

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER



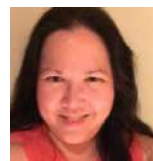
WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER?

- DYSLEXIA AND ADHD
- GOOD NEWS FOR GRE & PRAXIS
- ADVOCATE FOR GIFTED
- READING AND AUDIO APPS
- VIRTUAL LEARNING
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



Dear Friends

Welcome to new sponsor **Winston In College - Academic Support Anywhere!** Visit them to learn more. This month's issue includes some great tips heading into summer as well as a question from the session about ADHD. I'm giving a Dyslexia for Psychologists course for APA credits **HERE**. June 22 live but also available by recording! Get your 6 credits before the August deadline!



Fernette Eide MD, Editor

Congratulations to graduates!

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The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is \$79.99 and available for children and adults 7-70 years old. iPad, iPhone, Android, and Kindle Fire.

The app may be used to identify and qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books.

Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Williams, Cheryl Kahn, and Jack Martin. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for design and layout and Andi and Freshea for their social media and admin help!

PREMIUM

Editor's Note: to make our publications easier to read, we will avoid use of italics and certain types of fonts.

Newsletters can be read online **HERE**. This issue will be available on the Joomag site for 3 months and can also be downloaded as a pdf file.



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THIS SUMMER?



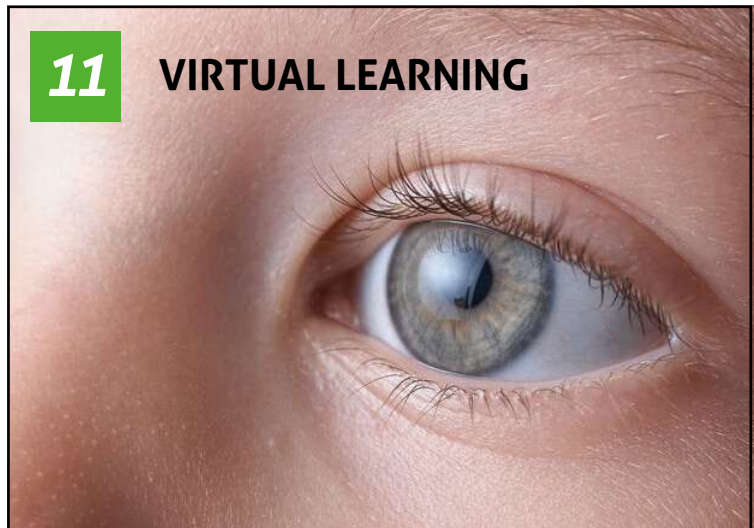
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DYSLEXIA NEWS



WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER?

Summertime tends to be a great time for dyslexic students.

The grinding schoolwork routine is gone - and school, if at all, has fewer time commitments and less time in a seat.

TAKE A BREAK

First, especially if your student has had a difficult school year with heavy workloads, make sure there's sufficient time to rest, recover, and do different things. Many students need a chance to remember that life is not school and they are not their report cards.

EXPLORE AND CONNECT

Summer can be a great time to explore the world, pursue new interests, and spend time on hobbies. So many people have told us over the years that what matters the most to them in their career success had little to do with schoolwork.

The dots don't have to be in a line, either. Summer jobs may give students experience at responsibility and leadership and a boost up in addition to money in the bank. Experiences don't necessarily have to be formal classes, although having a class with a professional in a field a student may be interested in can be exciting and even life-changing.

For some students, their gift may be in people skills. As a result, their free time might be spent with friends - but that doesn't necessarily mean they aren't developing their super strength that will carry them into their adult years.

If you have a friend or acquaintance with an interesting career, ask if they could job shadow or meet your kids to tell them about their career. Many people are happy to do this, and it can get the wheels turning about what they might really want to do when they get older.



When our kids were younger, I learned a dad in our daughter's class worked at a video game company. I asked if our kids and their friends could visit him at work - he said yes - and they were thrilled! They learned that he had worked as an architect before, but got hired by the company (Valve) to create environments. He told them that when he was an architect, he had to work a long time on a single building, but creating worlds for the game company, it was more creative because he could make a lot more and had more latitude in their design in these imaginary worlds.

