

Winter 2011

Hi! For those of you who aren't familiar with the Wellington-Alexander Center, please let us introduce ourselves.

We are a neurodevelopmental assessment & treatment center for individuals with dyslexia and other language/learning disabilities.

Our treatment team includes:

Ann Alexander, MD, FAAP
Founder & Owner
Consultant, Developmental/
Behavioral Pediatrics

Jane Lawyer, M.Ed.
Center Director

Stacy Fretheim, MS, CCC-SLP
Director of Speech-Language
Services/Assistant Director

Karen Backstrom, BS
Director of Academic Services/
Assistant Director

Debbie Borini
Administrative Coordinator

Lindsay Krumland, BS
Trained Language Clinician

Alison Moser, BS
Trained Language Clinician

Olivia Waltman, BA
Trained Language Clinician

Joann McFee, MS, OTR/L
Coordinator of Occupational
Therapy

Sarah Stoll, MS, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist



Let's Be Literal

WAC ADDS LEXERCISE TO PROGRAMS

The Wellington-Alexander Center is pleased to announce the addition of Lexercise to its lineup of language programs.

Lexercise, created by Mind Information, is a clinician-supervised Web-based learning tool for children ages 6 to 16 with language-literacy disorders. This program provides multiple repetitions to solidify phonological awareness and phonics skills through individualized, sequential multisensory exercises consistent with the well-researched Orton-Gillingham approach.

With his or her clinician's support, the child independently plays

customized language-building exercises camouflaged as online games and designed to assist in providing intensive practice.

Lexercise uses the visual appeal and familiarity of online games to maximize the child's motivation, encourage daily practice and offer rewards for improvement.

As skills are strengthened, reading and writing eventually become more natural communication tools as the child integrates letter-sound relationships.

When appropriate for the child, trained clinicians at the Wellington-Alexander Center work with your child in the office once per week, and

then monitor and customize his or her Lexercise exercises via the Web. Your child will then "Lexercise" daily at home for about 10-15 minutes per day during the other 5-6 days of the week.

This blended therapy involves integration of in-clinic and online techniques; therefore, Lexercise can reduce the need for frequent office visits and consequently reduce the cost of language therapy for affected families.

"Lexercise is an excellent tool to be used by clinicians as an extender of their therapy," said Dr. Ann Alexander, founder and owner of the Wellington-Alexander Center.

WRITING BY HAND STRENGTHENS THE LEARNING PROCESS

New research suggests that learning through handwriting—as opposed to typing on a keyboard—actually helps to improve the learning process.

Associate Professor Ann Mangen at the University of Stavanger's Reading Centre in Norway questions whether or not something is lost in switching from the book to the computer screen and from pen to keyboard.

When writing by hand, our

brain receives feedback from our motor actions, together with the sensation of touching a pencil and paper. The movements involved leave a motor memory in the sensorimotor part of the brain, which helps us recognize letters. In addition, different parts of the brain are activated when we read letters we have learned by handwriting.

Mangen, who co-authored an article in the

Advances in Haptics periodical, explains that this implies a connection between reading and writing, and suggests that the sensorimotor system plays a role in the process of visual recognition during reading.

The learning process may be further strengthened, she adds, because writing by hand takes longer than typing on a keyboard and therefore results in a longer amount of time the brain is

engaged.

"The sensorimotor component forms an integral part of training for beginners, and in special education for people with learning difficulties," Mangen says.

"Our bodies are designed to interact with the world which surrounds us. We are living creatures geared toward using physical objects to perform certain tasks."

Summarized from "Better Learning Through Handwriting" by Trond Egil Toft www.eurekaalert.org, January 2011

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WAC NEWS

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We are offering a
one-hour
complimentary
screening to assess
language/reading
ability.
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Call the Wellington-
Alexander Center for
a complimentary
consultation.
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Summer Intensive
Schedule is filling up
fast—call to secure a
position for your child!
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TOP 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF A CHILD WITH LD

• LEARN ALL YOU CAN

LD can take many forms; as an informed parent, you will be more able to communicate with teachers about your child, help your child with schoolwork and also help him better navigate social situations.

• KEEP IN CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS

Teachers want to work with you. Give them some insight as to your child's behavior at home and likes and dislikes. This could help further develop instructional and behavioral strategies for your child.

• KEEP A PROFILE OF WHAT YOUR CHILD DOES WELL

Too often we focus on the weaknesses—a "Strengths Profile" can help teachers and parents remember areas in which the child excels, as well as boost your child's self-esteem.

• HELP YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND LD

How will it impact her life, both negatively and positively? Kids need to know and take ownership; then, they will be more empowered to cope.

• GET ORGANIZED

Often, organization is difficult for a child with LD. Stay ahead of the game—help your child use a daily planner and break down steps for a big school project. Help your child be prepared!

• INVOLVE YOUR CHILD IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Getting your child into activities outside of school provides another avenue in which your child can achieve success and make friends.

• INVOLVE YOUR CHILD IN HELPING SOMEONE ELSE

Help boost your child's self-

esteem by giving her the opportunity to help someone else in need.

• KEEP EXPECTATIONS HIGH (BUT REALISTIC)

Let your child know that you believe in him. Children with LD are often very creative and insightful—ask for their opinions and let them figure things out.

• HELP YOUR CHILD BE A SELF-ADVOCATE

While most kids may know what they need, they may be afraid to ask. Teach them self-advocacy skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

• JOIN/FORM A GROUP OF PARENTS WITH SIMILAR SITUATIONS

You can learn a lot from others, and they can be a source of much-needed support!

Summarized from an article by the Council for Exceptional Children