



Nebraska Newsbriefs

Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska

Spring 2008

STRATEGIES FOR SUMMER READING FOR CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA

By: Dale S. Brown (2007)

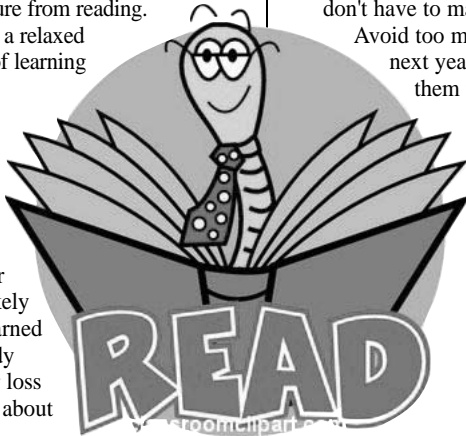
In this article read a dozen strategies to help your children keep the academic skills they learned last year. Support them as they read. Give them material that is motivating - and some of it should be easy. Help them enjoy books and feel pleasure-not pressure from reading. The summer should be a relaxed time where their love of learning can flower.

As a parent, you play a critical role in your child's education during the summer-- especially if your child has dyslexia. Without your help, kids are more likely to forget what they learned last year. A recent study estimates that summer loss for all students equals about a month of academic learning. Most likely, children with learning disabilities need even more reinforcement.

Help them remember what they learned in school. That way they can start next year caught up or ahead of the other students in their class. Bring out their natural love of learning. And encourage them to read for pleasure without the pressure they experience in the classroom.

Here are some summer strategies to help your child with dyslexia remember what they learned in school and see that reading can be useful and enjoyable:

- Give them material that motivates them to read, even though they might find it hard to do. Try comic books, directions for interesting projects, and mystery stories. Have them read information on possible activities as you plan your summer vacation. Let them decide what they want to read.
- Support them as they read. Read their book aloud to them, help them decode, and make it easy for them to get the meaning. Even if a question is asked again and again or if you feel irritated, act happy that they asked. Show them that reading is a way to find out what they need to know, or even to entertain themselves.



- Give them easy reading. Summer is supposed to be relaxed. Let them succeed and get absorbed in the book.
- When you read with them, make it your goal to enjoy the book together. You don't have to make them read perfectly!

Avoid too much correction. In school next year, the teacher will help them improve their skills.

- Let younger children "pretend" to read. Read the story aloud together. Let them follow your voice. Have them look at the words as you point to them, even if they aren't actually reading. When they say the wrong word, say the word correctly and cheerfully while pointing to the word.
- Read aloud to them as you do daily chores, sightsee, or sit on the beach. Read an instruction manual with them as you try to fix something. While visiting a museum, read the interpretive materials. If you see the slightest sign they want to read aloud to you, let them!
- Model and teach persistence. When you are working on something that is hard, model the discipline and patience that you want them to show while learning to read. Teach them explicitly the value of working hard to do something challenging. Tell them inspirational stories about famous people -- or members of your own family -- who have overcome obstacles.
- Accommodate their dyslexia. For example, if they have to read aloud in public, have them memorize their passage ahead of time. Ask the teacher or camp counselor to request volunteers to read rather than pass the book from one person to another. If you give them a recipe for cooking (or any project involving written directions), be sure that it is at their reading level and that the print is large enough for them.

- Use technology. If you have a computer, equip it with software that reads aloud. See [Reading Software: Finding the Right Program](#). Let them load books into their electronic devices and listen to them at the same time as they read the printed book in their hands. Take a look at [On the Go: What Consumer Devices Can do For You](#).
- Use recorded books. Use [Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic](#) or audio books.
- Be a model of reading. Bring books to the beach and read them. If you are traveling, find a book for the whole family to read and discuss. If you are dyslexic, "read" your taped books on vacation, letting your child see you or give them their own tapes. Show and tell them how you overcome your own difficulties.
- Have reading matter conveniently available. You might carry small children's books and magazines with you and have them ready when you must wait in line for those crowded amusement park rides and popular sightseeing destinations.

The summer months are important to your child's academic development in two ways. First, they need to be reminded of what they learned during the school year so that they remember it when they return in the fall. Second, and perhaps more important, children with dyslexia can discover the joys of reading and other academic skills in the relaxed summer season. If nobody tells them they have to read to get good grades, they might just pick up a book and enjoy it.

