

Dyslexia in Preschoolers

Research shows that the earlier we identify and support children with dyslexia, the better their outcome. So what are the first signs, and what can we do to help?



Like other specific learning disabilities, dyslexia isn't often diagnosed until after seven years of age. However, the warning bells can be apparent during early childhood. While children develop at different rates, it is important that whānau and educators can spot those tell-tale signs, so that children continue to be inspired by learning and go on to enjoy educational success.

Early signs to watch out for:

Delayed speech – By three years of age, 'typically developing' children can be understood by an unfamiliar adult most of the time. Delayed speech sounds can be an early indicator of dyslexia. These children may have lots to say but their speech development is slow and they may muddle certain sounds or words, particularly longer words.

Struggles to learn rhymes and songs – Like most children, they enjoy listening to stories, but may struggle to sit still and maintain attention, and show little interest in the text. They may have trouble remembering simple rhymes and songs or rhyming sequences such as 'the cat sat on the mat'.

Memory difficulties – A child with dyslexia can find it difficult to remember sequences of information. They might struggle with instructions that have more than two parts, and have trouble recalling names of people or objects.

Phonological awareness and sequencing difficulties – Research indicates that between the ages of three and five, children develop the ability to identify rhyme and syllables, and begin to recognise speech sounds and match them to letters. A child with dyslexia may be slow to reach these milestones. Sequencing words in sentences, and learning the days of the week and numbers may also be tricky for them.

Co-ordination difficulties – A child with dyslexia may demonstrate poor coordination: they may struggle with gross motor actions such as kicking, throwing, hopping or skipping, and have difficulties with fine motor activities such as threading beads, using scissors, pencil control and doing up buttons. They may also struggle to coordinate the sequences of routines, such as getting dressed.

Family History – Dyslexia has a strong genetic link. If a family member has dyslexia this can be a factor too.

In addition to the above difficulties, a child with dyslexia may also demonstrate particular strengths, such as:

Creative talents – This could be in the quality and imagination of their art work, their ability to build fantastic structures, or their flair for telling great stories, or performing skits etc.

Enhanced Cognitive skills – Children with dyslexia may be quick thinkers and problem-solvers. They might grasp new concepts quickly and be skilled in sharing knowledge verbally.

So what's the next step if you think your preschooler has dyslexia? See page 5.



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Our People

Message from the Chairperson



Kia ora tātou. Since the last issue of *The Record*, we've acquired a new government and a new Minister of Education (Hon. Chris Hipkins). This will bring changes to education policy and may also present some opportunities for SPELD NZ. I'll be sending a briefing paper to new ministers to let them know we're here and also to make a submission for government to fund assessment and

teaching subsidies for those families and whanau who find it difficult to afford our services. The thrust of the argument is the need for social investment: spend public money early to prevent having to spend more money down the line. I believe the new government will be receptive to the concept (as the previous government was). However, we need action to help families from slipping further behind.

We had a very successful AGM in Christchurch in September. Marion Fairbrass became a life member. As Chairperson, Marion was instrumental in helping bring SPELD NZ together as a national organisation during the transition period. We are hugely indebted to her wonderful work. Marion has also been a fabulous Convenor of the Professional Standards Committee. She will continue as a SPELD NZ Teacher and will have more time to pursue her other life goals.

Lynne Ashman became a new Board member, and Susan Moyle and Sharon de Castro were re-elected. The Board has a current vacancy and we welcome any expressions of interest from the SPELD NZ membership. We're also happy to appoint professional members with the appropriate skills, for a particular purpose as a secondment on a temporary basis, with no commitment to being a permanent Board member.

Before the AGM, PSC members Judith Alexander and Cathryn Bjarnesen delivered an extremely valuable workshop on the updates to the Woodcock-Johnson assessment tool. Our thanks also to Marion Fairbrass and PSC Teacher Rep Eleanor Boyce for their help in developing the new lesson planning material/forms/paperwork.

