



*Promoting literacy through research, education, and advocacy.*

## Arizona Branch

### TIPS FOR EVALUATING TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF READING DISABILITIES

#### IDA DISCLAIMER

The international Dyslexia Association supports efforts to provide individuals with dyslexia with appropriate instruction and to identify these individuals at an early age. The Association, however, does not endorse any specific program, speaker, product, or instructional material, noting that there are a number of such which present the critical components of instruction as defined by IDA.

If you wish to have your child tested for dyslexia then the best start is to ask their school to arrange testing for him/her. Put this request in writing, and then the school should act on it.

If you have already tried this, and you are not satisfied with the results, and you wish to do this privately, check with your insurance that they will pay for the testing, as some of them will and others will not.

**The following questions should be asked when considering any specific intervention:**

- ***Has the intervention been rigorously evaluated with scientifically designed studies, reported in reputable journals? Do these studies use standardized reading assessments?***
- ***What are the short- and long-term gains in reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of the interventions delivered by the therapist you are considering?***
- ***Do the therapists use standardized assessments to measure baseline performance and post-treatment outcome?***
- ***Is therapy administered intensively?*** (Learning occurs best with frequent repetitions close together. For example, 30 minutes 4 times/week is more productive than 60 minutes 2 times/week. Daily treatment, at least 4 times/week, is most productive. The older the child, the longer the daily sessions can be, to maximize the repetition factor.)

- ***Is there support following the intensive treatment to ensure that the child practices and maintains gains?*** (Children with learning difficulties find it hard to take what they learned in one setting and apply it to another.)
- ***What are the training requirements to become a proficient therapist?*** (Some language/reading therapies have certification requirements; others do not. Those that do not are not necessarily less effective; it just makes consumers need to ask more questions such as: *How were you trained – how long did it take, who did it, were you able to work with experienced therapists while you were first practicing the therapy? How long have you been doing it? What do you do if therapy is not progressing?*)
- ***Is it a cost-effective solution?*** (You should have the information about expected outcome at this point. The treatment should address the root of the problem and result in the child's being able to progress in reading at his expected level and work more independently in the future. Compare its cost with that of years of depending on tutoring/support to try to maintain school progress. Self-esteem cannot be measured monetarily, but should also be considered in the equation.)

Parents and professionals can find reviews of reading programs offered in the schools by going to The Florida Center for Reading Research Web site, [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org). The site also offers the presentations made by their professionals on current research in reading, and is a very helpful source of information.