More information on summer reading [LD OnLine](#) has more tips on how parents can help their children in this article, [Summer Reading Tips for Parents](#).

[Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic](#) has a list of titles that are available for summer reading at [Summer Fun Reading](#).

[Reading Rockets](#) has many articles that can help you with summer reading! You know your child better than anyone. Choose the activities that they will enjoy. Be sure and accommodate their dyslexia as you follow these suggestions.

(Continued on Page 7)

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From the President...

Greetings from LDA of Nebraska!

Summer arrived early it seems or else time really does fly! We have great news from our house as our daughter, Leslie, graduated from Metropolitan Community College with a certificate in Early Childhood Education. We are very proud of her. Leslie can attest to the fact that good support from others helps you reach the goals you have set for yourself. On a personal note, I would like to extend kudos to the Student Services Staff at Metropolitan Community College; these people know how to work with students with disabilities, let's hope it continues! Christine Hess was Leslie's advisor for several years and she is amazing, unfortunately she has moved on. Chris Holtz is now serving in her position and is also doing an admirable job. Hooray for Leslie! Needless to say her family is very proud of her and her hard work.

I start by telling you of Leslie's achievement to move into the need to keep encouraging your children in all their endeavors. Summer is a time in which parents and kids can have lots of fun with reading. We used to read nursery rhymes over and over (Often, because I love nursery rhymes). The rhythm and rhymes in the nursery stories are easy for children to learn and imitate. Nursery rhymes lead to many fun activities too. You can act out "Little Miss Muffet" or "Jack be Nimble"; how many of us have "huffed and puffed" to blow a house down? Take at least five minutes a day to read with your child; take turns reading even if the child has the book memorized, it can lead to a sense of accomplishment. Go to the reading sessions and reading incentive programs at your local public libraries. Checkout the books and tapes/cds that many libraries now have available. Just be sure to READ all summer long.

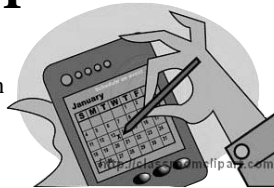
LDA of Nebraska is working hard to develop some reading helps for parents, teachers, and tutors. We have received a grant from the National LDA Foundation and have purchased or developed materials for parents, teachers, and tutors. We have had three presentations with small crowds in which we have shared our ideas and materials. If you are interested in attending a presentation, please let us know by dropping us a note at the LDA office. We are excited about sharing ideas with you. You will find many ideas about reading in this issue of our newsletter.

Save the date of October 18, 2008 for the LDA of Nebraska Annual Conference at ESU#3 in Omaha, Nebraska. Keynote speaker this year is Chris Dendy. Chris is a nationally known writer and teacher. She will present information concerning ADD/ADHD. Chris and her sons suffer from these disorders. She has a wealth of information to share with us. You can always attend LDA conferences because we do offer opportunities for scholarships to this event. Share this information with friends, family, and teachers; everyone is invited to attend. Have a wonderful summer!

Stephanie Cain; President, LDA of Nebraska

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Many children and students with learning disabilities can benefit from the use of assistive technology in a classroom or homework setting. Nebraska Newsbriefs will include information on one area of this valuable resource in each of the next several newsletters.



WRITING

Software and other technology devices are available to help prepare reports, letters, create projects, and use a word processor. The following are few examples of Assistive technology that can assist a student in writing:

Digital Recorder - To dictate responses, assist with note taking and allows teachers to record lectures.

Portable Word Processor - To use for taking notes; e.g. Braille, adapter, Alpha Smart or Dana with word processor software, spell and grammar checking capabilities.

Inspiration Software - (Draft Builder) Computer software program student's use to plan, research and complete projects successfully. With the integrated Diagram and Outline Views, they create graphic organizers and expand topics into writing.

Proofreading and word prediction software (Write Out Loud) - Software Program to help with proper spelling, punctuation, grammar and word usage.

Speech Recognition Software programs - Speech recognition programs (Dragon Naturally Speaking) work in conjunction with a word processor. The user "dictates" into a microphone, and his spoken words appear on the computer screen as text. This can help a user whose oral language ability is better than his writing skills.

Screen Readers - These systems can display and read aloud text on a computer screen, including text that has been typed by the user, scanned in from printed pages (e.g., books, letters), or text appearing on the Internet.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

The LDA Nebraska annual state conference is scheduled for **October 18, 2008** at ESU #3 in Omaha.

The keynote speaker will be **Chris Dendy**.

