

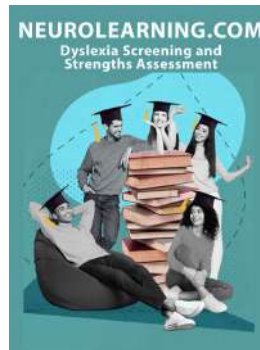
Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER

THE IMAGINATION AND
PERSISTENCE OF
SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR
OCTAVIA BUTLER



- READY, SET REVIEW - IEP
- WANTED: DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE
- MOVIE AMBASSADORS
- PLANNING FOR CHANGES FROM THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



Dr. Fernette Eide
Editor-in-Chief



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The link for this issue is: <https://joom.ag/A6wd>

We're looking for movie ambassadors to suggest groups that might be interesting in showing our movie when its released. Check it out **HERE**.

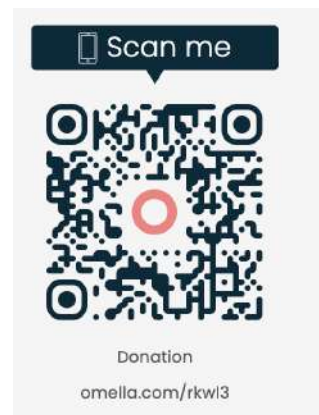
For back issues of this newsletter, visit **Newsletter Archives at DyslexicAdvantage.org.**

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!



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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NEWS



IMAGINATION AND THE DETERMINATION OF OCTAVIA BUTLER

Octavia Butler was a groundbreaking and influential science fiction writer in the 20th and early 21st century. She had many award-winning novels and stories, and won a MacArthur Genius grant, Hugo and Nebula awards, and was inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame.

She was also dyslexic.

As a child, she was daydreaming constantly and not able to finish work. Reading was effortful and she struggled with grammar and spelling. She had what she referred to later as an almost paralyzing shyness. But what Octavia seemed to excel at were "what if's" and seeing a science fiction movie fired up her imagination in the future as well as alternative worlds. The books in Octavia's classrooms held little interest for her, but she discovered her public library had them and she begged her mother for a library card. She would later say that reading was important for writing - and fortunately by not giving up, she was able to discover and play around with ideas in her mind that were years beyond her age.

"You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing (rubbish) and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it.

That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence."

- Octavia Butler

At MIT, Octavia made the [following remarks](#) about how she came to write science fiction:



Photo of Octavia Butler from Wikipedia

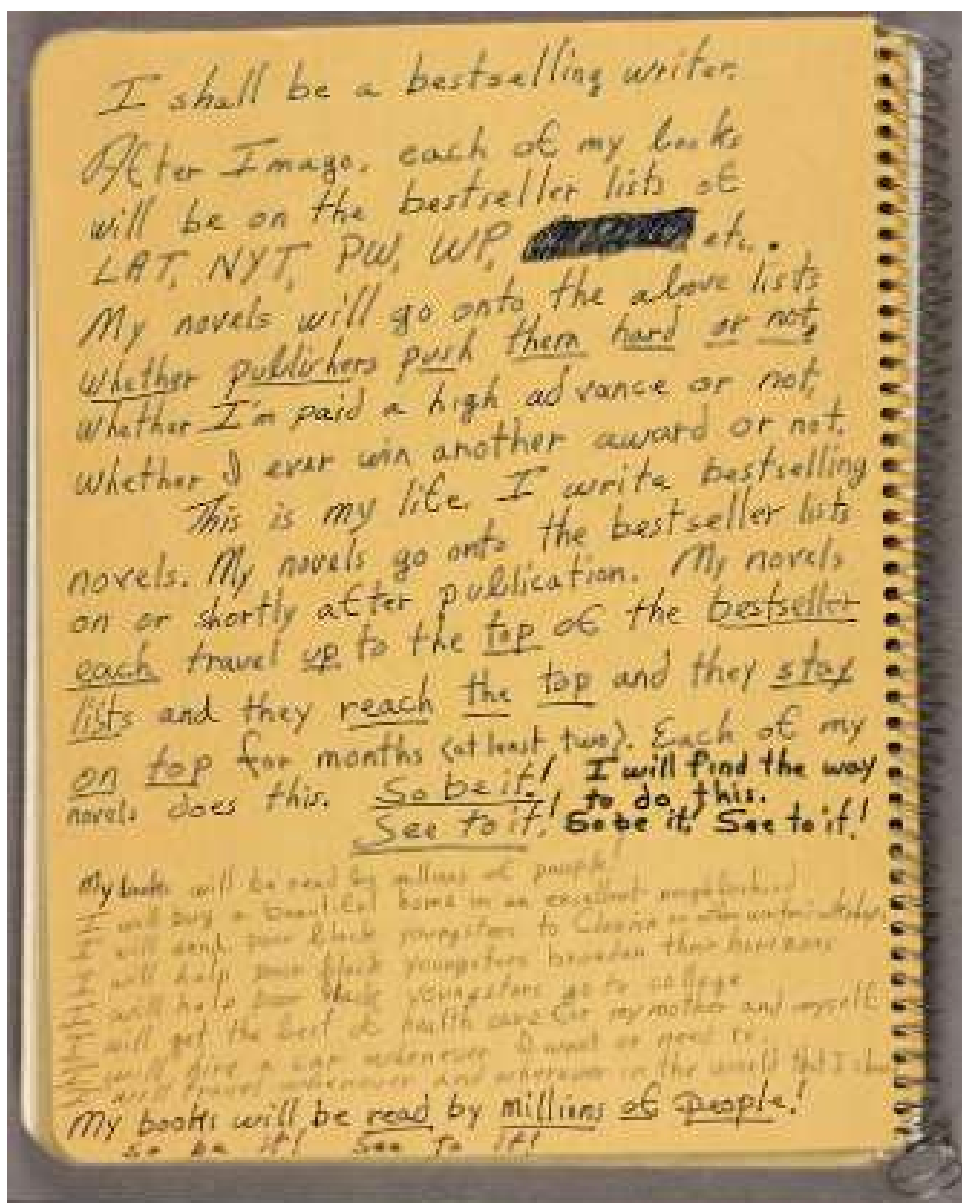
"It's impossible to begin to talk about myself and the media without going back to how I wound up writing science fiction and that is by watching a terrible movie. (Laughter) The movie was called, "Devil Girl from Mars," and I saw it when I was about 12 years old, and it changed my life. (Laughter) It was one of those old 1950s movies in which the beautiful Martian woman arrives on earth to announce that all the Martian men have died off and there are a bunch of man-hungry women up there. And the earth-men don't want to go. As I was watching this film, I had a series of revelations. The first was that "Geez, I can write a better story than that." And then I thought, "Gee, anybody can write a better story than that." (Laughter/Applause) And my third thought was the clincher: "Somebody got paid for writing that awful story." (Applause) So I was off and writing, and a year later I was busy submitting terrible pieces of fiction to innocent magazines."

In her elementary school years, she would write in a pink notebook, but by the time she was in junior high, she gathered up the courage to ask her science teacher to submit one of her stories to a science fiction magazine.

SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR

After graduating high school, Octavia took a series of "lots of horrible jobs" while she would complete a community college degree at night and write science fiction. Some of these horrible jobs included washing dishes, inspecting potato chips, and working the phones as a telemarketer. She woke up every day at 2 am so that she could write before she went to work. She wasn't able to give up those jobs and live off of her writing until she was 30 and she received her first book advance (read more [here](#)).

Besides not giving up, Octavia was also constantly writing self-affirmations and goals.



photo

One of her goals, to make it on the New York Times Bestseller's list, was finally reached in 2020, 14 years after her death.

From the MIT lecture, some other excerpts which reveal the tough grind of being rejected and her interesting thoughts that resulted in her stories:

"I wrote and wrote and sent things out and collected rejection slips until I realized that collecting rejection slips was masochistic. And I took the drawer and threw them all out. And then when I was 23 and attending Clarion Science Fiction Writers Workshop, I wrote a story called, "Child Finder." In "Child Finder," I had a lot of telepaths fighting like crazy with one another. If you wonder where this story is and why you haven't seen it, this is a kind of lesson in writing that I got early. This story was never published. It was paid for but the anthology was never published.



