



Learning Centre for Hamilton

“helping children with dyslexia to read”

Family Handbook

Mission Statement:

To provide free, quality, evidence-based, remedial Orton-Gillingham tutoring to children with difficulties in reading, spelling, writing, and related scholastic skills formally identified as the specific learning disability dyslexia.

**Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation
Learning Centre for Hamilton**

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www.dyslexiacentrehamilton.com

Facebook: Hamilton Learning Centre for Children

Charitable No. 75398 4129 RR0001

Staff:

- The Learning Centre tutors and staff are all volunteers
- The Learning Centre is under the guidance of a volunteer Board of Directors: membership in a Masonic Lodge is not a requirement
- The Board is responsible for providing support and direction to the Centre Directors and staff, and ensuring that the policies and practices of the Centre are in accordance with those adopted by the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada

Board of Directors:

President – J. Michael Kirk

Vice President – Dale E. Chapman

Secretary – Ian Anderson

Treasurer (acting) - Donald D. Thornton

Directors – Robert Dunne, Mario Kovacevic, Alexander Mouriopoulos

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The Learning Centre for Hamilton has been accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Centre.

Protocol and Important Information

It is important for everyone to read the following pages and become aware of the operations of the Learning Centre for Hamilton.

1. Terminology:

- Learning Centre for Hamilton is branded Learning Centre for Hamilton and should be referred to as such in conversation, e-mails, and other writing
- The term “tutoring” is always used instead of “teaching”
- The term “child” is always used instead of “student”
- The term “OG” refers to Orton-Gillingham which is the technique tutors use to teach your child

2. Tutoring Year:

- Tutoring starts in the middle of September allowing for children and families to adjust to back-to-school and extra-curricular activities
- Each child and tutor pair meet for two one-hour sessions weekly
- Tutoring does not occur during school breaks and holidays
- Tutoring will be finished a week before the Christmas break and will resume a week after the Christmas break
- Tutoring sessions and assessment will be done by the last week of May
- Child/Parent/Tutor end of year meetings will occur before the second Tuesday of June
- Celebration of Success will occur the second Sunday of June
- No tutoring occurs during the months of July and August
- **You will receive a schedule of the tutoring year (paper and e-mail)**
- **The schedule must be adhered to: with the increase in the number of children being tutored there is not an opportunity to reschedule tutoring or evaluation sessions**

3. Cancellation of a Session:

The Centre has developed protocols for cancelling sessions that will be clear and simple for everyone involved. The best practice is two one-hour sessions each week, but we understand that at times a cancellation must occur.

- Sessions may be cancelled for the child's birthday
- Sessions may be cancelled for family holidays
- Sessions are cancelled for school breaks and holidays

Should it be necessary for **parents/guardians to cancel a tutoring session:**

- Contact the tutor directly by phone or e-mail
- The tutor will notify the Volunteer Coordinator and the Co-directors Barbara and Michael Baxter (phone or e-mail)
- Please try to notify the necessary people with 24 hours notice

Should it be necessary for **tutors to cancel a tutoring session:**

- Tutor contacts the parents/guardians by phone or e-mail
- Tutor contacts Volunteer Coordinator and the Co-directors Barbara and Michael Baxter
- Please try to notify the necessary people with 24 hours notice

4. Up-to-Date Information:

- Please notify the Co-directors of any change in address, phone number(s), or e-mail address during the year

**One-on-one,
individualized sessions
are delivered to children
with dyslexia by trained
tutors at the Learning
Centre for Hamilton.**

5. Tutoring Sessions:

- Child should be at the Learning Centre 10 minutes before their designated tutor time to sign in at the front desk
- Tutor and their child have designated rooms
- Every lesson is very detailed and valuable; therefore, the tutor wants to be able to deliver the full one hour lesson
- Missed lessons will not be rescheduled for other days
- Lessons are custom-written for each child. Tutor Trainer assists with lesson writing.
- There is no cost for the materials your child receives during tutoring
- Sessions are recorded for safety reasons and stored indefinitely
- Lessons are stored in binders (one for each child) and kept for 7 years as legal documents
- The Orton-Gillingham technique focuses on teaching the structure of the English language to improve reading and spelling skills
- Tutor/Child observations and assessments by the Tutor Trainer will be scheduled during the regular session times but **may** need to be rescheduled for other days/times of the week
- Peanut free snacks, water, and juice will be available for the child to have before or after their lesson
- There is no homework

6. Other:

- Please inform the Co-directors If your child has allergies
- Fire safety protocols are posted in each room in the Learning Centre and will be practiced throughout the year
- Feel free to discuss other information with your child's tutor
- Co-directors are willing to meet with child's teacher or school special education personnel
- Co-directors can make plans for the child's teacher to observe a lesson
- Tutors will periodically observe other tutors teaching to gain knowledge about lesson delivery. The parent/guardian and child will be asked for permission in advance of the observation.

Dyslexia

What is dyslexia and how does it affect learning?