Chris Dendy is an author, former educator, school psychologist and children's mental health professional with over 40 years experience. She is also the mother of two grown sons and a daughter who have ADHD. Her highly acclaimed books include: "Teenagers with ADD and ADHD," 2nd edition (100,000+), "Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD," and "A Bird's-Eye View of Life with ADD and ADHD," a teen survival guide she co-authored with her son Alex.

Mark your calendar!

Adults with Learning Disabilities: Definitions and Issues

*The following article is based on "Adults with Learning Disabilities: Definitions and Issues,"
National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, Washington, D. C.*

Learning disability is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide variety of disorders, including disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. Learning disabilities may be displayed in an inability to effectively listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. These skills are needed everyday in all aspects of an individual's life, whether at work or performing ordinary daily chores. There are many useful definitions for learning disabilities that have been accepted by educators, federal agencies, advocacy groups, and/or professional organizations. Listed below are common elements found in most definitions:

There are many variations of learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities involve difficulties in any of the following skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and mathematics.

Social skills may be affected by the learning disability.

Learning disabilities may be due to a central nervous system disorder.

Although a learning disability may be present with other disorders, these conditions are not the cause of the learning disability.

For a long period of time it was thought that learning disabilities were a children's issue. That once the child finished school the problem would disappear. Research has shown that learning disabilities do not disappear when one leaves school and that they can occur across an individual's lifespan. Areas where learning disabilities may affect adults include:

Education - Learning disabilities that may manifest themselves in difficulties in spoken or written language, arithmetic, reasoning, and organizational skills will affect adults in adult basic education, literacy,



postsec-ondary, and vocational training settings. These students may perform at levels other than those expected of them. Adult educators are not always prepared to address the unique needs of learners with learning disabilities.

Vocation - Errors are commonly found in filling out employment applications because of poor reading or spelling skills. Job-related problems frequently arise due to learning disabilities that cause

difficulties in organization, planning, scheduling, monitoring, language comprehension and expression, social skills, and inattention.

Self-esteem - Being criticized, put down, teased, or rejected because of failures in academic, vocational, or social endeavors often leaves adults with learning disabilities with low self-esteem. Adults with low self-esteem tend not to take risks or strive to reach their potential. Also, adults with low self-esteem are less likely to advocate for themselves.

Social interactions - Adults with learning disabilities may demonstrate poor judgment of others' moods and attitudes and appear to be less sensitive to others' thoughts and feelings. In social settings these adults may do or say inappropriate things and have problems comprehending humor, for example. They may have problems discriminating response requirements in social situations. These traits may result in a difficulty finding and keeping a job or developing long term relationships.

Independent living - Responsibilities such as writing checks, filling out tax forms, or taking phone messages may present problems for adults with learning disabilities. Adults with learning disabilities may find themselves without the support systems (parents, schools, social services, etc.) that they relied on as children and have to incorporate their own accommodations when necessary.

BULLETIN BOARD

The Nebraska Branch of the International Dyslexia Association is hosting a regional conference Sept. 26-27, 2008 in Sioux City, Iowa. The conference includes a lineup of nationally-known speakers

Parents, advocates, teachers, administrators, and policymakers are invited to attend this informative conference.

For more information: <http://www.ne-ida.com/website?d=conferences>.

Omaha LDA: A big thank you to all the speakers who volunteered their time and to all the parents, teachers and other professionals who attend the meetings.

Using Poetry to Teach Reading

By: Mary Haga (2005)

Part of teaching reading is motivating the children to practice, practice, practice. Find out how to use children's poetry to encourage kids to read.

I have found that using children's poetry is one way to do this. Who can resist the joy of poets such as Jack Prelutsky or the late Shel Silverstein?

How to get started

Begin the school year by preparing a pocket folder for each child

labeled "Poetry" and by preparing copies of two poems. I used a school theme. On the first day of school, begin this activity by reading a poem to the students. Then pass out a copy of the poem to each child and reread it to the students as they follow along. Then read the poem together chorally. Poetry lends itself to choral reading because of its rhythm. Follow the same procedure with the second poem.

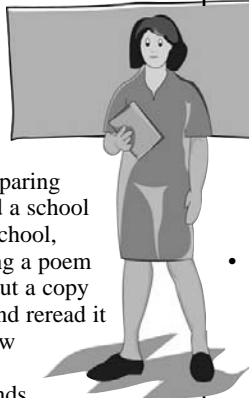
On the second day, reread the poems chorally. Use the poems to do some word study activities. You might have the students search for rhyming words, or synonyms of words you give them.