I wish all our members a very happy Christmas and a relaxing holiday period.

Peter Scanlan - SPELD NZ Chairperson

Letter to the Editor

I received *The Record* (August) and just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the story about the adult student Hamish Shoebridge. Such an inspiring story but also, as a teacher, a great story about adversity and the difficulties children face. I admit to having a bit of a lump in my throat thinking of this wee lad trying to do what was expected but unable to, and the part about him not being able to fill in his leaving form was so poignant. I passed it on to our RTLB who thought it was an excellent read and she shared it around her office.

SPELD NZ Teacher Ann Garry

SPELD NZ Board Profile



Lynne Ashman

I've been a SPELD NZ Teacher for about 10 years and am always astonished at the way SPELD NZ completely transforms students' lives.

I've spent all my life in education. I've taught science in girls' grammar schools in England, chemistry in an energetic all-American school in Brussels, and biology and maths in an Auckland high school.

I still saw myself as a teacher when I went to the Ministry of Education to introduce science and technology to teachers when the new curriculum (not this one, the one before!) came out.

I then went on to lecture in educational psychology at the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education (and also when it was the Auckland College of Education). After retiring, I worked as a learning support person for the Early Childhood Education department.

Teaching academic literacy in the Foundation Course at the Faculty of Education, I was shocked by the bright, intelligent students I worked with who had failed University Entrance. I was determined to focus on helping students gain the literacy and numeracy that would free them to use their considerable brains effectively.

I feel privileged to be involved in helping such an important organisation as SPELD NZ.

"It took him 40 years to write his wife a birthday card. His words made her cry."



Hamish and Heather Shoebridge

We were delighted to see our story in *The Record* on Hamish picked up by the *Dominion Post* and *Stuff News*. Hamish is a huge inspiration to other adults struggling with literacy and we're very grateful he agreed to share his journey. It's never too late to seek help!

Courses

SPELD NZ Introduction to Specific Learning Disabilities

Are you a parent or caregiver concerned about your child's learning journey?

Are you a teacher aide working with a child who is bright but not achieving?



These courses are a great way to learn insights into why specific learning disabilities (SLD) occur and what it is like to have dyslexia or other SLD. They also offer constructive, practical strategies to help these learners in the classroom and home.

The Level 3 NZQA-approved courses are held over two days and are suitable for anyone with little or no prior knowledge about specific learning disabilities. Parents, grandparents, teacher aides and teachers are all invited to attend. If you would like to have a course arranged in your area, please contact SPELD NZ and we'll do our best to organise this.

Upcoming 2018 Introductory Courses:

Dunedin:	8 & 9 March
Wellington:	15 & 16 March
Auckland:	21 & 22 March
Christchurch:	10 & 11 May 23 & 24 August 1 & 2 November
Hawkes Bay:	24 & 25 May
Nelson:	14 & 15 June
Invercargill:	6 & 7 September

For more information and dates for other 2018 Introductory Courses, see the Training page of our website www.speld.org.nz or call 0800 773 536.

New SPELD NZ Teachers and Assessors needed!

Please consider becoming a SPELD NZ Teacher or Assessor – both are needed in many parts of New Zealand. See our website for more details on SPELD NZ training options and scholarships available.

Children with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities often suffer years of failure and despondency at school. You could be the one to nurture them to success.

SPELD NZ Certificate Course in Specific Learning Disabilities

"This is a very valuable course, which ... should be available to every teacher in the country."

"The most informative and positive experience I have ever had in my teaching career of 15 years."

This Level 5 NZQA-approved course is delivered online, with a face-to-face workshop in Auckland during the July school holidays. For teachers, Resource Teachers: Learning Behaviour (RTLB), Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCO), and other related professionals.

The course provides training in identification of learners with dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities (SLD), and teaching methods for these students. It includes 400 hours of learning and assignments. Teachers with at least one year of classroom teaching experience wishing to become SPELD NZ teachers, can follow on with a probationary practicum period of guided teaching.

