

# Dyslexic Advantage

## NEWSLETTER



**HARRISON FORD**  
From Dyslexic Late Bloomer  
to Carpenter to Iconic Actor

Photo: Wikipedia

- AUDITORY TRAINING BEFORE STRUCTURED LITERACY
- WRITING: NARROWING A PROMPT
- SEEING IN 3D - THOMAS WEST
- LOOKING BACK
- DYSLEXIA NEWS

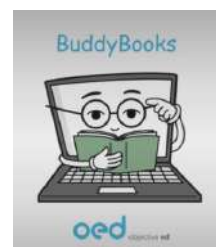
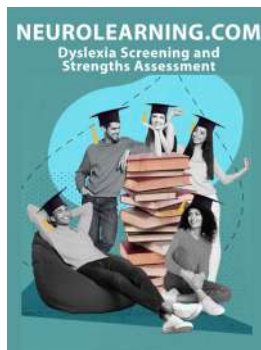
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Dr. Fernette Eide  
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## SUMMER FUNDRAISER: DYSLEXIA AND HIGHER ED

Support this free newsletter and Dyslexic Advantage programs by joining Dr. Joan in our Dyslexia in the Real World even **HERE**.

The link for this issue is: <https://joom.ag/oDtd>

This issue will only be on Joomag for about 6 months. Afterwards, look for this issue in our **Newsletter Archives at DyslexicAdvantage.org**. Keep our programs running by **donating** or becoming a **Premium subscriber**. We need your help.

## RISE OF VISUALIZATION - CHAT GPT AND ROBOTICS AUGUST 21st with TOM WEST AND BRANDON KING

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 qualify for services such as Benetech's huge free library of e-books. Bulk discounts available for higher ed.

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

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DYSLEXIA IN THE REAL WORLD  
PRIVATE EVENT in JULY  
with DR JOAN BISAGNO  
PAST STANFORD DIRECTOR

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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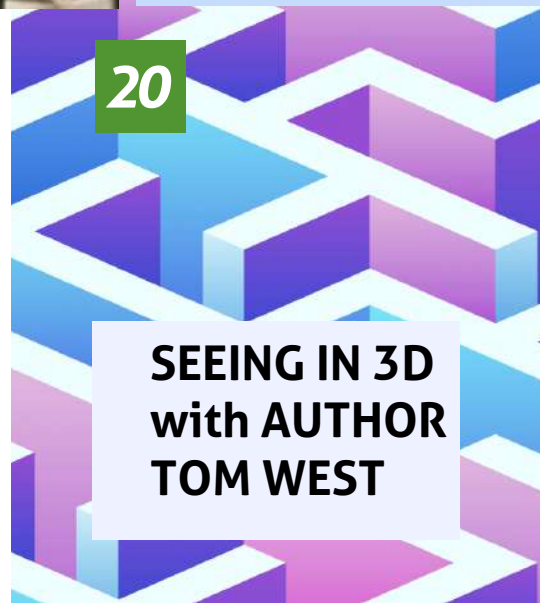


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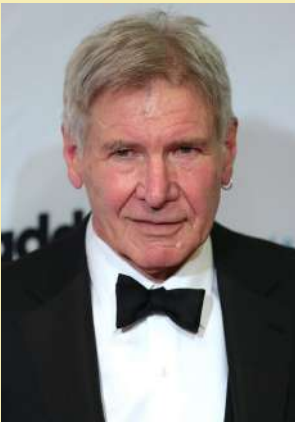
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# HARRISON FORD

## HAN SOLO, INDIANA JONES, JACK RYAN, LATE BLOOMER



**"I was a kid who never found a niche. I wasn't an athlete, I wasn't a school leader. I wasn't anything. I was a late bloomer, I think."**

**- Harrison Ford**

Image from Wikipedia

How could that possibly be?

Late blooming is a typical profile for dyslexic young people because their talents and their challenges are all over the place - and things you're supposed to learn in school (reading, writing, arithmetic) are difficult if not impossible to automate. In a few interviews, Harrison mentioned that he was a sloth in school - you wouldn't think it if you watched all the movies he's in - but that's kind of how it is for some people in their early years.

