



# Parent as Advocate

Presented by:

**Jules Johnson**  
**Dyslexia Parent**

# Jules Johnson

Jules is the Social Media Community Leader for Learning Ally

She is the mother of 2 children, a boy and a girl, with dyslexia and is an OG (Orton-Gillingham) tutor. She has been trained by Ron Yoshimoto, a AOGPE fellow, in his OG International Program.

Jules is also very involved with her local community and works closely with:

- Decoding Dyslexia (co-founder)
- International Dyslexia Association
- Public and private schools





**Nothing you do  
for children is  
ever wasted.**

**—Garrison Keillor**



# Agenda:

- Overview of Platform
- Panel Conversation
- Q & A / Discussion





## ***What does it mean to parent a dyslexic child?***

**“I am a wearer of many hats...”**

- **Secretary & record keeper**
- **Cheerleader**
- **Confidence builder**
- **Coach**
- **Chauffeur... to tutoring**
- **Check writer... for tutoring**
- **Designated reader**





## **Wearing many hats, continued...**

- **Sometimes parenting more than one child**
- **IEP participant**
- **Homework helper**
- **Task master**
- **Research specialist**
- **Counsel for the defense**
- ***Fill in the blank...***
- **ADVOCATE**





- **What is an Advocate ?**





- **Advocate:** one that pleads the cause of another



- **Advocacy:** the act or process of advocating or supporting a cause or proposal







You were given THIS child for a reason. You are your child's best advocate. Always remember that.  
-Thyroid Mom

Copyright Thyroid Mom





- **Understand Your Rights**

# U.S. school systems vary widely in their support of students w/LD

- Some districts and many individual educators are progressive, informed, up to speed on assistive tech, and helpful to parents.
- Some districts and educators are not as informed but remain receptive.
- Some are behind the curve of understanding, and unfortunately not receptive to parental input.



# Know Your Rights

- Familiarize yourself with the special education laws and rights on the Federal (**FAPE**) and State level.
- Students are entitled to a “free and appropriate education.”
- Dyslexia is listed under the category “Specific Learning Disability” in federal IDEA law. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)



# Know Your Rights

- You have the right to discuss your concerns with the school.
- You have a right to request that the school evaluate your child for services and/or accommodations. Always request in writing.
- You are a part of the decision making team. Your opinion matters and is important.



# RTI

## RTI Defind

RTI stands for “response to intervention.” This will vary widely from state to state and district to district, but the roots of RTI are to see if a child “responds” to a specific intervention/program/strategy.



# 504 Plan

## 504 Plan Defined

The 504 Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.



# IEP

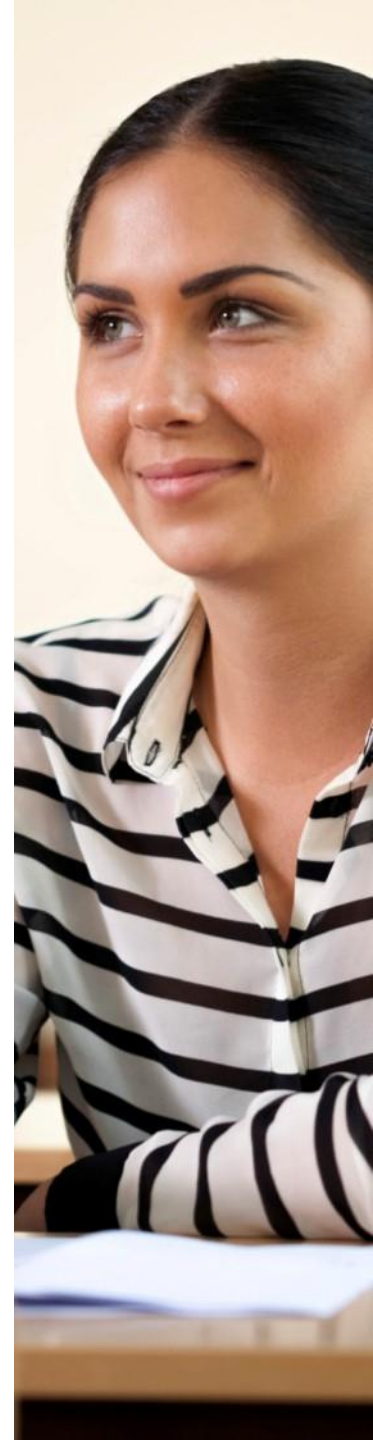


## **IEP Defined**

The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.



