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Developmental / Behavioral Pediatrics  
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Ann Alexander has worked in the field of developmental pediatrics for forty years in North Carolina, Texas, and Florida. In 1986 she and a speech pathologist co-founded the Morris Center in Gainesville, Florida to provide comprehensive interdisciplinary assessments and treatment for children and adults with dyslexia, other learning disabilities, and language and sensorimotor difficulties. Assessment findings drove treatment. The team designed treatment based on neurodevelopmental knowledge. Treatment was delivered intensively (1:1, daily), known to be most effective for creating new brain pathways. Results were monitored closely and post treatment assessments were carried out to evaluate progress immediately after treatment and one year later.

Based on the results with dyslexic children, Dr. Joe Torgesen, a leader in the field of reading research, invited the Morris Center to conduct ten years of research funded by the National Institute of Health and Human Development (NICHD). The goal was to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment for severe dyslexia in late elementary school age children. The results confirmed that the very explicit, systematic and intensive language therapy program developed by Patricia and Charles Lindamood resulted in robust gains in both spoken and written language. Severely impaired children were able to improve their ability into the normal range not only for reading, but for receptive and expressive language as well. Another component of the research grant was to assess effective methods for teaching kindergarten children at risk for reading struggles. Again, the Lindamoods' therapy program was found to be highly effective, resulting in normal reading at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade follow up. These findings replicated the results the Morris Center had been finding for the preceding ten years. For years, Ann had been frustrated with diagnosing dyslexia and other learning difficulties and seeing continuous struggles. The opportunity to see children and adults reach their potential has been one of the most rewarding endeavors of her career.

In 2003, Ann opened a sister center in Scottsdale, Arizona called the Wellington-Alexander Center. Their interdisciplinary team is carrying out the mission of the Morris Center, with similar results. The goals now are to continue helping children and adults to end their learning struggles, to work with schools and to pursue work on *prevention* of the school struggles and loss of self-esteem.

Ann was lucky to be raised in Colombia, SA in a small oil refinery camp next to a small village, in the middle of the jungle. She spoke Spanish before English and considers herself very blessed to have had the opportunity to be immersed in the culture, feeling part "Colombiana" at heart. Even though she attended a one-room school until 8<sup>th</sup> grade, she had heard of Duke Medical School. She set her sights on going there to become a pediatrician. After graduating with a BSc. from Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, she

was off to Duke. Ann earned her M.D. in 1966, followed by a residency in pediatrics and a fellowship in developmental pediatrics from 1966 through 1972.