Harrison often talks about how he was bullied at school, but he found some refuge in Boy Scouts. When studying for a reptile merit badge, he worked at an adventure boy scout camp with reptiles. Even though Indiana Jones was afraid of snakes, Harrison is quite comfortable with them and likes them a lot.

Outside of acting, Harrison has led an eclectic life. He was painfully shy as a child and thought of drama classes to help him get over some of his shyness.

He was a philosophy major in school (not an uncommon major for many dyslexics who like the big picture and looking at big ideas behind ideas), but struggled getting passing grades, and eventually left Ripon College without a degree.

Fortunately, Harrison had taken a drama class in his senior year and had been encouraged by his teacher and liked the acting community. He did a little summer theater, then headed out to Hollywood. As he describes, he was slowly starving as an aspiring actor, so to support his young family, he checked out books on carpentry from the local library and soon was getting paid well as a carpenter.

As encouraging as his college community was, he received plenty of bad advice over the years including "You have no future in movie business" from the head of a talent agency.

His breakthrough role (although still small) was when he was cast in American Graffiti. In fact, he was able to negotiate an increase above guild wage by saying that he made almost twice as much as a carpenter and had a wife and two children to support.

If you're interested in Harrison Ford, the carpenter, check out a wonderful story at MrSawdust.com [here](#). I did not know that Harrison was first hired to work on the Star Wars franchise not as an actor, but as a carpenter on the set. For photos of Harrison as a carpenter, visit [here](#).

In fact, Harrison first met George Lucas not during a casting call, but installing a door at Francis Ford Coppola's house.

Harrison considers himself a lifelong carpenter - and was working as a carpenter through the Indiana Jones and Star Wars series, believe it or not. He also has been actively involved in remodeling his homes.

Other spatial talents of his including being a pilot of planes and helicopters and he has rescued several people by helicopters - one a lost Boy Scout near Yellowstone

## HARRISON FORD



The lost boy scout was amazed when Harrison was there to rescue him. Harrison apparently joked at the time, "You certainly should have earned a merit badge for this."

Apparently, Harrison Ford has also been involved in another rescue - one where he witnessed a car crash in front of him.

Harrison seems to have had a very full life outside the film industry - he has a family, but also has been active in environmental causes including being Vice-chair of Conservation International.

It difficult to sum up Harrison's movie career because it spans 6 decades - but besides his roles in the Indiana Jones and Star Wars series, he is also well known for Witness (Academy Award), Blade Runner, The Fugitive, and Jack Ryan in Patriot Games and Clear and Present Danger.

Asked about whether he has a theory of acting, he said he didn't have a theory about acting at all, but rather, "I have a theory about storytelling, I suppose. I don't know if I have ever cogently expressed it...in my case [acting] almost always proceeds from asking questions about the story. Not so much about the character., but the story. Why did the writer write it this way? What does it mean? It's sort of a practical look at the way the thing is made.

If I can develop full confidence in the material, then I know what the purpose is, and the acting comes easily..."

What he said reminded me of what we've heard from other dyslexic people about the logic of stories and the story arcs and downstream events that come from that. As remarkable as Harrison's interests and talents are, the wonderful breadth can be more common than you think among dyslexic people.






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# BEFORE STRUCTURED LITERACY: AUDITORY TRAINING



If a student struggles when starting a structured literacy curriculum, it's important to see if there are any visual or auditory processing issues that are making it difficult to show progress. Sometimes a child may have a mild lazy eye or need glasses.

If a child has trouble with phoneme (sounds that make up words), and medical issues like an unrecognized ear infection) have been ruled out, then it might be that a more specialized curriculum may be helpful for a student before standard structured literacy lessons are begun.

## FOUNDATIONS IN SOUND AND LINDAMOOD BELL LIPS

[Foundations in Sounds](#) is often referred to as a pre-reading curriculum, but it can be helpful for any student who is having trouble discriminating, sequencing, and remembering the sounds in words. For students having trouble with the first step of a program like Barton Reading, for instance, Foundations in Sound or another program focused on auditory discrimination may be especially valuable for students having difficulty with the first steps of a structured literacy program like [Barton Reading](#) or [Seeing Stars](#) from Lindamood Bell.