On the third day, introduce another new poem by reading it to them, passing out the poem, reading it again, and then have the students read it chorally. Then read the old poems.

By the third day the children usually will have become fluent reading the old poems. So if the poem contains conversational parts (and try to pick many poems that have this feature) assign an individual child to read a character's part. The remainder of the class chorally reads any parts that would be considered narration. The children will enjoy the opportunity to read the individual parts. They have to be really alert and tracking to come in at the proper place.

Continue to follow this procedure throughout the school year:

- Introduce a new poem by reading it to the class. I tried to do this with lots of expression to give the students some idea of the possibilities of the poem. You may want to pick poems that go with the subject matter you are studying or the season of the year.
- Pass out the poem and have the children follow along as you reread it to them.
- Read the poem chorally with you as the leader to keep the class together.
- If there is new vocabulary in the poem that is crucial to comprehension, discuss it the first day the poem is introduced.
- As poems become old poems, use them



to work on word skills. These can be done orally, or as pencil and paper activities.

- Allow children to read individual character parts during the group choral reading.

- Read old poems as mini-Reader Theater scripts. This should be done after the children are very familiar with the poem. A child is assigned to each of the character/narrator parts or to a

particular stanza of the poem. The group of children presents the poem at the front of the classroom.

- If you have too many poems to read them all at once, have the children take turns picking an old favorite to read. This can go on as long as you need. It is a great way to fill up those few minutes while waiting for PE, art, etc. when there isn't time to start another lesson.

How to choose the poems

- Start with humorous poems that rhyme. The humor will hook your students and the rhythm of the rhyme helps with the choral reading.
- Choosing poems that go with other subjects can be effective. You can often find poems in theme resource books or maybe even in your teacher's manual. There are some teacher resource books that have poems to use with content areas. That way you have permission to reproduce the poem for classroom use. For instance, when I did a spider unit in science in the fall, I used *The Spider and the Fly*, by Mary Howitt. This poem, an old classic, is in the *Spiders* book of the Creative Teaching Press Theme Series. It remained a favorite old poem and mini-Readers Theater all year long.
- Find poems that have conversational parts that can be turned into a mini-Readers Theater.
- Find poems that have definite parts where the children can be divided into groups. For example, using Shel Silverstein's *The Meehoo* with an Exactlywatt from *A Light in the Attic*, which is a take-off on a knock-knock joke, you could divide the class in half and have them chorally read the two parts.
- Always be looking for a good poem. You can never be sure where a really good one will turn up.

Using poems to practice skills

Relating skills to what is actually being read is always a good practice. Skills practiced in isolation on a worksheet do not always transfer to actual reading. The one

caution here is that you not do this to excess. The main purpose of reading the poems is to create enthusiasm for reading. Always turning it into a skills drill can defeat that purpose.

Examine the poem to decide which skill to work on. If the poem has numerous contractions, then use that poem to work on contractions. If it has many short vowel words, use it to work on short vowels. You can make these oral activities or make up a worksheet for the children to complete as a written assignment.

Some of the skills I worked into these sessions:

- Find synonyms/antonyms. I would say a word and the children would search for a synonym/antonym. Sometimes I told them in which stanza to search.
- Work on alphabetical order using words from old poems.
- Use words from old poems in word sorts.
- Find the nouns, verbs, adjectives.
- Find the contractions and possessives. Since both have apostrophes, the students had to use the context to decide which it was.
- Paraphrase a short poem. You can see the rhythm of the poem disappear as it turns to prose. It really illustrates the difference.

Management tips

Everyone has to work out his/her own management system, but I will share with you what worked for me. Maybe you will find something that you can use.

- I had the children keep copies of all the poems in a pocket folder. They were told that we would be working with the poems the entire year and they should try to take care of the folder. I reinforced the binding of the folder with book tape to make it last longer.
- The children were not allowed to take the poetry folder home until the end of the school year. That way I was not constantly replacing poems and folders. When parents came to school, the poetry folder was always one of the things the children wanted to show their parents.
- I always ran a few extra copies of each poem for my file. There was always the student who lost a poem, chewed it up, or whatever else kids can think to do.
- I kept a clipboard with a class checklist for the poetry to keep a record of who got to choose the old poem to read, who got to read an individual part in a poem, and who had participated in the mini-Readers Theater. It solved the old argument of "you never pick me" because everyone had to have a turn

(Continued on Page 7)

Some Coping Strategies for Teens and Adults with AD/HD

If you have AD/ HD or your teenage son or daughter does, these are some helpful ideas!

