

What Parents Should -- and Should NOT -- Do by Susan Barton, Developer Barton Reading & Spelling System

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1. Use only one reading intervention program.

If your child is getting one-on-one tutoring using an Orton-Gillingham-based system, do not allow the school to provide any other type of reading or spelling intervention – not with a reading specialist, not in a special education class or the resource room, and not in a before- or after-school reading club.

Your child needs an Orton-Gillingham approach, and if the child receives any other type of reading instruction at the same time, it will only confuse your child.

2. Increase the frequency of tutoring during the summer.

The more often a student is gets the right type of tutoring, the faster the child will improve.

Summer is an ideal time to increase the tutoring frequency – because during the summer, there is no homework, there are no tests to study for, etc.

Children will improve their reading, spelling and writing skills more with an hour a day of the right type of tutoring than by going to summer school.

3. Fight for Classroom Accommodations.

It will take from 18 to 36 months of twice-a-week, one-on-one Orton-Gillingham based tutoring to bring your child's reading, spelling, and writing skills up to grade level.

Meanwhile, in order to survive and thrive at school, your child **must** receive Classroom Accommodations.

Accommodations are things the **regular** teacher can do to work around your child's dyslexia – and let him learn and *prove* his knowledge without print.

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To learn more about accommodations, watch the one-hour video called **Classroom Accommodations for Dyslexic Students**, free, by going to: www.BrightSolutions.US It is the third video listed on that page.

Children who are not in Special Education can get classroom accommodations on a 504 Plan if they have a well-written diagnostic report. Classroom accommodations should also be included on every I.E.P.

4. Read to your child every night.

A child receiving Orton-Gillingham-based tutoring should not do any independent reading until they are in the middle of Level 4.

So continue to read **TO** your child every day. Pick books at your child's intellect level. Do not turn outside reading into instruction time. Instead, sit on the sofa, put your arm around your child, and make reading to your child a warm, loving activity.

Or provide your child with Books On Tape from your local library or from Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexia, www.rfbd.org. Other good sources of audio books that are free to students with print disabilities are www.bookshare.org and www.learningally.com.

If your child has difficulty focusing his or her attention, allow your child to follow along in the book while listening to the audiotape or CD.

5. Avoid handwriting by using technology.

If you have a computer, **teach your child to touch-type** using "Type To Learn" from Sunburst Software, www.Sunburst.com. This should be done in 15-minute sessions, 3 or 4 times a week.

Purchase NaturallySpeaking, which is software that comes with a microphone. After the program learns your child's voice, your child can talk into the microphone, and the program will type what your child said into the computer – spelled correctly. It will then read out loud what it typed it.

If your child doesn't like what he hears, he can grab the mouse and edit the words – just as if he had typed them in himself. For more information, go to www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/.

Or, if you are willing, you can teach your child penmanship in a way that will help tremendously – in short 15-minute lessons each day. Just purchase **Handwriting Without Tears** and follow their directions. Better yet, attend one of their one-day trainings. For more information, go to: www.hwtears.com.

6. Find and develop their strengths and talents.

Children with dyslexia may struggle with language, but they are often exceptionally gifted and talented in one or more of the following areas:

Art Athletics Music Hands-on anything: science, woodworking, cooking Building or fixing anything: engines, computers People skills: sales & marketing, counseling, management, politics Learning or working with things that are logical

It is the parent's job to discover their child's interests and natural talents – and then encourage growth in those areas through private lessons, mentoring, apprenticeships, visits to museums, etc. Make those talented areas an important part of your child's life.

For every hour your child spends in tutoring, you should spend an hour exploring and developing his or her strengths and talents.

7. Educate yourself on dyslexia.

Tutoring will greatly improve your child's reading, spelling, and basic writing skills. But it won't "cure" your child. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition.

So you should become an expert on dyslexia – because you'll have to educate a new crop of teachers every year.

Also, the better YOU understand it, the more you can help your child understand it. A great place to start learning is to visit the website of Bright Solutions for Dyslexia, which is www.BrightSolutions.US. For a list of good books and videos, go to www.BrightSolutions.US, then click on the “To Learn More” button.