

My name is Jessica Mosley, and I am the mother of two dyslexic children.

Dyslexia BC is advocating for early screening, a funded category and access to structured literacy for students in British Columbia.

I am going to discuss with you today the price that we paid for these items not being in place for my daughter Tierney.

Because early screening was not available, my daughter suffered considerable emotional trauma, which led to compulsive and self-destructive behaviours, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and low self-esteem, but more than that, her entire concept of self was irreparably damaged. Had her teachers been aware of her learning disabilities, I suspect that the detrimental language directed towards her in the classroom, applying blame to her for her challenges, may not have occurred. By the age of eight, my daughter understood that she was different and believed herself to be less than her peers. Those words, used by frustrated and unsupported teachers, became part of her private speech. When she could not read something despite her best efforts, her internal voice reiterated those words to her... stupid... lazy... why don't you just read it?... it isn't hard... She continues to fight this internal monologue daily.

Because my daughter does not have a funded category, she is put in situations where her IEP is not followed, and her accommodations are treated as negotiable. She must advocate for herself to her teachers and is often perceived as rude or indignant for insisting that she has a right to equal access to education. These exchanges cause her substantial anxiety. Our family has paid upwards of \$100,000 supporting her education, for the expenses associated with her testing, remediation, lost wages, and any necessary assistive technology. I have endured gaslighting by educators,

administrators, and resource teams, but I suppose it is logical to blame the parents when a diagnosis will lead to an additional child who needs support and zero funds to help them.

Because my daughter did not have access to structured literacy her right to an education was not met. Her psych-ed report showed that she was illiterate at the end of grade three, barely reading at a kindergarten level. She was only offered balanced literacy remediation via the school system which ultimately taught her how to guess the words instead of decoding them, further masking her stealth dyslexia. She left the public school system for almost two years and was registered as homeschooled. She missed out on two years of building relationships with friends and learning to navigate the social hierarchy. I provided explicit instruction via structured literacy, and she received additional outside remediation at a cost of \$850 per month. Tierney worked relentlessly and finally learned to read, but we will never fully close the gap because remediation began too late.

She is now well supported by her resource team, but that does not negate all of the trauma and struggle that she experienced. Tierney's story is not the exception, it is the reality for as much as twenty percent of the population who is dyslexic. For our children to thrive, they need early screening, a funded category, and structured literacy.