When necessary, ask the teacher or boss to repeat instructions rather than guess.

- Break large assignments or job tasks into small, simple tasks. Set a deadline for each task and reward yourself as you complete each one.
- Each day, list what you need to do. Plan the best order for doing each task. Then make a schedule for doing them. Use a calendar or daily planner to keep yourself on track.
- Work in a quiet area. Do one thing at a time. Give yourself short breaks.
- Write things you need to remember in a notebook with dividers. Write down useful kinds of information like assignments, appointments, and phone numbers in different sections. Keep the book with you all of the time.
- Post notes to help remind yourself of things you need to do. Tape notes on the bathroom mirror, the refrigerator, in your school locker, or on the dashboard of your car - wherever you're

likely to need the reminder.

- Store similar things together. For example, keep all your Nintendo disks in one place and all your tape cassettes in another.
- Create a routine. Get yourself ready for school or work at the same time, in the same way, every day.
- Exercise, eat a balanced diet, and get enough sleep.



Thanks to: NIMH (Adopted from Weinstein, C.: "Cognitive Remediation Strategies." Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research. 3(1):44-57, 1994).

From CIRCUIT: The Newsletter of the Learning Disabilities Association of Connecticut, Winter, 2003; LDA of Connecticut, Inc., 999 Asylum Avenue, 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06105; www.ldact.org

The Nebraska Client Assistance Program

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a free service for individuals who are applying for or receiving services from Vocational Rehabilitation, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, or the Centers for Independent Living (example, League of Human Dignity). This would also include transition students who are working with any of these agencies. The main purpose of CAP is to find solutions or help to answer any questions or concerns individuals may be having regarding their services.

CAP Can:

- Help you communicate concerns to your counselor.
- Help resolve your concerns if you disagree with a decision.
- Help you understand agency rules, regulations and procedures.
- Protect your rights under the Federal Rehabilitation Act.

If you are receiving services from any of these agencies you have a right to:

- Make informed choices about your job goal, objectives, services, service providers and ways of getting services.
- Be a full partner in the development of your services.
- Have a parent, family member, guardian, advocate, or an authorized person help develop your services if you want or need their support.
- A review of decisions about providing you or not providing you with services.

If you have any further questions or would like to receive a brochure, please contact Vicki at 800.742.7594 or 402.471.3656 or victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov

Meet A Board Member

The Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska executive board includes parents, educators and other professionals. They all have one thing in common: they volunteer their time to inform other parents, educators, professionals and the general public about the hidden handicap of learning disabilities.

Meet Kathy Rayburn, board member from Fremont, NE.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Hi, my name is Kathy and I and my husband are the parents of 3 grown children. Our oldest, Michelle, has Cystic Fibrosis, our middle child, Nikki, has ADHD/Learning Disabilities and our youngest, Cliff, is married with 2 boys. I enjoy volunteer work, bowling, the outdoors and traveling. I am currently involved in several groups in our church including adult and funeral choirs. I really enjoy being a grandmother now, just as I have always enjoyed being a parent. I have through the years held various part time jobs so that I could be a stay at home mom.

How did you get involved in LDA?

I became involved with LDA during the time our middle child was

3 yrs old and attending a college preschool program and receiving therapy for speech problems. The director of the program was involved and suggested I might find some useful information if I attended a meeting.

What changes have you seen in special education since your child first started receiving services?

It seems that things seem to get better and then we see another generation of kids and we feel like we are starting all over again. I think progress has been made in diagnosing or identifying problems earlier and there has definitely been improvements in working with high school students in planning for their futures. Unfortunately it isn't always found everywhere but we definitely are making strides in the right direction, both in educating professionals and parents in what to do to ensure success for our kids and young adults.

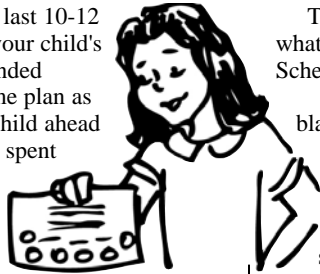
What concerns you most about the current trends in special education?