Anyway, this was about a bunch of telepaths who were fighting because they knew one another far too well. They were fighting because they understood each other. You know, we always feel that if we could just understand each other, we'd be fine. But the problem here was they couldn't conceal their disagreements and animosities and contempt, and they were killing each other.

Years later I wrote a story called, "Speech Sounds," in which everyone on earth was suddenly afflicted by something like a small, very specific stroke. Everyone acquired some kind of communications deficit: They couldn't read or write or whatever. And they had to deal with it, and a lot of them died, of course. A lot of them were no longer able to function. A lot of them no longer wanted to function. And I look at these two stories as the borders of where humanity is."

"Every story I create, creates me. I write to create myself." - Octavia Butler

READY SET REVIEW: PLANNING FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR & OBBBA

With the school year having come to a close, now is a good time to take stock of what worked or what didn't for the past school year.

THE QUESTIONS

- Did your child feel supported or frustrated at school?
- Did your student show progress in reading, writing, math, or another subject at school?
- Were accommodations like audiobooks or extra time on tests consistently provided?
- Was there a significant gap between what was promised in an IEP or 504 and what your child received?

See if you can get any input from others, like last year's teacher or a tutor or other specialist.

THE CHALLENGES

There can be many reasons why some IEP plans fail. Many students may not have had comprehensive testing, so the sources of challenges and strength areas may be unknown. Educational goals may lack specificity, and plans may be inconsistently applied across many school subjects and teachers. It's also possible that some classes will have many students on IEP-s, making it essentially impossible to keep all the specific needs of all students in mind when assigning activities or considering subject-level accommodations.

Communication may also break down between team members - especially at the higher grades when students have multiple teachers.



LOOKING AHEAD

The upcoming school year may be unpredictable for some districts because of budget losses and changes due to the newly pass OBBBA or One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

- Review your student's plan now and don't wait until the fall.
- Check in with your [Decoding Dyslexia](#) group to see how funding shifts may affect IEP services or dyslexia-specific programs.
- Look for a copy of your state's Dyslexia Handbook if your state has one - and learn about your state's resources for students with dyslexia. Usually you can find more information and programs and accommodations.
- If your students struggled last year and failed to meet progress, gather up resources, review your student's intervention logs, progress reports, and emails as well as notes from meetings, and consider requesting an IEP meeting now, before the school year begins.

Sample script for a request:

"Given the many changes in the district this year, I wanted to connect early to ensure (student name) continues to receive the support required in their IEP. Could we schedule a brief meeting or call before school starts?"

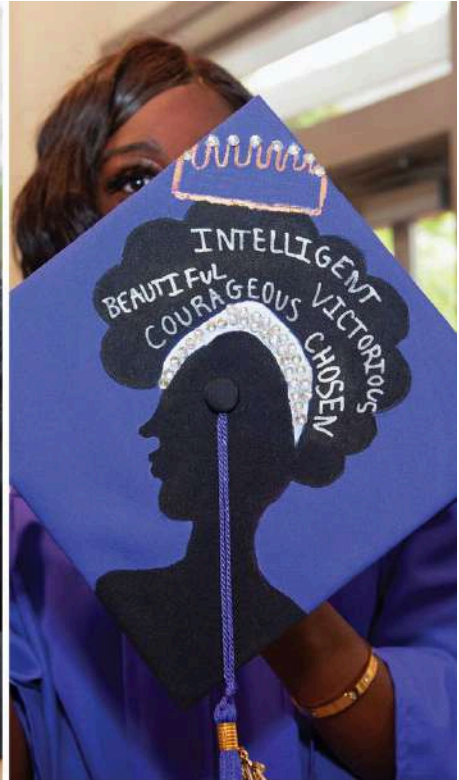
Read more about potential changes in the upcoming school year in the next article.

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OBBBA

HOW WILL OBBBA AFFECT MY SCHOOL?