Online 2018: This course will run from 5 March until 19 October. Applications must be received by January 31. Scholarships may be available in some regions. For more details, including an information booklet and enrolment application, see www.speld.org.nz/speld-training or call 0800 773 536 Ext 5 or email southern@speld.org.nz.

SPELD NZ Assessor Course 2018



"Judith's knowledge is impressive and her passion engages the learner."

This training is in two parts. Part A provides training in the administration and interpretation of the Woodcock-Johnson IV test batteries and the assessment of those with specific learning disabilities. Applicants must have NZCER Level C grading. Those wishing to become a SPELD NZ Assessor may be invited into the Part B mentored programme. For more information, see the Training page on the SPELD NZ website www.speld.org.nz or email eo@speld.org.nz or call 0800 773 536 Ext 5. Scholarships may be available to subsidise the cost of training. (This training is not an NZQA-approved course.)

What's it like to teach your own child? Charis Sweeney trained with SPELD NZ so she could help her dyslexic son, Luke.



Nearly two years ago, I became the only SPELD NZ Teacher in Greymouth. I'm so grateful for the opportunity – I've grown as a professional in a myriad of ways and feel incredibly fortunate to be able to help my son and others in the community with specific learning disabilities (SLD).

I began to notice learning differences in Luke when he was four. He struggled with sequencing and naming, and when we played I-SPY and I suggested looking for something that started with a 'B' sound, he would respond with words like 'tree'. Luke was very happy at preschool but when he started school his progress was slow and by the end of the first school year, he showed quite a bit of anxiety. He was exhausted and often emotional.

His teachers said he was "just a boy" and his ability was similar to others in the class; but they also noticed his lack of concentration and his anxiety. Luke would set high expectations for himself and become upset when he couldn't meet them. It was hard for me to see a child who loved to learn about the world, loved books and being read to, and had so much confidence, change so dramatically in the course of the year.

A trip to a knowledgeable optometrist revealed a severe tracking issue. A friend who's a dyslexia therapist in the USA advised that I not wait for him to fail, and encouraged me to have Luke assessed sooner rather than later. I'm so grateful for that advice. A formal assessment revealed what I instinctively knew. Luke is very bright and his general intelligence scores were very high, but the scores around phonological awareness, rapid naming, working memory, sequencing, and visual perception were very low.

Receiving his assessment inspired me to become a SPELD NZ teacher. I hoped that the online CCSLD course would give me the knowledge and understanding to help and advocate for my son, and I wasn't disappointed!

Since working with Luke, I've seen some great improvements in his ability and self-belief. He is my most challenging student and I understand why many parents avoid taking on their own child! However, I work hard to teach around activities and methods I know Luke enjoys. Because he's such a physical kid, we learn new words and vowel patterns by jumping to sounds and running to put new words together. He loves games so I'm always looking for or making up a game to teach something new.

We've also been bolstered by achieving goals. When Luke can do something he couldn't do before, he becomes self-motivated to take on a new challenge. The key is letting him be in the driver's seat as much as possible.

I now teach several other students and work at a Greymouth kindergarten part-time. As a SPELD NZ teacher, I think about the skills and knowledge the kindergarten children will need to be ready for school, such as phonological awareness, coordination/laterality, visual perception skills and a keen interest in learning. I try to plan some of the learning experiences with these in mind.

I've also initiated a local support group for parents of children with specific learning disabilities, which has been an amazing asset as both a parent and educator. We have a number of committed educators and professionals who're passionate about helping their own children and other children in the community with SLDs. We've started a Facebook page, a kete of resources and a meeting each term, which have allowed us to discuss the challenges, frustrations, anxiety and celebrations we experience as parents of children with SLDs.

If your child has changed emotionally and is struggling at school, don't delay getting an assessment. More knowledge about the way your child learns, their strengths and weaknesses and how their mind works, will always be an asset to their school journey and beyond.