Seeing the digital artwork inspired our son, and touring a game studio inspired our daughter, who then was just learning how to design simple Flash games.

WHAT ABOUT REVIEW?

Summer learning loss is a real occurrence - so if there is a way to incorporate some reading, writing, and math into the long days of summer, it could help keep skills up (and even get a little ahead) by the time the school year rolls around again.

It's **most common** for students to lose ground in math and spelling rather than reading.

SUMMER

MATH

For math, this is the time to set a regular math card game time.

[We are Teachers](#) has a great list of math card games. Remember the skill of breaking down and putting together numbers (like finding 10's) can improve flexibility with numbers that's not dependent on rote memory.

Making minor changes to favorite games can increase the math challenge to wherever they are. For example, playing "Go Fish" to make 10's or doing multiplication War (play 2 cards at a time and use the multiplication product of the two numbers to see who wins a round).

For spelling, what you choose may depend on your student. Many spelling apps can help your student get some practice in and keep up some skills over the summer. Summer schools or tutoring may offer creative writing groups - and spelling can be snuck into the process - even if students use spellcheck or something like [Grammarly](#).

Finally, getting students hooked on books is much easier during the summer than during the school year.

Let your student read whatever they'd like whether it's a popular book based on a movie or game, magazine, comic book, or game manual.

If reading is still difficult, offer to read the first chapter or few to get over the hump of being introduced to the characters and general scene. Character names and places are often difficult to decode - so hearing the first chapters can make the rest of the book easier to read.

Try pairing a print book with audio - this may be easier for some students than reading along in an e-book app. Some might also do well with an e-book app, especially if time is taken to customize the rate and the display options to match a student's speed of reading. Check out the next articles for apps that offer free online reading from your public library.



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GREAT READING AND AUDIOBOOK APPS FOR SUMMER

If you or your student haven't tried audiobooks or e-books, summer is a great time.

You can get a public library card for free, and have access to thousands of e-books, audiobooks, comics and graphic novels, and movies and magazines from the convenience of your desktop or digital device. Many libraries may even have free 1:1 tutoring and language lab for foreign or English Language Learners. Some schools also have institutional subscriptions for online book services that families can use for free. Contact your teacher or tech support at school to see what additional goodies you may qualify for before school dismisses for the summer. Remember, too, that students with dyslexia or other print disability qualify for free e-books from [Bookshare](#).



First, I want to sing praises of [Libby](#) and its audiobook collection!

TIPS FOR AUDIOBOOKS

LIBBY

Libby is a wonderful and easy-to-use app. The only drawback is that popular books can sometimes have long waitlists - and if you have a slow reader, then the borrowing times may be short.



The [Sora app](#) is the ebook and audiobook app for public schools. Sora uses Overdrive and launched a summer reading program called [Sora Sweet Reads](#) for the US and Canada which will have popular juvenile and young adult ebooks available from May 15 through August 28. These books will always be available for students who want to read / listen.



TeachingBooks®



Sora Sweet Reads lists and resources are available on TeachingBooks and Book Connections.



Some people will be able to access Sora titles through their local library. Books may also be available in other languages.

TECHNOLOGY

For comic book and graphic novel lovers, if your selection from Libby isn't enough, check out Hoopla which also runs through your public library.

As explained below, Hoopla also has an action mode so that you can see single panels at a time and not have to squint at panels that are too tiny on a phone.

Hoopla offers popular audiobooks, music, ebooks, and TV.



Also, if you haven't tried Audible audiobooks before, there is a 30-day free trial and Prime members get 2 free book credits.

Check out their collection of audiobooks [here](#):



GUEST POST from Stacy Scofield from sponsor Commonwealth Learning

VIRTUAL LEARNING IS HERE TO STAY...

More than three years have passed since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. And now, with little pomp and circumstance, the Public Health Emergency Declaration is over. We made it, resilient lot that we are, through the isolation, illness, and three of the most challenging years students and teachers have ever seen (and lest we forget, too many episodes of *The Great British Bake Off* to count!).