You may be able to find out the big picture of your school district by searching online for "OBBBA impact and (state or school district)". When I searched our home district, I could not find specific information, but a search for our state said that Washington state is facing a projected \$10-12 billion shortfall over the next 4 years. It also added that Washington has underfunded special education, forcing districts to use local levy dollars to close the gap. Brave search added, "The cumulative effect of these cuts could include larger class sizes, reduced access to specialized services, and fewer resources of special education teachers."

If you can't seem to find specific information about your school district, try reaching out to your school principal or special education director. You could ask, "Do you think there will be cuts or changes to special education or literacy programs?"

But the OBBBA provisions also support some non-public school support that including specialized curricula and tutoring, but the soonest it would take effect would be January 1, 2027, so not this upcoming school year, but half of the next.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If your student isn't formally on a IEP or 504 yet, then request an assessment in writing.

Support your request with for an assessment. To get an IEP, you need to have [1 of 13 disability categories](#). The most common category is specific learning disability (35%). Students with ADHD or dyspraxia can qualify under "Other Health Impairment" or OHI. Students with a 504 qualify with a disability impacting one or more major life activities like reading, writing, or attention.

IEPs can be helpful when pull out reading remediation is necessary; 504s are often chosen when mainly accommodations like extra time or an option to keyboard or option to use other assistive technology are needed.

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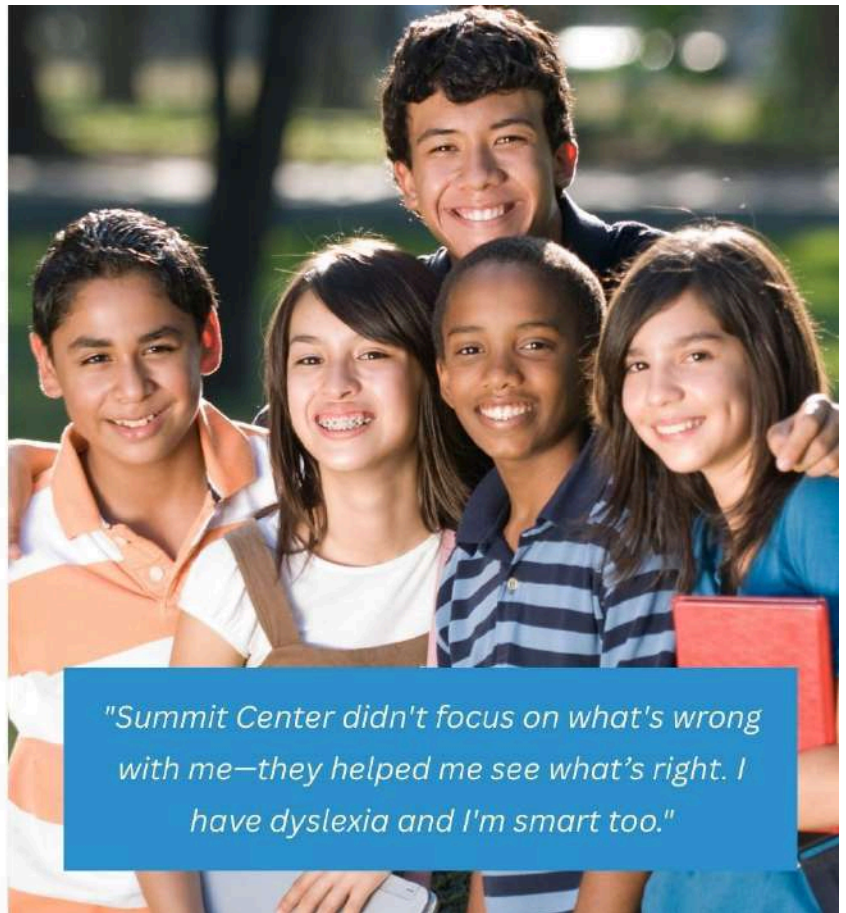
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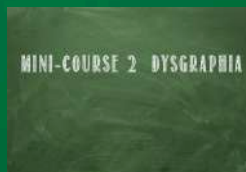
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If your dyslexic student has been formally identified, then look to make sure that the support plan is airtight. This is especially important before services are cut or diluted.