# ▪ **Know your Responsibilities**



# Know Your Responsibilities

- Document everything. Keep well organized records.
- Communicate and collaborate well.
- If requests are denied, have game plan for follow-up.
- Ask questions of anything you don't understand.
- Remember to include your child's strengths!





# ▪ Organize Yourself

# Organize Yourself

- Keep a 3 ring binder of student's work, evaluations, notes from the teacher, etc.
- Keep another binder with research on the law, dyslexia, and interventions/accommodations.
- Some parents find it helpful to record IEP meetings. Tell the school upfront as they may be required to also record.



- **Identify Resources and Supports**



# Emotional Factors: You Are Not Alone



- Although at the onset, and for quite a while, it may feel that way. . .



- The process can be isolating. Dealing with teachers, administrators and school personnel often plays out on a one-to-one basis.



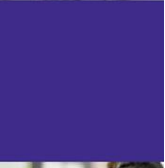
- Long waiting periods can compound the isolation.

# Resources and Supports

- Decoding Dyslexia in all 50 states:  
[DecodingDyslexia.net](https://DecodingDyslexia.net)
- Learning Ally parent services:  
one-on-one phone calls and webinars
- Other resources: International Dyslexia Association, Bright Solutions for Dyslexia, Wrightslaw, Dyslexia Training Institute



# Become Your Child's Champion



**Remediation**



**Accommodation**







# Individual Advocacy

- Research and learn what you need to know to advocate well
- Connect to your local resources
- Communicate often with teachers and other professionals
- Build a network of supportive peers
- Support your child's strengths



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# Systemic Advocacy

- Share your knowledge with others
- Connect others to valuable resources
- Collaborate and network with teachers and other professionals
- Build a network of like-minded peers
- Help others to accept and embrace diversity



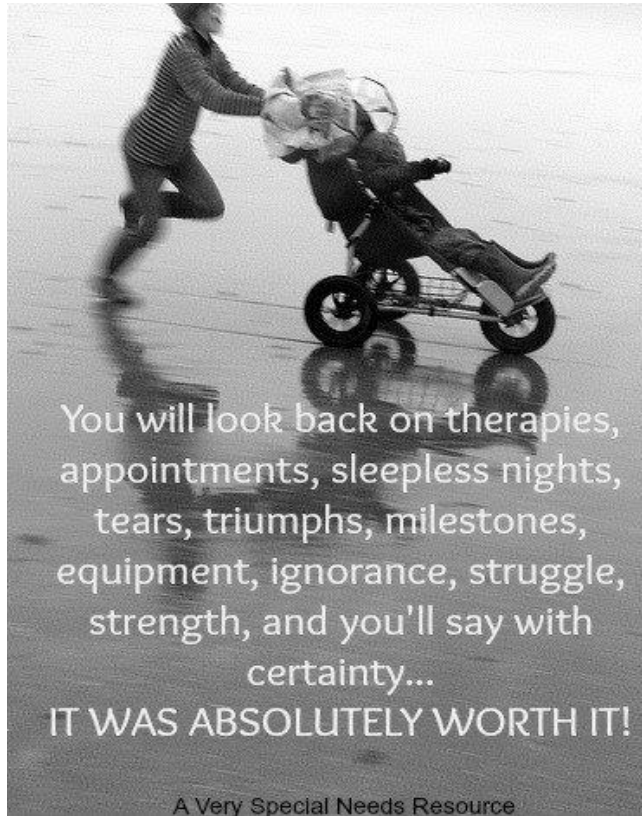
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- Parent Support Specialist Consultations
- Webinars and Events
- Ask A Parent and Parent Chat Forums
- Specialist Directory & Tutor Network
- Community E-Newsletter
- National Achievement Award Program
- Audiobook Library Access





You will look back on therapies,  
appointments, sleepless nights,  
tears, triumphs, milestones,  
equipment, ignorance, struggle,  
strength, and you'll say with  
certainty...  
**IT WAS ABSOLUTELY WORTH IT!**

A Very Special Needs Resource



# Spotlight on DYSLEXIA

Presented by **Learning Ally**

A Virtual Conference for Parents and Educators  
December 4, 2015

[learningally.org/dyslexiaconference](http://learningally.org/dyslexiaconference)





# THANK YOU

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