

Dear Legislators

I am a 41yo mother of four children. I would like to share with you the tremendous peace and empowerment that has come to my home through the diagnosis and remediation of my children with Dyslexia.

My oldest son is 14 years old and in the eighth grade. He has been 'tested' on two different occasions by public school professionals in the Special Education department. The first time for giftedness in about the fourth grade. The second time he was tested, in the seventh grade, it was for social and attention issues. We were told "He is just a puzzle" and although his grades were dropping and he was apparently struggling in school, he didn't qualify for any assistance that they could provide. We were left with no direction, our hands in essence were tied. This is when we looked at many other forms of remediation outside the school system for him; the 'Neural-Developmental Approach' and the 'Fast forward' online exercises to name two.

When my daughter (third child) began the reading process in Kindergarten, I began to notice that she would look at the pictures in the stories and guess at words instead of sounding out the words. This raised some concern for me. As she continued to struggle in reading ability, her math skills were also reflecting a struggle. As a mother I became overwhelmed with all the homework that she was unable to do without many hours of effort and no apparent gains in knowledge of the subject. On the advise of friends, we took her to the Fundamental Learning Center in Wichita to be assessed by Dr. Stone. His diagnosis came with much positive information and gave us real direction. I enrolled in the introductory course for Alphabetic Phonics so I would be able to fulfill his recommendation for one hour a day of Orton-Gillingham remediation. I enrolled because this was our only source of Orton-Gillingham remediation in our area of Kansas.

This AP course not only benefitted my children, but has gone far beyond. I began to realize as I worked with my children in this approach, I also suffered from this difference. I never before knew how I was able to achieve my Bachelors in Nursing without reading the text books. Not to mention all the disregard for my educators and my emotional scars that I brought into adulthood. Taking this course and seeing the results in my children and myself I was able to let go of those many hard feelings and hurts that I held on to because I realized that the teachers honestly wanted to help me, but didn't understand how my brain worked differently. They weren't given the tools in their education experience to help me. As I am brought to a new level of function while also bringing this opportunity to my children, I see a improvement in our home life. It's not as much of a struggle just to maintain status quo. This is where the peace, forgiveness and healing comes in. The empowerment piece is the fruit that will flow forward from this point. How much greater will our Kansas kids be with such dramatic empowerment. Why not take the first steps to lead our nation in Education!

Tarese Hammes