Some schools have IEP teams that meet over the summer. Some may not have the funds to do this, but still others may call team members together if a new student is transitioning to the school or another needs a change in services.

Dyslexia IEPs

Especially if your student is struggling to decode, try to ensure that some mention of "dyslexia-specific" or "specially designed instruction" is in the plan instead of "general RTI" or general terms like "tiered" support. Many schools may suggest that RTI be tried first, but RTI should not be used to delay evaluation under the IDEA.

Dyslexia-specific reading intervention implies reading instruction that is structured, systematic, and explicit. It includes phonology, sound-symbol association, syllables, morphology, semantics, syntax, and orthography (for more on this, visit [here](#)).

Because the OBBA scholarships won't begin until 2027, ask your school whether any "high impact tutoring" may be available for your student in 2025-2026. You can also ask if tutors receive any dyslexia-specific training or are available outside of school hours.

If your student's tutoring was critical to showing progress in reading, it can be considered a required service through an IEP.

To learn about possible tax deductions for special education check [here](#).

If your student is not on an IEP or 504, you may be wondering if payment for tutoring can be deducted on your taxes - check with your tax professional and also refer to the [502 publication from the IRS](#), especially the section on Special Education.

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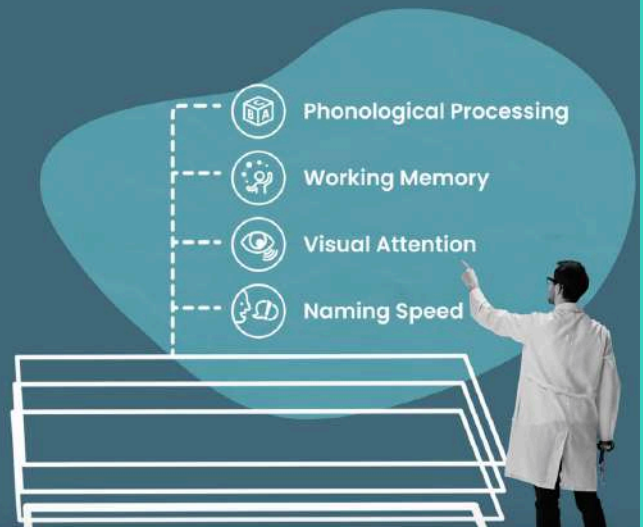
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— L
Adult

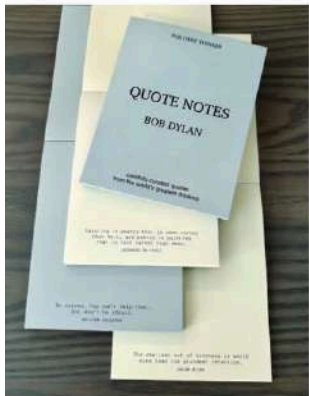
Your program...gave me the confidence to keep pushing despite no one else believing me. My daughter was finally diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia by a neuropsychologist. I highly recommend it when people ask about screening options.

— D
Parent

Having my children do the test and receiving a comprehensive feedback in a way that I, a non technical person, can understand has been invaluable. The follow up from Dr Eide and his **recommendations and guidance for each of my children has been a game changer** in our homeschooling. Also, I've **noticed a huge improvement in the past year or so since I've implemented these changes**. Thanks Dr Eide and keep up the good work!

— WJD
Parent

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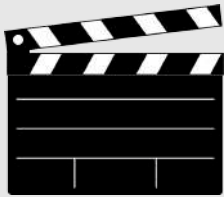
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Wanted: Movie Ambassadors



Dyslexia Led Steven Spielberg to Make Movies

Psychology Today



Gary Payton II's Basketball Camp Supports Kids with dyslexia - scholarship for free screening too (Oakland)

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Britain's Dyslexia Crisis: How Kids Are Being Failed

The Times



New York State Establishes Center for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

NY Senate



Neurodiversity Unleashed - Dyslexic Traits into Success

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and examine anything."

- Octavia Butler