

FAQ: Dyslexia and the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centres.

1. How do I know if a child is dyslexic?

No single factor can be used to identify dyslexia. Usually, a child with normal to above-normal intellectual capabilities will show difficulties with several of the following: reading comprehension, single word identification, expressing thoughts verbally or in writing; handwriting, spoken language, understanding the spoken word, directionality, etc. There are a number of standardized tests which are directed towards formally identifying dyslexia in a child.

2. Is dyslexia just the simple reversals of letters?

No. Dyslexia has long been characterized in those terms but dyslexia is far more complex and reversals may or may not be present. Many non-dyslexic children reverse numbers and letters until age seven or eight. There are many other characteristics, which may or may not be present with dyslexia. Dyslexia's characteristics vary from person to person and in severity among persons.

3. Is dyslexia curable?

No, it is not curable. It is not a disease, but is a Learning Difference that can be overcome with remedial tutoring.

4. Does dyslexia run in families?

Yes, it can and often does. We are not

absolutely sure it is always inherited or genetic.

5. Does it affect both boys and girls?

Yes.

6. Does one outgrow the condition?

Never, but proper tutoring can overcome it.

7. What type of gains are the children making with Orton-Gillingham tutoring?

Children, on average, appear to gain one or two years growth in reading and comprehension in one year. They may gain between one to four years of growth or more in a test of phonics skills. Keep in mind that these are children who usually begin the program about two years below grade level in reading.

8. What is the average length of time a child needs remedial tutoring?

For many children, two years are sufficient. A few children are very successful after one year and some require three years or more therapy to obtain optimal results.

9. What is the Orton-Gillingham Approach to remedial tutoring?

It is a structured, multi-sensory, phonetic, sequential one-on-one tutoring approach which is individualized and paced for each child. It is said to "rewire the brain" to overcome difficulties with reading, spelling and handwriting and to establish new neuropaths in the brain to overcome their absence.

10. How are the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation Learning Centres being established in Canada?

The Scottish Rite Freemasons in a given area must make a formal declaration of their willingness to be responsible for organizing and administering a Learning Centre in their area, and for raising some of the funds needed to initiate and continue a Centre. The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation has established the governance structure, which is incorporated in an extensive Handbook which must be followed precisely. The Foundation also provides some start-up and continuing operating funds, as well as an Executive Director who oversees compliance.

11. Why can't our schools treat dyslexia as well as the Scottish Rite Learning Centres?

It is usually a matter of insufficient funding to provide the very labor-intensive one-on-one tutoring required to achieve successful results with a youngster with dyslexia. The Learning Centres in Canada use only one-on-one tutoring with trained and certificated volunteer tutors. Most schools do not have teachers trained in the Orton-Gillingham Approach to tutoring.

12. Isn't this why our schools have special education teachers?

Yes, but very few have been specially trained in the Orton-Gillingham method to provide the one-on-one remedial tutoring needed by a child with dyslexia. As well, children with learning difficulties are normally assigned to a class of children with similar difficulties, and the teachers normally do not have time with a classroom of children to provide an

individual child with this kind of tutoring.

13. When and where do these Learning Centres Operate?

Except in unusual circumstances, the Centres operate out of school hours, usually after school. The Centres are normally located in buildings other than schools, and are often found in Masonic buildings. The Centres are set up specifically for tutoring, with specially designed tutoring areas and equipment, as well as tutoring materials.

14. What do teachers, schools and school boards think about the Learning Centres?

Although attitudes are expected to vary among individuals and organizations, the Canadian Learning Centres have met with high praise and excellent support from teachers and administrators, because they realize the great benefits being offered to children that cannot otherwise be offered by school systems. Furthermore, this help is FREE, thanks to the generous donations of supporters of this program for children in dire need of help.

15. The program always uses the term "tutor", and never "teacher". Why?

The Centres wish to emphasize their support role and their lack of conflict with the formal teaching process of the schools. Nonetheless, it is clear that meaningful learning is taking place during the tutoring process. For similar reasons, the term *Learning Centre* is used instead of *school* or *class*, and *child* is used instead of *student* or *pupil*.

16. How are the tutors trained?

Volunteers who have a Bachelor's degree apply, then go through a selection process, and then undertake formal training by a certificated tutor trainer. Those who are accepted as volunteer tutors are trained at no cost to themselves. The basic level of training requires 45 hours of concentrated classroom learning and 100 hours of hands-on supervised practicum before being certificated. As part of the training and continuing supervision of the tutors, every tutoring session is video recorded and then archived, thus ensuring the personal security of the child as well.

17. Are there Scottish Rite programs similar to this in the United States?

Yes. The first US Centre opened in 1954, and there are now over 200 similar Learning Centres in the US which vary greatly from state to state. Some US Centres focus on various learning differences including aphasia, autism, speech problems, and/or dyslexia. In the Northeastern US, the Learning Centres program concentrates solely on the remediation of dyslexia, and its first Centre was opened in 1994. The Scottish Rite Learning Centres program in Canada follows this latter plan, and opened its first Learning Centre in London, Ontario in September of 2003, with others following soon after.

18. Are the Learning Centres going to be involved in research?

Yes. The Foundation has funded meaningful

major research at the University level with co-operation of one of the Learning Centres. It is expected there will be further meaningful research and co-operation as further applications for funding are made.

19. Are Computers being used with the children?

Computer literacy can have a positive effect upon the self-esteem of a child, help increase his or her self-confidence and it can be used as a reinforcement in some situations. However, the Learning Centres do not use computers as an alternative to effective one-on-one tutoring.

20. How can I become involved in a Learning Centre?

Contact your local Centre through the website: www.learningcentresforchildren.ca, or through the local Scottish Rite. There are many areas in which you can volunteer and the Director of your local Centre can discuss these with you. It may be that you might wish to volunteer as a tutor, and feel the tremendous satisfaction of helping a child overcome a major hurdle in life. Retired teachers remember this kind of satisfaction from classroom teaching, and easily adapt to the tutoring process, but others can learn to do so easily as well. For more information, please visit our website at: www.dyslexiacentrehamilton.com

21. Are donations tax deductible?

All donations to the Hamilton Learning Centre are made to the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada, and are "tax deductible". Donations to the Hamilton

Learning Centre must be so noted on the reference or memo line of your cheque. They are sent to: SRCF, 4 Queen St. S, Hamilton ON L8P 3R3

22. How can I apply to a Centre for my child's admission?

Contact your local Learning Centre by telephone, or e-mail information given in answer to question 20 above. Ask the Director for application information, and you will be asked for some detailed information about your child, and asked to complete an Information Form and return it to the Centre so your child's name will be on file. When there is an opening you will be advised, and asked to complete an application form. When an evaluation is completed as to the most appropriate applicant, you will be advised.

23. Why is a polar bear used as a logo for the Learning Centres in Canada?

Different Teddy bears have been used as logos with the US Scottish Rite Learning Centres to emphasize the service to children and the warmth and friendliness of the Centres. In Canada, a warm, fuzzy and friendly polar bear is used as a distinctive symbol to indicate the independence of the Canadian program in the cooler part of North America while reaching out to children in need. You will note that our polar bear carries the logo of The Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation of Canada, and is copyrighted.

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FAQ*

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(*Frequently Asked Questions)