For 35 years Commonwealth Learning Center has provided [1-to-1 academic support services](#) to individuals with learning differences and offered a variety of [multisensory trainings](#) to local and regional educators. This work was conducted exclusively in person, and then along came the pandemic. We had considered the idea of offering virtual services more than once over the years, but our Learning Center seats were always full, so we opted in these moments to leave well enough alone. But suddenly it wasn't enough after all. As COVID swept the country, schools moved to a fully remote curriculum; fear and frustration set in for many families while educators worked overtime transforming their lessons to fit the new virtual format. Questions swirled about how it would work, and whether it would work. Would this generation of learners lag behind or feel shortchanged forever? At CLC, we knew we had to step up and make some changes.

"Initially it was a lot of trial and error. Teachers had to just jump in. We had never done this before," recalls Beth Dinelli M.Ed., Director of Commonwealth Learning Center. "Prior to the pandemic, we were of the mindset that in-person tutoring was the best way to go; but we saw students struggling and wanted to make our tutoring services as accessible as possible while still incorporating the multisensory strategies that are so effective with our students—all students, really. To that end, what we have been doing since the beginning of the shift to virtual in March 2020 is mailing supplies and manipulatives to our students to make tutorials hands on despite the presence of the computer screen. For example, some of the things we mail to students receiving Orton-Gillingham instruction are colored chips for sound segmentation, a plastic screen for tactile practice of sounds and sight words, and a columned vowel chart for word sorts. Before the lesson, we also email materials that are printed at home, so the students have those in front of them."



Of course, making such a significant change was not without its challenges. “Initially, Wi-Fi connection was a major issue for a lot of people because students competed with others in the home for a good signal,” notes Dinelli. “That was overcome through a lot of troubleshooting with the parents. Another hurdle was that some families didn’t have a device. That’s still the case even now—sometimes families don’t have a device to use for remote instruction and we’ll lend them a Chromebook to use.” Regarding the lesson content, for students with dyslexia, one challenge we anticipated with a virtual learning environment was discriminating between sounds. On a computer without headphones, auditory is sometimes compromised. In situations like this the teacher will prompt the student by saying, “look at my mouth to see what sounds it is forming, and how my mouth moves to make those sounds.” For this purpose, having a close-up of the teacher’s face on a screen is actually quite an advantage.

On the whole, we’ve found that the multisensory learning approaches we employ such as [Orton-Gillingham](#), the [Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing® \(LiPS®\)](#) program, the [Nancibell® Visualizing and Verbalizing® Program for Language Comprehension](#), and [Multisensory Math](#) lend themselves nicely to the virtual environment. “Students have responded really well,” reports Dinelli. “When the pandemic first started, I thought, this is never going to last. As soon as we can, we’re just going to go back to in-person. And I was definitely proven wrong.” At this point we have reintroduced in-person instruction—it’s been back for over a year now—and still the breakdown of virtual to in-person clients is three to one. Dinelli cites convenience as a primary influencing factor for this, as many families are scheduling tutorials around extracurriculars and siblings’ schedules. Fatigue from a long day at school and mental health challenges are some other factors that make virtual instruction appealing for our students. With virtual instruction students’ attendance is better, and because their attendance is better, they’re able to make measurable gains faster. We’re also able to reach populations outside of the Greater Boston Area, which wouldn’t have been the case before the pandemic. Dinelli notes that even some of the students who received in-person instruction at Commonwealth for years have moved to virtual and never looked back.

In Commonwealth Learning Center teacher Ms. B's experience, she has found parents to be more in sync with virtual lessons because they print out the materials for their children, are nearby during instruction, and even occasionally pop on screen to chat at the end of the session. But really, it's about the students, and Ms. B observed that kids come alive when they are in their comfort zone. She has enjoyed providing her students with the opportunity to share their pets and favorite possessions and speak and behave more freely than they might in the Learning Center amongst other student/teacher pairs. She recalls one learner in particular, a gymnast, who completed a task, excused herself to do a few back flips, and then returned to her lesson refocused and ready for the next activity—an option that would have been challenging at best in the Center.

"Prior to the pandemic, the prevailing opinion was that multisensory instruction couldn't happen virtually. It had to happen in person," Dinelli recalls. "I don't think we would have made as much of a transition if the pandemic hadn't happened because we were of the mindset that being physically present was necessary for optimal learning to occur." Now, her feeling is just the opposite. "Our experience has shown us that students can get just as much out of a virtual tutorial session as they can in person."