The dilemma for students who may have short auditory memories for little sounds (like "uh" or "eh") is that even introductory levels of some curricula require a certain level of proficiency at keeping these sounds straight and in the correct sequence before the letter titles or cards come out. To avoid frustration, working in even smaller steps with a foundational program like [Foundations in Sound](#) or [Lindamood Bell LIPS](#) can help the programs proceed more easily.

**LIPS** is a program that can work very well in 1:1 or a 1:2 group. It does require a tutor or teacher to provide precise feedback and it includes visual and verbal cues about mouth positions to correct common errors that students may have that could interfere with later phonemic and phonological awareness lessons.

Good tutors or software programs with accurate feedback are very important for dyslexic students because it can be very difficult to unlearn incorrect sound associations or discriminations later. Errors in auditory discrimination will also have its impact on spelling, too.

Some families may want to do some well-spaced out practice over the summer if it helps them get ahead with reading or spelling.

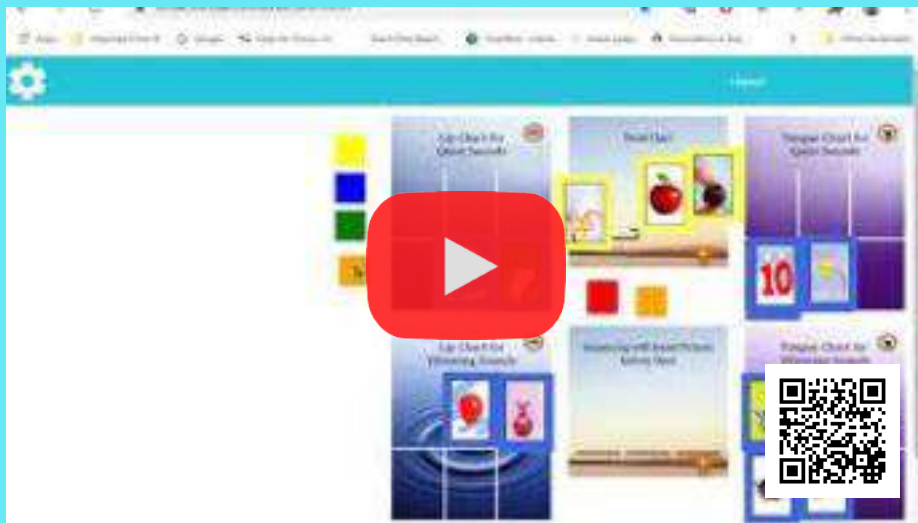
There are print and virtual options available for both Foundations in Sound and LIPS. LIPS has been around longer so it has more associated activities.

Auditory Training may also be helpful for English Language Learners. If a person didn't hear certain sounds in their native language growing up, it is harder for them to learn them when they are older. This observation is often referred to as a critical period for language. Years ago, it was thought that the critical period for language was very short in early childhood, but now it is known to be longer...for instance grammar learning extends out until the age of 17 (more [here](#)). What that means is that if English is not the native language for your child and your child is also dyslexic - it may take longer for them to hear and correctly sequence and remember certain sounds - but that with training, it can get better.

On the next pages are some videos with more insights into these auditory training programs.



# DYSLEXIA AND HEARING SOUNDS



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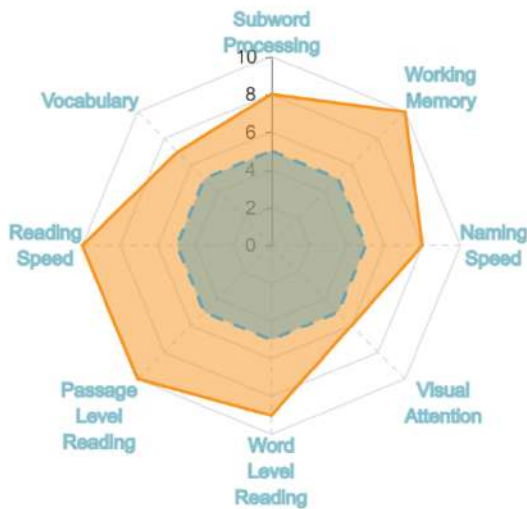
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## Understanding Your Dyslexia Subscale Score:

**ALL SCORE RANGES ARE 1-10. SCORES 7+ INDICATE GREATER DYSLEXIA RISK OR READING CHALLENGES.**



YOUR SCORE

AVERAGE SUBSCALE

The radar graph of your scores provides a quick overview of your Dyslexia Subscale Scores.

