

# Individual Matters

*Discover.  
Act.  
Grow.*

Newsletter — June 2025 Issue

## Reading into Summer: A Guide for Parents

Summer has begun! While school may be the last thing on your child's mind right now, we'd like to share some ways you can support their reading over the next couple months and beyond.

### Ten Tips for Encouraging Your Middle Schooler to Read More



Whether your middle schooler likes to read or avoids it entirely, here are ten simple and effective ways to engage and encourage them to read more often.

**1. Connect books to life.** If your reader likes Harry Potter, consider learning magic with him. If they like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, help them create a journal. If they likes Hunger Games, go to an archery range. If they like mystery, create a dinner mystery at home. If their book has been made into a movie, ballet, or play, go see it. If they likes outdoor adventure books, go hiking or camping. Bringing a book to life through real-world activities is not just fun, it also helps your reader connect with story and characters on a deeper level.

**2. Create a “book culture.”** Take your reader to book signings. Go to local author events. Research an author, ask their background and interests – maybe write them a letter and ask questions (authors really do enjoy these). Schedule trips to the bookstore on Saturday mornings, during which you each get breakfast and coffee/hot chocolate, and read or peruse books for an hour.

Check out 8 more tips for encouraging reading [HERE](#).

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## **Dyslexia Programs: Which are Best for Your Student?**

Parents often ask us for recommendations about programs or methods for helping student with dyslexia. Which are best? Are they research-backed? What local providers can help?

The “answer” really depends on your child’s unique reading profile and temperament, along with the relationship they form with the tutor or learning specialist.

That said, there are 3 major programs that have been shown to work for students with dyslexia. Each one takes a different approach, but all try to improve reading and writing skills.

Orton-Gillingham (OG) is one of the most popular and trusted methods. It is structured, step-by-step, and uses many senses—like seeing, hearing, touching, and moving—to help students learn the connection between letters and sounds. It also teaches spelling and reading in a way that builds on what the student already knows. OG is often used in schools and works well for students who struggle with sounding out words.

Sounds in Syllables (SIS) is a lot like Orton-Gillingham but even more detailed. It breaks words into small parts and teaches them in a very specific order. It focuses on how words sound and how they are built. This program can help students who need more structure, but some might find it too strict or overwhelming.

Davis Dyslexia is very different. This program does not use phonics or sounding out words. Instead, it works with how a person sees and thinks. It uses tools like clay models and mental pictures to help students understand words and symbols. Some people really like this approach, especially visual thinkers.

In short, OG and SIS are structured and based on how sounds and letters work together. Davis Dyslexia focuses more on visual learning and thinking. Different students may do better with different programs, depending on how they learn best. Understanding these choices helps families and teachers find the right support for each student.

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## **Reading Disorder**

### **Clinical Diagnosis vs. Educational Classification**

Many parents are understandably confused about the difference between 1) a clinical/medical diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder in Reading, and 2) a school-based classification of Specific Learning Disability in Reading. Understanding this difference is important for parents because it affects how their child receives support both in and outside of school.

**A clinical/medical diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder** in reading (often called dyslexia) is made by a licensed psychologist using criteria from the DSM-5. By way of an in-depth neurodevelopmental evaluation, a psychologist identifies ongoing difficulties in reading accuracy, fluency, or comprehension that are not explained by low intelligence, lack of education, or other conditions. This diagnosis helps guide treatment and may be used for clinical or educational support outside of school. Learn about Individual Matters' clinical learning evaluations [HERE](#).

## **An educational classification of Specific Learning**

**Disability** in reading is made by a school team through a special education evaluation process under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This classification focuses on whether the reading difficulties significantly impact the student's ability to access the curriculum and require specialized instruction. A student may receive services and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if eligible.

The key difference is that a clinical diagnosis is focused on identifying a disorder based on clinical standards, while an educational classification is focused on how the difficulty affects learning in the school setting. A child can have a clinical diagnosis without qualifying for special education, or qualify for services at school without a formal clinical diagnosis. Both are important and can work together to support the student.

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“If you don’t like to read, you haven’t found the right book.”

— J.K. Rowling

Wishing you and your family a joyful, restful, and reading-filled summer!



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