Now, in year three of virtual instruction, Dinelli doesn't see the possibility of ever returning to an in-person only enterprise. "We get many, many requests for virtual, and if we couldn't provide a high level of service in this format, we wouldn't continue to get those requests or even offer the service. I understand some families may have trepidation about switching from in-person, but our virtual students receive the same type of experience through the screen, using the same multisensory model. Lessons are formatted in such a way that students are engaged, feel successful, and make gains comparable to those of in-person tutoring."

Children with language-based learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, may be at a higher risk of summer slump than their peers (*Christodoulou, J.A., Cyr, A., Murtagh, J., Chang, P., Lin, J., Guarino, A.J., Hook, P., & Gabrieli, J.D.E. 2017*).

Impact of intensive summer reading intervention for early elementary school children with dyslexia. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 50(2), 115-127, so now is a particularly pertinent time to consider virtual tutoring to help your student(s) stay on track academically without disrupting summer fun. Sessions can take place before or after camp, or even from your vacation rental/seasonal residence. For more information about virtual tutoring services through Commonwealth Learning Center, schedule your free consultation [here](#).

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TESTING NEWS: DOJ FORCES CHANGES IN NEED FOR MORE TESTS GRE AND PRAXIS



Any student who applies to college or graduate school knows that the burden to re-test can be costly for students pursuing higher education.

For decades, families have had to navigate a minefield of proof to be granted much-needed accommodations for high stakes exams. The cost may really add up.

We have posted on the Department of Justice's regulations regarding the ADA at work and at school [here](#).

Although these guidelines clearly stated re-testing for accommodations should not be burdensome and that generally outside testing should be accepted, families have had to fight battles on an individual basis if their particular request for accommodations was denied.

Well, the recent good news is that the Department of Justice has announced at [settlement](#) with the Education Testing Service, the company of the Graduate Record Exam and Praxis, a test for teachers and speech language pathologists.



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ADVOCACY

From the report:

"to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, ETS must:

- a. limit its requests for documentation regarding testing accommodations for individuals with disabilities to requests that are "reasonable and limited to the need for the modification, accommodation, or auxiliary aid or service requested";
- b. give "considerable weight to documentation of past modifications, accommodations, or auxiliary aids or services received in similar testing situations, as well as such modifications, accommodations, or related aids and services provided in response to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or a plan describing services provided pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973";
- c. respond "in a timely manner to requests for modifications, accommodations, or aids to ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities."

The report noted that the Department of Justice had received many complaints from individuals with disabilities saying the ETS had rejected their requests for accommodations despite years of documentation establishing the need.

One example they shared seemed to describe a gifted student with an ability-achievement discrepancy, a common pattern for gifted dyslexics:

"Complainant A.T. received a learning disability diagnosis from a qualified professional as a teenager, and consistently received testing accommodations during high school and through college and graduate school, including extended time for examinations, extra breaks, and a quiet room for test taking. A.T. received those and similar testing accommodations on standardized examinations. A.T. provided documentation of this history of accommodations to ETS, but ETS repeatedly requested that A.T. submit additional documentation establishing that A.T.'s disability was currently causing functional limitations that warranted the requested accommodations by providing documentation within five years of the date of request, which would be costly for A.T. When A.T. advocated for ETS to follow current federal guidance regarding testing accommodations, ETS's former



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ADVOCACY

Director of the Office of Disability Policy responded, "I question the diagnosis of a learning disability, given the scores from the WISC-III and the WIAT-II when you were a teenager. There is no question that you were functioning in the gifted range (FS IQ 137), but you performed below expectations on only one single subtest of the WISC-III at that time, with little to no impact on your academic achievement skills." This ETS professional had never met or evaluated A.T. ETS declined to provide A.T. with any testing accommodations."

To be sure, other higher education testing services like the College Board and ACT will be reflecting on this case; students and their families should be aware that a wide variation may exist among psychologists and their understanding of dyslexia.

The settlement ruling is a great reminder to [submit a complaint](#) with the Department of Justice when discrimination occurs; it is the only way to impact testing agencies and large educational institutions.

