							
4. Complete all assignments.							
5. Review progress of the day and double check everything.							
6. Check all checklist to show completion.							

Appendix 8

Classroom Procedures

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Materials needed daily:

\_\_\_\_\_

Class format:

First \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Second \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Third \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fourth \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 9

Evaluate the way you feel about yourself by checking one of the three boxes:

A for always

S for sometimes

N for never

Score yourself at the end of the checklist.

Do I ...	A	S	N
1. feel that I am important?			
2. feel special about my life?			
3. feel that I know my goals for life?			
4. reach goals I set?			
5. feel confident in what I am doing?			
6. feel successful in my work?			
7. act independently when required for my work?			
8. assume responsibilities?			
9. look forward to new challenges?			
10. influence others?			
11. feel power in appropriate areas?			
12. tolerate stress well?			



13. feel worthy of praise?			
15. feel other people like me for who I am?			
16. display several emotions and feelings?			
17. feel creative in my work?			
18. feel I am capable of developing new ideas?			
19. feel empathy for others?			
20. feel I have strengths as an individual?			
21. feel there are special things about myself?			
22. feel that I have knowledge and abilities that others do not have?			
23. express the way I feel in an appropriate manner?			
24. enjoy being who I am?			
25. fulfill my responsibilities?			
26. know how to make decisions?			

27. apply skills I have learned?			
28. have good problem solving skills?			
29. know how to deal with stress?			
30. feel I can verbally communicate with others?			
31. tolerate ridicule?			
32. accept compliments?			
33. feel I am in control of my time?			
34. deal with boredom?			
35. deal with losing?			
35. deal with peer pressure?			
36. deal with embarrassment?			
37. deal with being left out?			
38. deal with failure?			
39. accept "no" as an answer?			
40. know how I feel about things?			
41. express concern for others?			

Total your checks in each column.

Column A \_\_\_\_\_ x 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

Column S \_\_\_\_\_ x 1 = \_\_\_\_\_

Column N \_\_\_\_\_ x 0 = \_\_\_\_\_

82 - 42 points suggest you have good self-concept  
and self-image

41 - 20 points suggest you do not have the self con-  
fidence that you need for success.

19 - 1 points suggest you may need to make changes  
including professional guidance to get your own  
life on the road to success.

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## Appendix 10

### IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Educational Interventions for Learning Differences, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1753  
Baytown, Texas 77522-1753

Irlin Institute  
5380 Village Rd.  
Long Beach, CA 90808

Learning Disabilities Associations, Inc.  
4156 Library Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Council for Exceptional Children  
1920 Association Dr.  
Reston, Va. 22091-1589

The Orton Dyslexia Society  
724 York Road  
Baltimore, MD 21204

## Appendix 11

### Suggested Classroom Modifications for Children with Learning Differences

1. Highlighted textbooks.
2. Give a test orally, or ask for demonstration of a skill.
3. Enlarge print for written work.
4. Break written assignments into small segments.
5. Use a peer-tutor to do the writing on a lengthy assignment.
6. Use a window overlay for written assignments.
7. Use graph paper for math assignments.
8. Extend time for completing work.
9. Encourage him to slide finger of dominant hand under words while reading.
10. Use a marker or L-shaped card to help keep his place.
11. Reduce amount of homework given, because of the amount of time it takes to complete the work.
12. Fold, cut, or cover worksheets so only one section is seen at a time.
13. Give clear, concise directions of one or two steps. After giving directions, have him repeat what is to be done before he begins his work.
14. Have him sub-vocalize when reading for better comprehension.

Additional copies of this book may be ordered from:

**Educational Interventions Publishing**

P.O. Box 1753

Baytown, Texas 77522-1753

713-421-4660



This is an informative and easy to read book about dyslexia as a learning disability. It is written by a concerned parent and experienced teachers who know success can be found for the dyslexic and learning disabled.

... Beyond the Rainbow

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