The further a particular score is from the center of the graph, the greater the likelihood it represents a dyslexia-associated processing trait.

### Foundation Scores

These are low-level processing skills underlying reading and spelling



#### Subword Processing: 8

Measures your brain's ability to break apart, identify, and manipulate sound components that make up words.



#### Working Memory: 10

Measures the amount of auditory-verbal info your brain can actively process at one time.



#### Naming Speed: 8

Measures the speed at which your brain can recall words from memory in response to visual symbols.



#### Visual Attention: 6

Measures how well your eyes and brain cooperate to gather accurate information about printed symbols.

### Achievement Scores

These are learned reading skills.



#### Word-Level Reading: 9

Measures your ability to recognize (or "sight read") and decode words.



#### Passage-Level Reading: 10

Measures your ability to read and understand longer passages of text.



#### Reading Speed: 10

Measures the speed which you read sentences and paragraphs.



#### Vocabulary: 7

Scores 7 and higher can increase reading problems.



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# LOOKING BACK: A 10th GRADER'S DYSLEXIC JOURNEY

A creative and intelligent 10th grader reflects on her experiences with dyslexia in [this article](#):

"As a little kid I loved so many things. I loved stories, listening to picture books and imagining the stories in my head. I loved making up my own games to play with friends around the yard. I loved being creative, playing with blocks, and building miniature houses out of popsicle sticks with my dad. I loved Legos with a passion. I had almost every Lego set my parents would allow; I could envision the whole building before I made it and I would sit for hours working on making the Legos come to life...

When I was younger, I loved stories. I remember sitting with my mom on the couch reading picture books for hours, imagining the characters coming to life."

But things changed when she went to school and books were introduced:

" I vividly remember first being introduced to reading books in kindergarten and not knowing what I was supposed to do with the words on the pages. Everyone else seemed to know innately what to do. I remember thinking to myself, how do they know how to read that?"

Amelia even remembers how she tried to memorize her early readers instead of reading individual words:

"A lot of the time, I felt like giving up. As a first grader, I remember feeling called out and embarrassed. I felt less smart than my classmates and overall defeated."

So many members of this community have shared these early experiences. The downside of having such strong personal memories - but a reminder of how important it is to look for strengths in the early years and minimize public embarrassment.

Amelia shares this memory of her pull-out classes:

'...extra classes were supposed to improve my reading skills, I still didn't improve; instead, being pulled out of class pushed me further behind and made me feel worse about myself.'

Amelia was enrolled in a private school specialized for dyslexia - it's telling though what her favorite memories were from that time. She articulates it so well:

"...my favorite part of school was art and being with my friends. My friends definitely helped me through some hard times. And art was an escape because it didn't require reading or complex instructions. Art is just about being creative in whatever ways move you. Art was the way I excelled outside the academic classroom. It was something I was good at, and I loved it. I may not have been the best artist in the art room, but that didn't matter. Working in the art room and being able to be creative helped me let go of a lot of the stress I felt. Still today, if I feel stressed or anxious about school or other things, I often paint or tinker with something to help calm my mind."

Finally, listen to this lovely answer that Amelia gives about her strengths:

"Throughout my years in school, I have learned about my strengths, and have even enjoyed reveling in them. One that stands out is my ability to visualize an assignment and know where to go from there. I have learned that I am a good leader on group projects. I also excel in art — whether it's painting, using clay, or building something. I've also learned that because of my dyslexia, I think and see in three-dimensions, something most traditional learners do not do."

Bravo Amelia!



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# WRITING: NARROWING THE OPEN-ENDED PROMPT

For many reluctant writers, there is nothing worse than the dreaded "open-ended prompt."

Write about what you did this weekend. Tell me about space. Tell me about American History.

Arrggh. Sometimes it's the gifted kids who seem to struggle with this the most. If the writing prompt were narrowed it would be easier - instead prompts like these can be paralyzing and students may twirl their pencils for a while and then put them down.

## NARROW THE PROMPT

Whitney Ebert has a nice mini-lesson on narrowing topics [here](#).