The DOJ also recently released a [letter](#) reminding their students post-secondary institutions like colleges and universities make sure that all of their online materials are fully accessible - so that includes screenreaders for those who need them.

In the past, we have heard about difficulties posting in online boards and being required to read and comment on other students' posts although the sites seem inaccessible and appear to lack text-to-speech.

If you're the student, meet with the teacher and / or someone from the IT department. Common university platforms have them (for example [Canvas' Read Speaker](#)). It may need to be enabled by IT or you may just be shown how to access it.





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National Center for Learning Disabilities, the International Dyslexia Association have evaluated the Sondag System(r) and deemed that the program contained the required elements for teaching reading identified by the Nation Reading Panel.



Q: Can the strengths of dyslexia be affected or minimized by ADHD?

This question came through our webinar last month and I thought we could respond to it in more detail in our newsletter.

There can be a high degree of overlap between individuals diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. Both dyslexia and ADHD can run in families and both can be associated with creativity, giftedness, and lower working memory.

Dyslexia is usually identified through a "clinical diagnosis" with a professional looking at gaps between certain measures of IQ - like verbal reasoning and comprehension, and lower than expected single word or pseudoword reading (fake words that need to be sounded out and so reflect phonological awareness), naming speed, oral reading accuracy and speed, spelling, and impaired automaticity with writing by hand. An entire book can be devoted to this - but here are just some details to give you the situation.

ADHD is not identified with neuropsychological testing - but instead with a behavioral checklist looking for behaviors that a family member or teachers can observe and make conclusions about - like inattention or impulsivity.

From [Shaywitz, et al., 2016](#):

"Estimates of rates in those with dyslexia and comorbid ADHD range from 9% to as high as 60%, whereas patients initially diagnosed with ADHD have a co-occurrence of dyslexia reported to range from 15% to 45%."

Another interesting intriguing aspect is that - as we have mentioned previously Cambridge University researchers Taylor and Vestergaard have recently published [Developmental Dyslexia: Disorder or Specialization in Exploration?](#)

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Michelle Lucas, M.Ed., AT



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DYSLEXIA ADHD

But did you also know ADHD is also associated with a bias for exploration ([Addicott et al., 2020](#))?

Exploration by itself is not always "good" or "efficient", but a lack of a tendency to explore is also not always "good" or efficient." Whether that is good or efficient depends on what your goals are.

There are complex aspects to interpreting the research on dyslexia, ADHD, working memory, reward, learning, and strengths. You wanted to know whether ADHD could affect or minimize strengths - and the answer is - yes, but it also depends - depends on the extent of attention problems and impulsivity and depends on what a person is trying to do. Problems with persisting with activities and organization can interfere with the development of talents - or at least delay them for some time. Working on the weaknesses associated with ADHD will help those strengths to emerge.

There's an **growing sense** that high-level creative work requires both divergent thinking, salience (ability to recognize something that's interesting), and executive function (analyzing, organizing, executing plans). So to realize high levels of creative achievement, executive function will need to be developed.

There is a great deal of brain organization and reorganization that takes place from childhood to young adulthood and sometimes development may go backwards for awhile before it goes forward.

What I would do is find something that your student loves, and encourage them to develop this love to a high degree - whether its finding a mentor or peers with this interest and expertise.

Success can breed success and micro-expertise can grow. Encourage grow, trying difficult things, failing, and trying again. that will improve attention and perserverance and resilience.

Intrinsic motivation is a huge force to try to latch onto. It will help skills grow naturally and increase the likelihood of success.



DYSLEXIA ADHD

As a group, kids diagnosed with ADHD seem more reward-sensitive than their peers who are not. As a result, if there's something you really want them to do because it's good for them, but they have no interest in it, then provide an external short-term reward. A good reward in this setting is something that has a quick pay-off (cookie, game time, playing with friends, avoiding a chore), not something that would be rewarding in weeks or longer.

Don't provide an external reward for something that they already find interesting. [Researchers](#) have discovered that providing external rewards dampens the intrinsic rewards and enjoyment of the tasks.

In fact, protect time with things they love to do (whether it's building or drawing or learning how a computer game works) - it helps intrinsic motivation grow and it also builds focus, persistence, and resilience.