I think just the inconsistency from one community, one state sometimes even within a school district. Our students are more and more finding themselves in inclusionary programs with teachers who have not received the education they need to serve our students to the best of their abilities. This needs to come from the institutions of higher education as well as support programs within the community.

FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE: Preparing your LD Child for College

By: Vicki Duggan, Parent

You have spent the last 10-12 years looking out for your child's welfare; you have attended every I.E.P. with a game plan as to how to move your child ahead in the world; you have spent countless hours helping and fighting with your child about home work and trying your best to make school a better place for him or her. When your child decides her or she wants to go to college, it makes all those years worthwhile. Now you have to move on to the next phase and that is finding a university for a person with learning disabilities.



1) It's never too early to start.

Get a jump on things, starting with talking with your high school guidance counselors, administrators, and special ed. teachers and get a working list of which colleges and universities have good learning diagnostic services or which ones have good reputations for working with people with learning disabilities. Talk with parents of children with learning disabilities who have graduated from your child's high school and gone on to college. Ask them how they made their decisions and how has their child fared at that particular school. What are the pitfalls. The larger you can make your list, the more variables you can account for, and the better chance you have to make a joint decision with your child that will be good for all concerned. You need to try and accomplish this by your child's freshman year in high school. If your child is to go to college he or she will need to take certain required courses. Start building your information base as soon as possible.

2) As early as you can, get your child involved in every phase, including attending and planning I.E.P.'s.

I can't stress enough the need to learn self-advocacy skills. Once the child reaches college, he or she will have to know where to go for and how to obtain assistance and needed academic accommodations. Once your child starts college, you, as a parent, have no more legal rights to school information, such as grades . . . your child is now truly on his or her own.

3) Explore entrance requirements.

Once you have gotten a list together of possible universities, check to see what their entrance requirements are and how they fit the curriculum your child is taking in high school. If you find a university you think will be a good fit for your child, you need to make sure your child's high school classes are in line with the requirements of that university.

4) School visits.

This is your one chance as a parent to see what the university actually has to offer. Schedule an appointment with the Director of Disability Support Services. Ask point blank what options are available for students going to that university. How does a student go about applying for these services? What safeguards are in place for students? Discuss your student's specific learning disabilities and ask what is available? **All this has to be done with your student present and participating.**

Learning how to use the support services and what is available to him or her is the most critical step for the student. Each university has certain services available (i.e., wake up calls, priority registration, and special admissions procedures). You and your student need to discuss with the program director how best to take advantage of these resources . . . Up until now, either you or a special ed. teacher or a school administrator has been there to support your student. Now, although you can be there to encourage, your student will have to go from here on his or her own.

5) Utilizing strategies.

It is important for your student to really sharpen life skills in high school. The better your student understands how to prepare for a test, study skills, time management, and proofreading, the better prepared for college. One of the biggest obstacles we had to overcome was the workload and time management needed for college. It's impossible to overstate the need to be prepared for a whole new way of life.

6) Alternate courses or required courses at your community college.

Sometimes a reduced workload is needed by the student (12 hours instead of 15), just in order to survive. Taking courses that will transfer to the university offered at a local community college during the summer is sometimes a way to get some of the general education requirements out of the way and less stress on the student.

7) Devise a game plan once school starts.

By the time mid-semester rolls around, it's too late to do anything if a test or two has been failed. Encourage your student from day one to speak with his or her professors (almost all the ones our son has encountered have been more than happy to help) to develop a plan to help him or her succeed. Make sure your student let's the instructor know he or she is there to learn.

There are many more things to discuss and a lot of different opinions for how to help your student succeed. The bottom line is that, as a parent, you have to be prepared for the loss of control. It will be a rollercoaster.

You will get calls regarding challenges your student faces daily; you will be overjoyed at your student's ability to overcome obstacles; you will cry with your student when things aren't going well, and, trust me, there will be times when things aren't going well. In the end, if you have made realistic goals, taught your student the value of being independent and above all, have faith in your student's abilities, he or she will achieve his or her ultimate goal of a college education. . . . I just won't promise that it will happen in four years. . . . or even five.

Vicki Duggan is the parent of a college student and was a presenter at the LDA of Missouri 2004 Conference.

Adapted from *PERSPECTIVES: a Publication of the Learning Disabilities Association of Missouri*, January/February, 2005; Learning Disabilities Association of Missouri, 1942 E. Meadowmere # 104, P.O. Box 3303, Springfield, MO 65808

A Lifelong Challenge

A specific learning disability (SLD) affects the way children and adults with average to above average intelligence receive, process and express information. SLD can be found at every level of society; authorities estimate that 10 to 15% of the population has learning disabilities. Children do not outgrow learning disabilities. It is a lifelong challenge which cannot be cured.