## WRITING

A writing prompt that is too wide can have the opposite effect of encouraging student to put something down on paper.

What is more helpful to choose instead is a topic that can be summarized in 50 words or less or 2 paragraphs or whatever writing goal is appropriate for your student.

If you're completely stumped about how to narrow your topic, then ask an AI program and it will suggest narrower topics. Don't ever use any student's name because of confidentiality issues when typing into an AI program like **ChatGPT**. Instead, add more specific information like the age of the student, how many words, sentences, or paragraphs you are aiming for - or even ask for a short writing sample that a student can use to help understand what is expected. Also while ChatGPT works well for summarizing or rephrasing work, it can also "hallucinate" or make up information - so factual information should always be checked with reliable sources.

When I asked ChatGPT to narrow a topic down for a 10 year old about space, it responded:

### "1. Choose a Specific Aspect of Space

**Planets and Moons:** Focus on one planet or moon and its unique features. For example, "Life on Mars: Could It Be Possible?" or "The Mysteries of Saturn's Rings."

**Astronauts and Space Missions:** Write about a specific mission, such as the Apollo 11 moon landing, or a day in the life of an astronaut.

**Space Technology:** Explore how telescopes, satellites, and rovers work and their importance in space exploration.

**Asteroids and Comets:** Explain

What they are, how they move, and any famous ones like Halley's Comet.

### 2. Focus on a Phenomenon or Event

**Black Holes:** What are they, how do they form, and why are they important?

**Eclipses:** The science behind solar and lunar eclipses and why they happen.

**Meteor Showers:** When they occur, why they are spectacular, and how to watch them.

### 3. Relate Space to Everyday Life

**Space and Time:** How the concept of time changes in space and what it means for space travel.

**Gravity:** How gravity works, why it's different on other planets, and its effect on our daily lives.

Gravity: How gravity works, why it's different on other planets, and its effect on our daily lives.

#### 4. Historical or Future Perspectives

History of Space Exploration: Key milestones, such as the first satellite, the first man on the moon, or the development of the International Space Station.

Future of Space Travel: What scientists and engineers are planning next, like missions to Mars or the idea of space tourism.

#### 5. Use Engaging Formats

Interviews or Diaries: Write from the perspective of a famous astronaut or a fictional character exploring space.

Comics or Illustrated Stories: Use visuals to explain complex concepts in a fun and engaging way.

#### Example Narrowed Topics

"Exploring Mars: The Red Planet's Secrets"

"Journey to the Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission"

"How Telescopes Help Us See the Universe"

"Understanding Black Holes: The Universe's Mysteries"

"Why Do We Have Seasons? A Space Perspective"

Here are sample model texts of 50 and 150 words generated by ChatGPT:

"Mars, the Red Planet, is a fascinating world with towering volcanoes, deep canyons, and dusty deserts. Scientists are curious about its dry riverbeds and ice caps, wondering if life ever existed there. With rovers like Curiosity exploring its surface, Mars reveals more secrets every day."

"Mars, often called the Red Planet due to its rusty color, has captivated scientists and dreamers alike. This intriguing world is home to the largest volcano in our solar system, Olympus Mons, and the grand canyon Valles Marineris, which stretches over 4,000 kilometers. Once, ancient rivers flowed across Mars, carving out valleys and leaving behind clues of a wetter past. Today, polar ice caps and traces of water in the soil keep the hope alive that Mars might have once supported life.

Rovers like Curiosity and Perseverance traverse the Martian surface, conducting experiments and sending back valuable data. They examine rocks, soil, and the atmosphere to understand Mars' history and its potential for future human exploration. As we continue to unlock the secrets of Mars, we get closer to answering the age-old question: Are we alone in the universe?"

## VISUALIZATION

# SEEING IN 3D: FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF AUTHOR THOMAS G WEST



## The Rise of Visualization and Dyslexic Thinking in the Age of ChatGPT

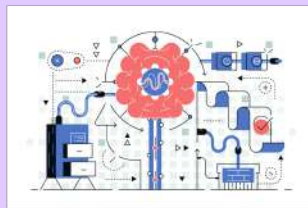


Mind's Eye Author Thomas G West  
and AI Robotics Expert Brandon King



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<https://omella.com/vty5v>

Tom West is a founding Board member at Dyslexic Advantage and an early inspiration for the first edition of our book, *The Dyslexic Advantage* in 2011.

