



*Masonic Learning Center of
Louisiana, Inc.*

Dyslexia Training Program

Program Overview

Program Overview

History

The Grand Lodge of Louisiana's major philanthropy prior to 1998 was the Masonic Children's Home in Alexandria, LA; however, due to changes in federal regulation, the Grand Lodge was forced to close the facility in 1994. With this closure the Masons searched for a new philanthropy. In 1998, the Grand Lodge of Louisiana and its membership chose to take on the task of helping children with dyslexia as its major philanthropy to replace its efforts previously provided by the Masonic Children's Home. The Dyslexia Training Program was established under the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana and works on a cooperative basis with the local Masonic Lodges and communities to address the manifestations of dyslexia in the classroom.

Mission & Vision Statement

Our mission is to provide the very best educational and training services to address the learning needs of school-aged children in Louisiana who struggle with dyslexia. It is our vision to develop a network of local dyslexia learning centers providing the very best educational and training services that are easily accessible to children in all 64 Louisiana Parishes. Our goal is to provide this training to qualified children with dyslexia at no cost to the families and to furnish special instruction to these children with dyslexia who need extra help to permit them to cope successfully with their condition and be given the ability to succeed in life at their full potential.

Organization

Masonic interest and participation is essential in establishing, maintaining, and growing class awareness. Lodge financial contributions for initial class set-up are key, along with ongoing support of the program.

Community interest and assistance is welcomed, encouraged and vital, however control of the program must remain with the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana, Inc. Dyslexia Training Program Board and the Grand Lodge of Louisiana.

Services We Provide

The Dyslexia Training Program consists of two separate and age appropriate after-school programs, Dyslexia & Literacy. Both programs are multi-sensory programs of instruction that emphasize phonics using a number of teaching aids including interactive lessons, workbooks, and other items.

The Dyslexia Program is a two year program geared towards qualifying students who are in grades 3 through 5 who have not yet attained the age of 12 at the start of the assigned class.

The Literacy Program is a one year program geared towards qualifying students who are in grades 6 through 11 who have not yet attained the age of 17 at the start of the assigned class.

Class Facilitation & Accommodations

The Dyslexia & Literacy Programs are facilitated by Louisiana Certified teachers, under the direction of the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana, Inc., with class size limited to no more than eight students per class. The two age groups are maintained separately and are not combined into one class/classroom. Classes are conducted a total of five hours per week, generally follow the local school calendar and are hosted in various locations such as local schools, churches, and Masonic Lodges.

Classrooms are to be secure, well-lit and ventilated, clean, and have access to a restroom and water. Classrooms are to be a minimum approximate size of 12'x20' with room to accommodate eight school desks and chairs suitable for ages 8 through 17 as well as a desk and chair suitable for a teacher. A secure storage area for class materials and student records is also required.

All program and classroom materials are purchased by the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana, Inc. at no cost to the teacher or student.

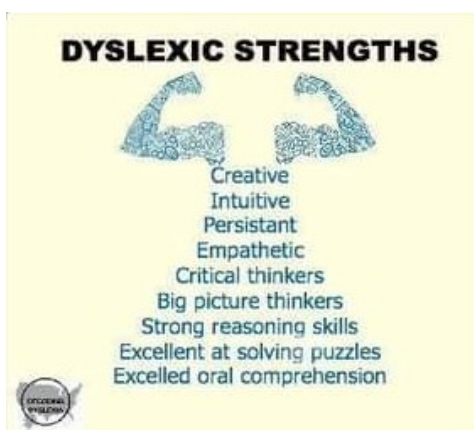
Admission Procedures

Admission to the Program is based upon submission of a program application, a parent interview conducted by our office and evaluations conducted by a licensed psychologist, at no cost to the family. Applications can be made to the Dyslexia Program office housed at the Grand Lodge Offices located at 5746 Masonic Drive, Alexandria, LA. Submission is accepted in person or by mail at this address, emailed to dyslexia@la-mason.com, or by fax to (318)443-5759.