Suspect your preschooler may have dyslexia? Here's what you can do.

The more time you spend with a preschooler, playing games, singing songs, reading, repetition, miming and moving, the more you will understand how and what your child is learning. The best way to identify learning delays is to intentionally engage in activities with a child, so you can observe their skills in a natural, informal context. During play, an adult can demonstrate some of the skills and then watch to see if the child develops these easily, once exposed to them.



Recommendations:

- For all children, **focus on developing oral language skills** through rich conversation, story-telling, songs and rhymes in order to build the vital skills for learning and socialising.
- In early childhood settings, educators can **introduce children to phonological awareness through play**. Point out the sounds in words, have fun with rhyming and syllables and show children how sentences break down into words. Parents can also do this at home, as well as helping children to understand how to listen – not just to adults, but also to their friends. Group learning situations give children opportunities to learn to interact with their friends, to show empathy for others and to work and play together.
- **Outside play** is also very important for helping children develop core strength and accuracy with large movements. Encourage activities that involve coordinating both sides of the body and crossing the midline to support children in developing the fine motor skills they need to write.
- From as early as six months of age, children can be exposed to **opportunities to interact with writing and drawing**. They can start using large crayons or chalks,

paintbrushes with water on the floor or wall, water or spray bottles to spray water on to concrete or a fence. These can be a fun first foray into mark-making. These positive experiences help children feel empowered and motivated by literacy. If a child goes on to have a diagnosis of dyslexia, that motivation will help them face the inevitable challenges.

As a parent, you know your own child best. If you have concerns, follow your instincts. It's important in the first instance to speak to your child's teacher or your family doctor.

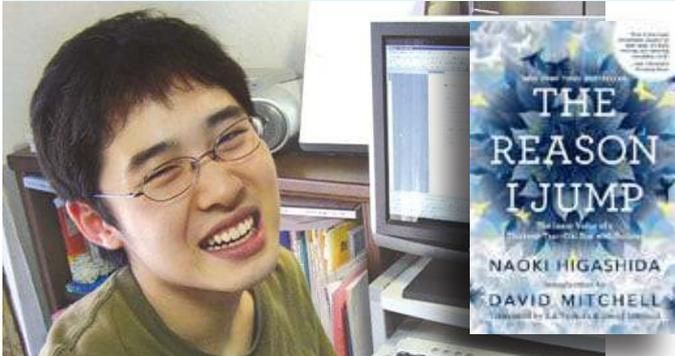
Educators need to take any parental concerns seriously. Respectful, reciprocal conversations between parents and educators are essential to ensuring that children who show early signs of dyslexia receive the support they need, and are able to work to their strengths and engage confidently in their learning.

If a child is exhibiting a significant number of these early signs, you may also wish to seek further support from specialist assessors, educators, speech language therapists and occupational therapists.

Our thanks to Auckland Kindergarten Association.

The Woodcock-Johnson assessment used by SPELD NZ can test for dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities in pre-schoolers. Research shows many benefits of early identification and intervention but parents/caregivers of children younger than 7 or 8 should note that a definitive diagnosis of dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities (SLD) is difficult to make for this age group. However, the assessment can identify where difficulties are likely and the Assessor can make suggestions to help future learning. Individual lessons can still help a child under this age who is significantly behind in reading. A firm diagnosis can usually be made for children once they turn 9.

One boy's voice amid the silence of autism



The Reason I Jump is a book written by a severely autistic 13-year-old boy, Naoki Higashida. This fascinating child's perspective on what it's like to have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has helped me improve my teaching approach as a SPELD NZ teacher and as a classroom teacher of children with ASD.

Each chapter begins with a question that Naoki answers about his experiences of being autistic. One of these is: "Why do you Jump?" (hence the title of the book). Naoki describes the sense of peace his repetitive movements give him and his love of nature. He finds being in the water particularly calming and freeing.