If you see a student getting frustrated at difficult tasks, try to troubleshoot the difficulty. See if scaffolding and more instruction improves persistence. Is what they are trying to do, too difficult? If so, is there a way you can help (like scribing a creative story) or watching a video to a particular task.

The nice thing about finding a way to get a student to persist at something is that it can create a positive feedback loop of more success, more enjoyment, stronger persistence and difficult tasks, and so on and it can still be a lot of fun for them.

The legendary photographer Ansel Adams said this about his childhood and father:

"I often wonder at the strength and courage my father had in taking me out of the traditional school situation and providing me with these extraordinary learning experiences. I am certain he established the positive direction of my life that otherwise, given my native hyperactivity, could have been confused and catastrophic. I trace who I am and the direction of my development to those years of growing up in our house on the dunes, propelled especially by an internal spark tenderly kept alive and glowing by my father."

Ansel's father did try him in school until he decided he would make more progress with tutors and learning through experiences like going through the

exhibits at the World's Fair. The first activity that motivated him to stay in one place was playing the piano. The next big event in his life was getting a Brownie camera.. and he was hooked for life.



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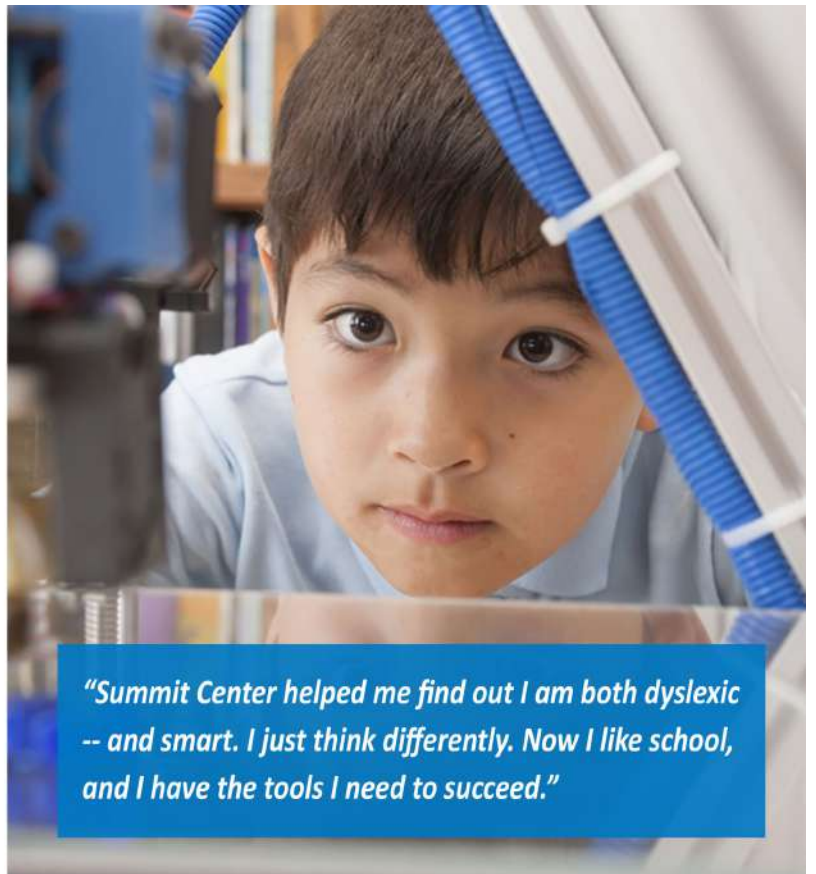
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What Readers Say Needs to Be Done To Help Dyslexic Students

Education Week



Struggles in School for Dyslexic Students Prompt Interest in Sport

Cronkite News

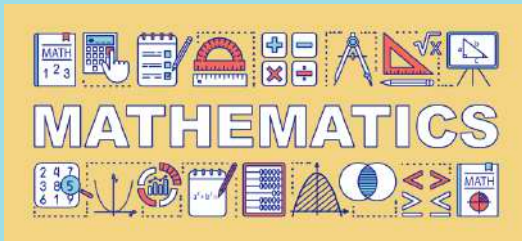


Mandatory Dyslexia Screening Coming to California

EdSource

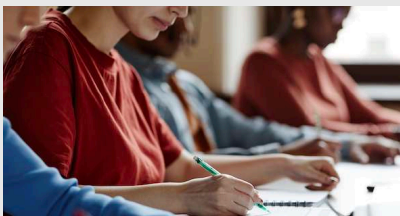


Dyslexia Desirable for Spycraft (GCHQ Director)