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by underlying difficulties with manipulating the sounds of language. Through brain imaging techniques, the dyslexic brain shows distinct neurological differences for language activities such as reading and spelling. Diagnosed through formal assessments completed by certified psychologists, dyslexia is a spectrum of challenges presenting differently in each person. People who are diagnosed with dyslexia can have difficulties with many aspects of language particularly reading, spelling, and written expression. Affecting both boys and girls and people from all socio-economic levels, current research is increasingly uncovering more precise information about dyslexia and how the dyslexic brain differs from the non-dyslexic brain. Struggles with literacy activities, especially in school, often result in people with dyslexia displaying poor self-esteem and having a heart-breaking negative self-image.

What is the Orton-Gillingham approach?

Orton-Gillingham is a technique and not a program

- It is **structured and sequential**. The structure of the English language is taught from the most common to the lesser common. Sounds are matched with letters and read and written in isolation, then blended into syllables, words, sentences, and longer connected texts.
- It is **explicit**. All elements of the English language are taught directly in a logical, sequential, and explicit way. OG teaches consonants, vowels, digraphs, blends, syllable types, syllable division patterns, Latin roots, prefixes, suffixes, vocabulary, spelling patterns, spelling rules, and the basics of English grammar.
- It is **multisensory**. New concepts are taught using auditory, visual, and kinesthetic senses for optimal learning.
- It **rewires brains**. As new material is learned, old material is constantly reviewed until it becomes automatic. Each child is encouraged to read and spell with automaticity, fluency, and accurate comprehension. Errors are corrected immediately, and corrections are rehearsed until mastery.
- It is **individualized, flexible, prescriptive, and diagnostic**. Tutors are trained to look for areas of progress and challenges with each child and to write lessons that promote each child's mastery and success.
- It **teaches the whole child**. In every lesson, the student experiences success and gains confidence and skills. Learning becomes a positive and rewarding experience.

Who were Orton and Gillingham?

Samuel Torrey Orton (1879-1948), a neuropsychiatrist and pathologist, was a pioneer in focusing attention on reading failure and related language processing difficulties. As early as the 1920's he had extensively studied children with the kind of language processing difficulties now commonly associated with dyslexia. He used neuroscientific information to hypothesize that the underlying issue for these challenges with mastering reading and spelling was a difference in neurophysiology and formulated a set of teaching principles and practices for such children. Anna Gillingham (1878-1963) was a gifted educator and psychologist with a superb mastery of language. Working with Dr. Orton and Bessie Stillman, Anna Gillingham trained teachers and published instructional materials. Over the last half century the Orton-Gillingham technique has been the most influential intervention designed expressly for remediating the language processing problems of children and adults with dyslexia.

Resources

International Dyslexia Association—Ontario Branch

- International Dyslexia Association-Ontario Branch promotes literacy through research, education, and advocacy. Anyone with an interest in dyslexia can join this organization through their website: **idaontario.com**
- On this site you can... learn about dyslexia, neurobiology of dyslexia, use of the term “dyslexia”, dyslexia in other countries, personal stories, dyslexia resources, signs of dyslexia, early screening, and formal assessments for dyslexia.
- On this site you can... learn about supporting your child at school and home, hiring a professional, and assistive technologies.
- On this site you can... learn about upcoming and community events and attend very informative webinars and training courses.
- On this site you can... read about the newly released Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Right to Read Inquiry and view The Right to Read Symposium: *Breaking down barriers to education equity* which was held in March 2022

Books:

- *Overcoming Dyslexia: Second Edition* by Sally Shaywitz M.D.

Websites:

- There are many. Google ‘dyslexia’ and select what you wish to read.

**With the support of the
Scottish Rite Charitable
Foundation and
generous donors we are
giving children the gifts
and lifelong skills of
reading and spelling.**

Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation

The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada is a private charitable foundation registered with Revenue Canada under Letters Patent of Incorporation (1964). The Foundation labours for the benefit of all Canadians, regardless of race or creed. From its incorporation, the Foundation has concentrated its efforts to help solve the puzzles of the mind with the focus on funding research into Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia in the aging population, autism and dyslexia in children, and the start-up of Learning Centres for children with dyslexia.

- There are Learning Centres throughout the United States and Canada
- Canada has 9 Learning Centres: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Barrie, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Halifax, and Moncton and 3 satellites: Truro, Muskoka and St. Catharines
- The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation supports these Centres through generous donations from the bodies of the Scottish Rite, Masonic lodges, Eastern Star chapters, corporations, and individuals
- The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation has established a governance structure, which is incorporated in an extensive manual, which must be followed precisely
- **Because of the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation there is no cost to the child or the family for tutoring at the Learning Centres for Children**

The Learning Centre for Hamilton is the newest Centre in Canada. Incorporated in June 2016, it officially opened in September 2018. The first child and tutor graduation, and official Centre dedication took place in June 2022.

“Learning to read is not a privilege, but a basic and essential human right.”

The Supreme Court of Canada, November 2012