This is an engaging book that makes you feel like you are having a conversation with a very articulate, intelligent 13-year-old who understands himself, his behaviour and the way he thinks. As I worked with children on the autism spectrum in mainstream classroom settings, (as a primary school teacher), this book gave me a better understanding and more compassion for children with ASD. I gained insight into why symptoms of autism, such as sensory overload, can lead to behaviours like avoiding eye contact and 'zoning out'. Sometimes, as classroom teachers, we can interpret these behaviours as 'not paying attention' when really, for someone with ASD, they are often a survival mechanism for dealing with the world. Naoki's book reminded me how being a learner with ASD in a classroom with up to 30 others could be very overwhelming.

As a SPELD NZ teacher I have the opportunity to work 1:1 in less busy settings than a classroom, which can be of great benefit to learners. However, as educators we sometimes focus on sticking to a carefully scheduled teaching and learning plan, with a variety of different engaging learning tasks (with the best of intentions for our learners). For some students, this approach could seem quite chaotic and is not always optimal for their learning.

The Reason I Jump made me consider how I could modify my SPELD teaching approach to better meet the needs of a particular child (with ASD) I teach. I have learnt that more time on fewer tasks was a better way of catering for this child's learning needs. He has thrived on having more time to think, process and order his thoughts before moving on to the next learning task. I also modified the amount of verbal feedback and feedforward I gave him, to allow for longer spaces of

silence (rather than constantly prompting or encouraging him). This led to better retention of his learning and longer stretches of calm, focused learning for him. My fairly constant verbal praise and encouragement was, for this child, another distraction to try to screen out. I found other less distracting ways of encouraging him, such as written feedback and encouragement, and stickers at the end of a task. I would now like to learn more about how to provide learning environments that are better suited to children with ASD in mainstream classroom settings.

I would recommend *The Reason I Jump* to anyone who knows someone on the autism spectrum, or has an interest in learning more about ASD. This book offers a different perspective to the academically written non-fiction books and articles on this topic. It reminded me that every person learns differently, and that finding ways of tailoring our teaching approach to a particular learner can have a great benefit.

Reviewed by SPELD NZ teacher Liz Skinner

SPELD NZ's world-class learning opportunities



SPELD NZ has had its hands full in recent months, hosting workshops by internationally acclaimed educators. UK-based Judy Hornigold (above far left) shared her outstanding insights into the Singapore approach to teaching maths. 'Bars' are drawn to represent amounts in word problems, their positions indicating whether amounts are joined or compared, breaking a word problem into a more manageable visual problem. Reduced complexity and deeper understanding particularly benefit those who are struggling with maths and the comprehension of maths language. Judy is a fabulous communicator and her workshops in Auckland and Christchurch provided great professional development for SPELD NZ Teachers. We also had a huge response from teachers in local schools – in fact, two thirds of the course participants in Christchurch were from outside SPELD NZ.

SPELD NZ also hosted workshops by Dr Lynne Jaffe, an American learning difficulties practitioner, academic and author. This was a huge opportunity for SPELD NZ Assessors and others to learn about the significant changes to the revised Woodcock-Johnson assessment tool.

Learning

Student-designed dyslexia aid a winner

A group of Year 13 students at Tauranga Girls' College has invented a device to help those with dyslexia – and they're ecstatic about the attention it's getting.



Tauranga Girls College Brite NZ students with one of the current options for dyslexic readers, a coloured plastic sleeve. Photo: Tracy Hardy.

Former SPELD NZ student Madison Sykes has teamed up with her equally entrepreneurial classmates to set up a company called Brite and develop their first product.

The iBrite is an LED device that projects a coloured light overlay onto a student's page and work space. It has the same relaxing effect on the brain as the plastic coloured overlays used by many dyslexic students, allowing them to process written information more easily. At around \$40, it's also significantly cheaper than glasses with coloured lenses. Madison came up with the idea for iBrite as an eight-year-old.