Tom is the author of the [In the Mind's Eye Dyslexic Renaissance Blog](#) in addition to books [In the Mind's Eye](#), [Thinking Like Einstein](#), and [Seeing What Others Cannot See](#). Recently, he posted an excerpt from one of his books sharing an interview with Bill Dreyer - Brandon King's grandfather - who is also dyslexic as well as a scientist and inventor who created an automated sequencer that revolutionized DNA biotechnology.






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## VISUALIZATION

"I knew I was different in the way that I thought, but I didn't realize why I was so dumb at spelling. . . . And rote memory and arithmetic and so forth. The first time I realized how different . . . brains could be . . . was when I bumped into Jim Olds at a dinner party back in the late sixties. Jim Olds was a professor here...

A speaker talked about the way we think and compared it to holography. Jim was across the table from me. I said, "Oh, yes. When I'm inventing an instrument or whatever, I see it in my head and I rotate it and try it out and move the gears. If it doesn't work, I rebuild it in my head." And he looked at me and said, "I don't see a thing in my head with my eyes closed." We spent the rest of the evening, over wine and so forth, trying to figure out how two professors—both obviously gifted people at Caltech in the Biology Division—could possibly think at all, because we were so different.

So then I took this up with Roger Sperry [Hixon Professor of Psychobiology], and I realized that I had some amazing shortcomings as well as some amazing gifts."

Bill Dreyer was right! These are amazing gifts and many people don't have them!

Join us for an unforgettable evening with In the Mind's Eye author Tom West and robotics executive Brandon King as they talk about dyslexia in the workplace, the visualization gifts associated with dyslexia and much more. 10 years ago, Brandon's talk at the Conference on Dyslexia and Innovation received a standing ovation!



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# DYSLEXIA NEWS



## **DYSLEXIA IN THE REAL WORLD FUNDRAISER for Dyslexic Advantage** Ret. Director OAE at Stanford Dr Joan Bisagno

**July 25th**



**Celebrating Dyslexia as a Special Way of Thinking**

**Psychology Today**



## **Maryland Could Retain 3rd Graders with Low Reading Proficiency**

**Maryland Matters**



## **More States Failing to Meet Special Education Requirements**

**Disability Scoop**



## **Science of Reading - NY Schools**

**CBS News**



## **Spotlight - Dyslexic Teacher Holli Quebe**

**Brownwood News**

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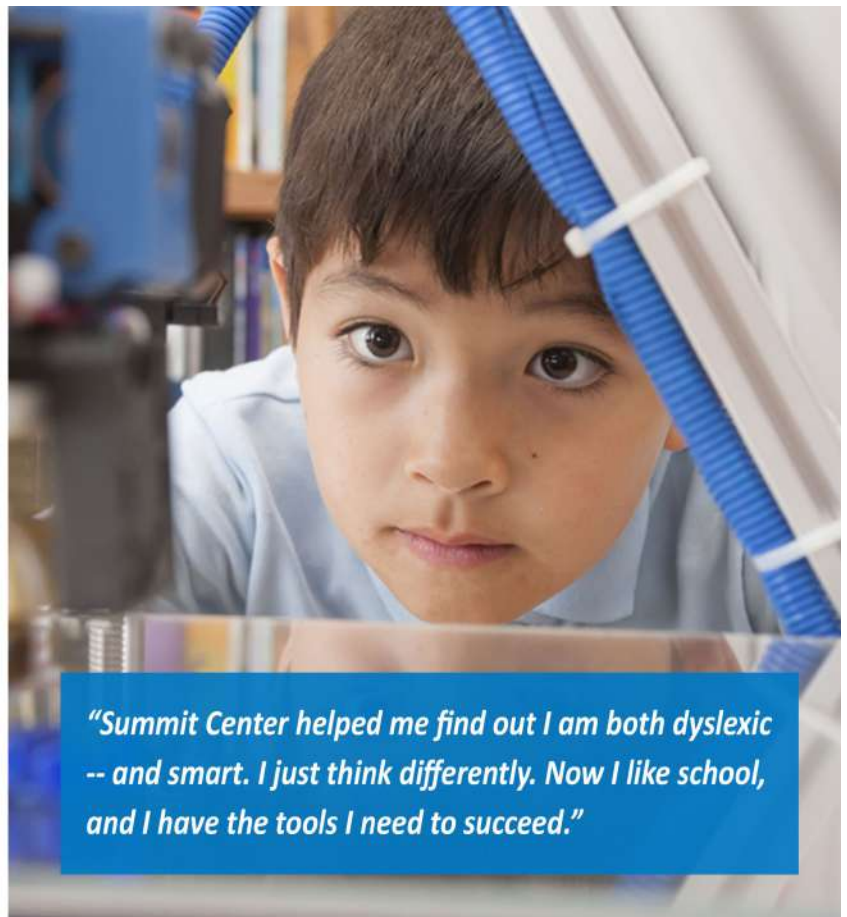
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*"Summit Center helped me find out I am both dyslexic -- and smart. I just think differently. Now I like school, and I have the tools I need to succeed."*