Learning disabilities are often responsible for the creation of a gap between the individual's potential and actual achievement. Persons with learning disabilities have difficulty mastering basic skills like reading, writing, calculating math and developing social skills. Their learning difficulties may have secondary results such as emotional problems, behavioral difficulties or feelings of frustration and failure.

It is never too late to identify a specific learning disability. With the appropriate education, individuals can be taught to compensate for their learning problems. Early identification and remediation by qualified professionals can help the SLD child or adult live a fulfilling, productive life.

- Poor judgment in social situations
- Appears clumsy or has coordination problems
- Extremely active or may appear to be inactive or lethargic
- Inability to focus
- Acts impulsively and /or easily frustrated
- Difficulty handling changes in routine
- Loses things, trouble sticking to a simple schedule, disorganized
- Difficulty expressing spoken or written thoughts
- Reads below age and grade level with poor comprehension
- Reverses letters and numbers
- Difficulty understanding mathematical concepts
- Difficulty with sequential order, days of week, months of year
- Cannot remember today what was taught yesterday
- Meaningless repetition, inability to stop an activity at the appropriate time

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Membership Memo

CHECK OUT
Our New Website
<http://www.ldanebraska.org>

*It is still under
construction
but you can check for
Events, Library List, etc.*

Using Poetry to Teach Reading

(Continued from Page 4)

- before I started the list over.
- The checklist also let me keep track of the reluctant oral readers. There were surprisingly few of those by the end of the school year. Constantly rereading the poems made them confident enough to volunteer for the mini-Readers Theater or to read a character part during the choral reading.
- The rule was no illustrating during reading time. If the children wanted to color in the clip art or add their own art, they had to do it as a free time activity.
- I tried to add variety to the reading by dividing the children in different ways when we did choral reading. For example, everyone wearing jeans would read the first stanza. Those not wearing jeans would read the second stanza. Everyone would read the last stanza. Of course, you need to be alert. This would not have been a good choice on a day when all but one or two were wearing jeans.
- Reading the old poems is a good activity to leave in substitute plans.

Poems and the copyright law

Before you go copying every poem you see, you need to be aware of the copyright law as it pertains to fair use and poetry. Remember that any artwork on a book page is also copyrighted.

Look for books and magazines that give you permission to reproduce poems for classroom use. I have found some really good poems in professional magazines, such as Instructor. If you or your school subscribes, look back through the old issues. Look in theme resource books or teacher's manuals. Old reading manuals can be a good source.

I have several books that are now out of print that contain poems that can be reproduced. No, these are not the quality of a Shel Silverstein or Jack Prelutsky, but they do work. I have noticed some newer books on poetry for teaching phonics or content subjects. I did look them over at my local teacher store, but since I was retiring, I didn't make a purchase. Check them out. You might find something that you can use.

Even if you can't copy all of the poems you would like, you can still expose your students to them by reading the poems aloud to the class. Put copies of favorite poets' books in your classroom library. Point out to the children that they can check out books of poetry in the school library or purchase them in their paperback book order. And, if the children, upon hearing a poem, say, "Let's add that poem to our poetry folder," wouldn't that meet the test of spontaneity? Caution: I am not a lawyer, so make your own decision.

Strategies for Summer Reading

(Continued from Page 1)

- 10 Weeks of Summer Reading Adventures for You and Your Kids
Reading Is Fundamental provides lots of practical ideas that will entice your child!
- Be a Reading Role Model
Set the right example when it comes to reading. Just remember that it might be easy for you and hard for your son or daughter.
- Five Free and Easy Tips for Summer Learning: Research Pointers and What You Can Do
Encourage your child to combine fun and learning this summer. Did you know that active physical play helps children achieve in school? This article has enjoyable ways for your children to read, write, and do math.
These tips were written exclusively for LD OnLine by Dale S. Brown, Senior Manager, LD OnLine. She is a nationally recognized expert on learning disabilities who has written four books on the subject. She received the Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award for her work as an advocate.

LDA of Nebraska is a non-profit nationally affiliated volunteer organization of parents and professionals dedicated to helping children and adults with learning disabilities. LDA does not endorse or recommend any institution, school, treatment or person. We provide support, information and advocacy for our members.

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