"When I was diagnosed with dyslexia, my teacher gave me a sheet of coloured plastic to use over my reading," explains Madison. "This technique is effective, but I became frustrated at constantly having to readjust the plastic and not being able to write on the page below. Around this time I was introduced to the many uses of LED lighting. My dad, an electrician, would

encourage me to think innovatively about how we can use technology (especially electrical components), to solve problems. From here it was like a 'light-bulb moment'."

Local SPELD NZ teachers attended the official launch of an early iBrite prototype in Tauranga in August. Among them was retired SPELD NZ Teacher Luci Carter who was impressed by the girls' enthusiasm and product knowledge.

"I think it could be a suitable alternative to coloured lens for glasses or a coloured overlay, but not too expensive to buy, which is a major consideration for some parents," she says.

The girls have recently completed 3D printing of the final prototype with sponsorship from 3Design. They are now testing it with a trial group, and working on a USB-chargeable version, and hope to enter the market with their product in 2018.

This year the Brite team was ecstatic to be named 'Supreme Winner' ahead of 504 other entrants at the Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty Young Innovators Award. This incredible achievement saw them win a \$3000 prize and \$10,000 worth of internships with businesses across the Bay of Plenty to move forward with their product development and branding.

They have also been voted regional winners in the Young Enterprise Scheme, a nationwide competition for high school students and hope to become the national champions this month.

For more information about the iBrite, contact the Brite team through their Facebook page (@nzbrite) or email briteheadoffice@gmail.com.

Former SPELD NZ student behind the bright idea

Former SPELD NZ student 18-year-old Madison Sykes is the inventor of the iBrite reading aid and CEO of the Brite company behind it. She was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyspraxia as an 8-year-old.

"I wanted to excel in my schooling, but the words on the pages didn't want to co-operate. Some days it felt like I was fishing, trying to pluck a word off the page; then trying to align the slithering fish to form sentences. This constant battle began to discourage me, until it reached the point where I didn't want to go to school and be in the lowest groups for reading, writing and maths."

However, once Madison started SPELD NZ lessons, she began to make progress with her learning and gain more confidence.

"We'd work together on developing skills to overcome the struggles I faced. Initially I felt embarrassed about needing to go to a tutor, but after a few weeks I valued my sessions as I began to see progress.

"As I became more aware of just how common it is, I was no longer ashamed to have dyslexia. Today I'm proud to say I have dyslexia and dyspraxia. I'm doing well in school, and English (a past enemy) is now my favourite subject. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that our differences (such as dyslexia) are not burdens; they should be celebrated. With determination and perseverance, everyone can achieve."



And Madison is a shining example of this. After completing her Year 13 studies, she plans to go to university to do a conjoint degree in law and commerce, majoring in economics.

Dyslexia key ingredient to celebrity chef's success

He left school with the equivalent of just a couple of NCEA Level 1 qualifications, but Jamie Oliver has gone on to become a celebrity chef and healthy-eating campaigner who shares his love of cooking with the world. And while he didn't read his first novel until the age of 38, he's made a considerable chunk of his estimated \$460 million (£240 million) fortune publishing his own cookbooks.



Far from holding him back, Oliver believes that dyslexia has contributed to his success, and describes those who are dyslexic as lucky. In a September interview with Radio Times, he said, "I genuinely think that when someone says to you, 'Johnny's got dyslexia', you should get down on your knees, shake the child's hand and say, 'well done, you lucky, lucky boy'."

Embracing the many positive aspects of his learning difference, Oliver says that dyslexia gives people a unique perspective and ability to problem solve.

"If I'm in a meeting I just see the problems differently and I obsess about things differently. I have a funny way of looking at stuff – Jamie's World, it's a funny place. Some bits of work need to be sweated over and cried over and crafted. Because I'm dyslexic, sometimes, when it requires a load of

stuff to be done, I just do it. It's like I'm a massive, ten-tonne boulder rolling down the hill."