Dyslexia and Dyscalculia

Education Week



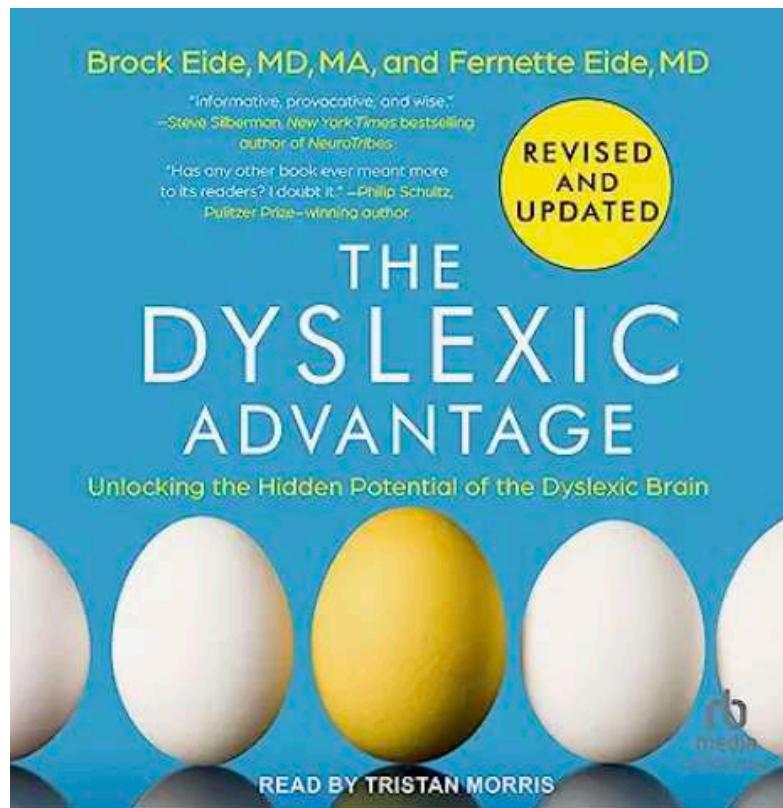
More Accommodations Needed for Exams Say Dyslexic Students

Irish Examiner

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Dyslexic Advantage
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★ ★ ★ ★ ★
4.7 STARS

**OVER 1,300
AMAZON REVIEWS**
FOR THE FIRST EDITION

**"A light in
a dark place..."**

Undeniably the best
book on this subject."

—A. KERMATH,
AMAZON REVIEWER

**"This book has
changed my life!"**

I wish it existed
when I was a kid."

—BAP,
AMAZON REVIEWER

**"A
must-read..."**

helped me understand how
my child communicates,
listens and thinks."

—A. VAN METER,
AMAZON REVIEWER



Discover Your Learning Ability

Churchill's proven methods and well-trained faculty change the lives of children who struggle with dyslexia, ADHD and language-based learning disabilities.

At Churchill, we know our success is measured not by how many students we impact, but by the impact we have on any one student!

CHURCHILL
CENTER & SCHOOL
National Leader in Learning Disabilities

churchillstl.org | 314-997-4343

“Summit Center helped me find out I am both dyslexic -- and smart. I just think differently. Now I like school, and I have the tools I need to succeed.”

Helping Children, Teens, Adults, and Families Realize Their Potential

assessment | consultation | treatment

Summit Center specializes in helping students with complex learning profiles and differences -- including kids who may be gifted, and those who might be both gifted and have challenges (known as twice-exceptional or 2e). We provide formal evaluations of strengths and challenges, and offer specific strategies and recommendations to guide growth and maximize potential.



**SUMMIT
CENTER**

Reach New Heights

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"A great photograph is one that fully expresses what one feels, in the deepest sense, about what is being photographed."

Ansel Adams

Ansel Adams, Monolith, the Face of Half Dome