The Dyslexia Training Program requires the following qualifications for admission:

1. Commitment by the family to attend the full program
2. Full-Scale IQ of 90 or higher as determined by a licensed psychologist
3. Diagnosis of Dyslexia as determined by a licensed psychologist
4. Professional opinion of the evaluating psychologist is taken into consideration in regards to the child benefiting from inclusion in the program

The Admission process may take several months to complete due to required evaluations and scheduled start-up of new classes. Once the admission process is complete, and all information is reviewed, notification of decision will be mailed to the applicant's family.



S.P.I.R.E-

Reading intervention that opens up a world of imagination

S.P.I.R.E. is an intensive, multisensory reading intervention program which opens the door to reading through 10-step teacher-led lessons and reinforcing practices, locking in measurable gains and replacing doubt with delight in reading. **S.P.I.R.E.**, an Orton-Gillingham approach based program, is the program currently utilized by the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana, Inc.

POWERFUL FLEXIBLE PROVEN

- Multisensory activities meet different learning styles and ensure meaningful development of reading skills
- A consistent, intensive, and structured curriculum is research-proven to work
- Scripted Teacher's Guide saves educators' time and assists with structured flow of program
- Comprehensive and consistent assessments readily confirm students' progress
- S.P.I.R.E. builds foundational reading skills & supports struggling students as progress



Meeting Standards through S.P.I.R.E.

The standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read & the skill with which they read. S.P.I.R.E. lessons are built on the principles of the Science of Reading, supported by decades of rigorous research into how children learn to read. S.P.I.R.E. Users have shown real progress in all aspects of reading, from fluency to comprehension.

Phonological Awareness

- ✦ Rhyme providing, categorization, and matching
- ✦ Phoneme and syllable segmentation and deletion
- ✦ Blending sounds, syllables, and words

Phonics

- ✦ Explicit, coordinated instruction in decoding and encoding
- ✦ Phonemes, letters, graphemes, phonograms, syllable types, prefixes, and suffixes are directly taught
- ✦ Decodable text reinforces every concept and builds fluency

Spelling

- ✦ Spelling and phonics are taught simultaneously
- ✦ Oral pre-spelling activities analyze phoneme-grapheme relationships

Fluency

- ✦ Fluency drills are provided for every concept
- ✦ Decodable text provides daily fluency practice
- ✦ Modeling and practice of phrasing, pausing, and inflection

Comprehension

- ✦ Literal and inferential thinking is modeled and practiced
- ✦ Visualization strategies and graphic organizers are utilized
- ✦ Vocabulary instruction supports text comprehension

Vocabulary

- ✦ Phonetically controlled vocabulary for every lesson
- ✦ Strategy instruction to help students expand vocabulary
- ✦ Class discussion to activate and build background knowledge

Writing

- ✦ Instruction in capitalization, punctuation, and certain parts of speech
- ✦ Print handwriting is taught to build motor memory

Understanding Dyslexia

What is Dyslexia?

For purposes of the *Dyslexia Training Program*, the term “dyslexia” is defined as a learning disorder in persons who are intelligent, who suffer from no other physical, emotional, psychological, or psychiatric conditions which act as an impediment to learning but who, nevertheless, are unable to learn to read, write, spell, and comprehend the language as expected from exposure to a normal classroom experience. Dyslexia is a lifelong diagnosis, parents and the students themselves are their best advocates!

What are the causes of Dyslexia?

The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but brain imaging shows differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions. These brain imaging studies demonstrate an inefficient functioning of those neural systems for reading in dyslexic readers. (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2012).

How is Dyslexia diagnosed?

Dyslexia is a clinical diagnosis. Just like any other medical diagnosis, the psychologist takes a clinical history, a family history, and then has the child speak and read aloud. Tests (there is not one single test) are evaluated and then after compiling all of these a diagnosis can be made. Many children are identified in kindergarten and 1st grade, but even more are diagnosed in or after 3rd grade. Early diagnosis and treatment is key to help these students.

What are the effects of Dyslexia on spoken and written language?

The impact that dyslexia has is different for each person and depends on the severity of the condition and the effectiveness of instruction or remediation. The core difficulty is with getting to the sounds of spoken words which leads to a range of predictable difficulties in both spoken and written language.