Raised to work hard and to be resourceful, he remembers always wanting to create things and being good with his hands, but school wasn't a place he could showcase his talents.

"I was very bad at school, didn't get any exams. I was in 'special needs' for five years of secondary school, so I didn't really blossom at school. I think I was given all the support to shine and it just wasn't my time. I really loved school [but] I had nothing to offer. I didn't learn much about myself, didn't feel compelled to excel or put extra effort into any class, but I liked hanging out with my mates."

Now 42, Oliver recalls being taken out of class to join a group of four others with learning differences. He felt singled out and embarrassed when the teacher would come to his English class and announce: 'Can we have Jimmy and Jamie for special needs?' As they left, the kids would sing 'special needs' to the tune of the Beatles' song *Let it Be*.

He's grateful that more is known about dyslexia now, and children with learning differences are receiving more tailored teaching at school.

"There are different types of intelligence and everyone has their ability to be brilliant. School really should be about facilitating kids to find their inner genius and their confidence, and help them with life skills and just being good people."

Being dyslexic is not an excuse or a reason to not prosper in life, he says.

"It's just that you're not going to be good at the predictable things. There are wonderful people in business and architecture, and art and music that have learning difficulties, but every single one of us need to feel like we're good at something. It's about self esteem and that can be relevant to anyone, regardless of whether they have dyslexia or not."

"If everyone is thinking alike,
then no one is thinking."

—Benjamin Franklin

Student Contributions

Autumn Wonderland!



Delicate leaves twisting and turning
Frolicking in the wind.
Playing around until they hit the ground
Lying down, not making a sound!

Lying as if they are making
A vast maroon blanket
Partly covered in frost.

Jack Frost has awoken from his summery slumber
As he covers the world with his huge quilt
Letting the world know winter is here!

By Mala Horrax (10)

Accident!

It all happened so quickly... It had been a lovely day... Jack, I, Mum and Dad were walking to Mission Bay while his sister was swimming. Jack asked to jog to Mission Bay because he felt like it. Near the stairs he saw Samuel who was a bully from his school.

Jack started his run. Samuel put out his leg really quickly when he was close enough. Jack tripped really badly – three rolls – and he got a really bad graze. He landed on a rock. Crr! He snapped his arm. “Arr Arr Arr!” he screamed. His parents came running and they saw a bone was sticking out from his skin. There was heaps of blood. He lost a lot of blood.

Mum called the ambulance – she dialled 111. They only took a few minutes because they weren’t far away.

Samuel ran away and the police chased him. One of the police guys hopped out of the car to follow him. The other policeman drove his car to a carpark where Samuel was running. The police guy hopped out of his car and he said “FREEZE”.

Down the other end, Jack was lying on the ground and the ambulance had arrived. They picked him up and put him on a stretcher and into the ambulance. The ambulance drove away with its lights flashing and its sirens, with Mum and Dad in it.

In hospital they had to do surgery on him. He got plaster on his arm. It took two months to get better.



Story dictated by Kyle Paris (9) to his SPELD NZ Teacher, Julia Miller. Kyle says he finds it better to dictate a story “because writing takes too long and it’s easier when someone else does the spelling”.

Student Contributions

Chopper!



This is a chopper. It breaks
the tree down and chops it up.
A bike comes out the back.

By Kieran Hampshire (8)

The day we won Jump Jam...

In Term 1 we learnt how to do Jump Jam. We picked the music and practiced the routine a lot! We went to Auckland to perform at Nationals.

On the day of the performance we went to the green room to get ready and then we waited.

While we were waiting in the green room suddenly a girl with a white bow in her hair comes to tell us 'you are on next'. Then she came back again and we were all ready to go on. The music started and we ran onto the stage. It felt good

to finally be on the stage. After our performance we sat down on some chairs and watched 2 more schools.

