

My name is Cathy O'Shea. I am a parent of a 10 year old boy with Dyslexia. Despite Dyslexia affecting 1 in 5 kids many go unidentified. Only about 5 % of kids are identified with Dyslexia. I was told by my child's seasoned SPED teacher and his 3rd grade teacher that my son is the only child they have ever had that has been diagnosed with Dyslexia. His SPED teacher added that there were many they suspected had Dyslexia over the years. Our teachers need more support with Dyslexia training and Dyslexia Intervention. My son has had some amazing teachers over the years, but they admit they have little knowledge about Dyslexia. I find it disheartening that our teachers have such little knowledge about an extremely common learning disability.

My son is now in the fourth grade. I cannot possibly put into words the amount of stress I endured, hours of research I spent, or tears I cried trying to figure out why my child struggled in some areas of reading. In first grade we were alerted that he was behind in mastering his sight words. We worked hard with him on them. His teacher called at the beginning of 2nd grade to let us know his MAP scores had plummeted and some of his Dibels scores were below benchmark. I said to his 2nd grade teacher if you know what the problem please just tell me. She did not know and offered suggestions of other possibilities. I decided I needed to have eyes checked first. That led to me to being referred by our regular Optometrist to a Behavioral Optometrist. I was told they would test him for Dyslexia and vision disorders. We paid hundreds of dollars out of pocket( not covered by insurance) to have him tested. He was diagnosed with a vision disorder. We were told we have to complete 6 months of vision therapy before we could know if he truly had Dyslexia. Starting in January we paid for 6 months of therapy that cost over \$1000 out of pocket. We also spent 3 months doing vision therapy at home. This brought us to the start of third grade. We again received a call from his 3rd grade teacher in the first few weeks of school. He tested way below benchmark on his Dibels and MAP test again. Vision therapy had not fixed the problem. I was heart broken. I requested the school evaluate him. I found out that Children's Mercy diagnoses Dyslexia. This also cost us around \$600 out of pocket. I called in August and received a mid November appointment. That is how far they book out. I was blessed to be able to get into a cancelled appointment in October. They finally confirmed that my child had Dyslexia.

Finally a diagnosis! I thought ok we will get to work on getting him the help he needs. The reality set in when I discovered the phonics program his school had was not a well reviewed program in all of my research. We hired a Barton tutor instead. We were lucky to get into one. I know of many kids on a waiting list. We pay \$90 dollars a week for his tutoring. He needs approximately two years of this tutoring. This will cost us \$9000 out of pocket for both years. We struggle to pay this each year. It has been an amazing program for our child! His first two quarters in school this year he has had all A's except for a B in reading.

I hope that you will sincerely consider this legislation. Kansas needs early identification programs. Kansas needs a multi-sensory, structured, cumulative literacy program that will build a foundation in phonics to help all readers. Teachers need more training. I don't want any other parents or children to have to go through journey my family has had to endure.

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