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### Dyslexic Brain Strengths:

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- Pattern Recognition
- Systems Reasoning
- Memory From Personal Experiences
- Spotting Trends/ Making Predictions
- Storytelling



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# DYSLEXIA IN THE REAL WORLD

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<https://omella.com/x654r>



Limited to 50.

## 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

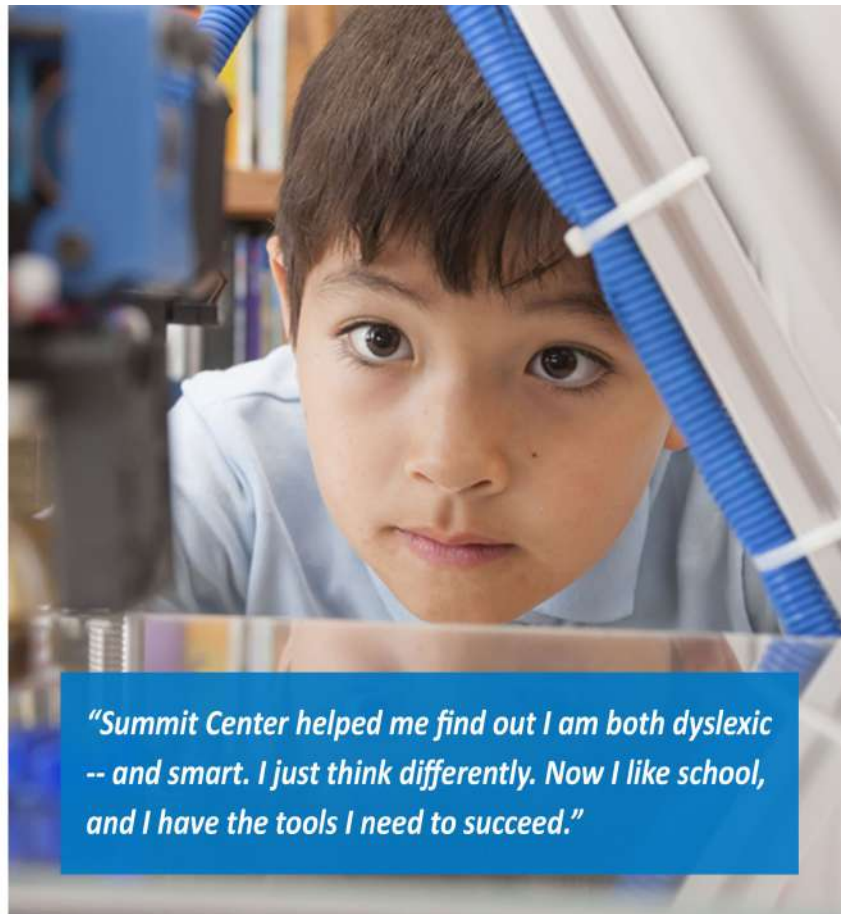
**Offices in California:**

San Francisco Bay Area 925-939-7500

Los Angeles Area 310-478-6505

[www.summitcenter.us](http://www.summitcenter.us)

[info@summitcenter.us](mailto:info@summitcenter.us)



*"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."*



“We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance.”

- Harrison Ford