People with dyslexia have problems with spoken language, even after they have been exposed to good language models in their homes and good language instruction in school. They may find it difficult to express themselves clearly, or to rapidly find the word they mean to say, especially when placed in high anxiety producing situations such as oral exams or when called upon in class. It is important that parents and teachers and oral examiners are aware of these word retrieval difficulties so that children who know what they want to say but can't retrieve the correct word are not unduly penalized. Dyslexic students have difficulty getting to the sounds of spoken words. Dyslexia interferes with attaching the letters in a word to the individual sound(s) they represent-a process necessary in order to sound out an unknown word. As a result, children who are dyslexic experience difficulties decoding words, reading words automatically and rapidly (fluently) and spelling.

Many individuals with dyslexia especially when provided with excellent and early instruction learn to read though their reading remains slow and laborious. It is critical that these dyslexic readers are provided with evidence-based effective interventions early on and with accommodations such as the provision of extra time for completing exams.

How prevalent is Dyslexia?

Epidemiological data indicates a prevalence rate of 17.5% - 21.5% in children and adults. It affects all races and all socioeconomic groups. This means that 1 out of 5 children; or 5 to 6 children per class of 30 students, are suffering from dyslexia manifestations. (Connecticut Longitudinal Study of Learning) There appears to be an element of heritability involved and the incidence is greater in boys than in girls. This may, however, be only an appearance since girls tend to be less disruptive than boys and, consequently, are not detected.

How is Dyslexia treated?

Remediation and accommodations! Many individuals need one-on-one help so that the neural pathways are put in place to read. Children with dyslexia need at least 90 minutes a day in reading and small group (ideally 6:1 student teacher ratio) instruction by a qualified teacher. Repetition in a structured, sequential fashion by a teacher with specialized training is critical to lay these pathways down in the brain. Dyslexics read using a different pathway than non-dyslexic readers. This pathway is slower so fluency is always an issue but their comprehension is good. So, after the child learns to read they must be given academic accommodations. Students with dyslexia should be given extra time to complete tasks and take tests. Dyslexic students test scores improve when given extra time because of the alternate pathway in their brain used in reading.

Why is Dyslexia so discouraging and frustrating for children & families?

The frustration with dyslexia often centers on the child's inability to meet expectations. It is important to keep in mind that dyslexia represents an unexpected difficulty in reading. In other words, that child is bright in every other way and the expectation is for the child to be able to become a proficient reader as well. The child's parents and teachers see a bright, enthusiastic child who is not learning to read and write. Time and again, children with dyslexia and their parents hear, "He's such a bright child; if only he would try harder." Ironically, no one knows exactly how hard he/she is trying, typically, much harder than most other children in the class.

Children become discouraged because, without effective reading instruction, they are unable to learn to read at the level of their ability. As a result, they see the children around them reading and yet, they are unable to read and are embarrassed and frustrated when they are called on to read out loud in class. They cannot understand why, with all their efforts, they cannot read or spell as well as their classmates.

Dyslexic children often develop anxiety about their school work, about answering questions in class and worry about their own abilities and their futures. For these reasons, it is important that children with dyslexia are identified early on and receive effective instruction. It is critical for these children to develop self-awareness of who they are as learners, how dyslexia affects them and to be told about their strengths. They should also be given opportunities to find areas in which they excel and which they enjoy so that their only experiences are not struggles and frustration associated with reading.

How You Can Help

Do you know a child that may benefit from Dyslexia Training?

We offer specialized approaches to Dyslexia Training that may better suit your child's learning needs. To apply for the program, please visit us on the web at <http://la-mason.com/dyslexia-program-information>. If you have questions or would like an application, please contact our Dyslexia Training Program at 318-487-4986, or by email at dyslexia@la-mason.com.

Partner with us to make a difference in the lives of children with dyslexia and your community!

Financial support of this exciting philanthropy is of utmost importance!

Your donations provide for the support of the facilities and equipment used, salaries and related benefits for staff, and (most importantly) the services of the program at NO CHARGE to the student and their parents/guardians. We want to ensure that your gift is secured and used in a way that will make a lasting effect on your community and the lives of the children you are helping to support.

Donations are accepted by cash, check, or credit card and can be dropped off or mailed to The Grand Lodge Office, 5746 Masonic Drive, Alexandria, LA 71301. Please notate check donations with the "Dyslexia Training Program" written in the memo line. Donation envelopes are available upon request.

Thank you for your consideration in making a contribution to support the Masonic Learning Center of Louisiana Dyslexia Training Program!