At the end of our category we got certificates and then they gave out the trophies. We got first place!!

By Chay Down (10)

Chay used Google Dictate to turn his voice into text for this story. His SPELD NZ Teacher, Renay Bevin, says Google Dictate is a great academic equaliser for students with dyslexia as they are able to concentrate on the content of what they are writing.



Chay (front row, far right) with his team at the Jump Jam Nationals.

Student Contributions

Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and ADHD



By Callum Moffitt (11) – as dictated to his mum Kerry

What is it like to have dyslexia, dysgraphia and ADHD? Let me share how I manage the tough stuff, and tell you about all the awesome stuff.

When I was at kindy I never wanted to leave the sandpit. I refused to learn to write my name. I didn't like holding a pen. I never liked drawing and colouring in activities. When I started school I never felt that different to the other kids because, as it turns out, most of my friends have dyslexia too. We'd all rather run around than sit in a classroom, and we all struggle with schoolwork. If schoolwork is hard for someone else, it's double hard for us! Having dyslexia, and ADHD, makes it extremely difficult to get anything done in a timely manner, as I can't sit still and focus on stuff. When I was younger I struggled to control my behaviour, like calling out loudly and jumping around. But now that everybody understands my learning style, I'm much better at keeping calm in class.

I am good at reading, which is strange for dyslexia. The only thing I have trouble with is losing my place. But I have ways around that by using a ruler or using a coloured overlay, or choosing books with bigger print. Although I'm a good reader, I don't read for fun because it feels like hard work, and I can't read for long. I only read if I have to, if I need to find out information. My main dyslexia learning issue is short-term memory. For example, I can't hold numbers or words in my head while I work something out.

My biggest problem at school is my dysgraphia, which makes writing very difficult. When I have to copy a lot of stuff off the board my initial reaction is no, nope, no thanks, not today, not now! It's a lot of effort just to write one word, looking up, looking down, looking up, looking down, because I can't memorise a whole word, and I keep losing my place. Whenever I'm writing my wrist gets really tired, I feel frustrated and annoyed, keep losing my place, forget what I am writing about, and lose all my good ideas. To help me with my dysgraphia, Mum got me an iPad with a keyboard, and that removed one step – from actually thinking of it, to moving my pen. And it also has spelling choices and that speeds up things because you can half write a word and it will bring it up for you. The iPad has made me be able to keep up with everybody else. I'm not the fastest typer in the world but it's faster than using pen and paper.

I reckon the teachers have got a bit better at understanding my dysgraphia and dyslexia. They've given me more time on tests, don't call me lazy or yell at me to hurry up or anything, because they understand it's hard sometimes. I think my SPELD lessons are good. They're great actually because I get 1 to 1 and I need that. My tutor gives me help and shows me different ways to learn things, and if I'm struggling with something in class she'll help me with that topic.

So, now for the good stuff! Outside the classroom, my dyslexia and ADHD make my life amazing. I have heaps of energy and spend hours on my motorbike, mountain bike, BMX bike, scooter, doing back flips, digging dirt jumps, and just running around outside. I have always been fascinated with tractors and machinery and like going out on the farm with Dad. I always seem to have a project that is a work in progress.

I've been collecting model tractors and implements since my first replica tractor when I was one. I design model farm displays with a variety of farming scenes, like silage making, seed drilling, cultivating and hay baling. I have a workshop where I build sheds, make toy tractors out of old broken ones, make 2 wire fencing and other stuff for my model farm. I like my farm displays to be very realistic with lots of detail. When I complete a farm display, I make a video on my iPad and upload it to YouTube. I've got over 30 subscribers. I also subscribe to channels of kids around the world who do similar model farm displays as me.

My dyslexia gives me good ideas, and makes me think outside the box for all my projects. I would never want to not be dyslexic, because I'm better at outside of school stuff the way I am.

My YouTube channel is 'tractormadboys'. Please check out my model farm and motorbike videos.



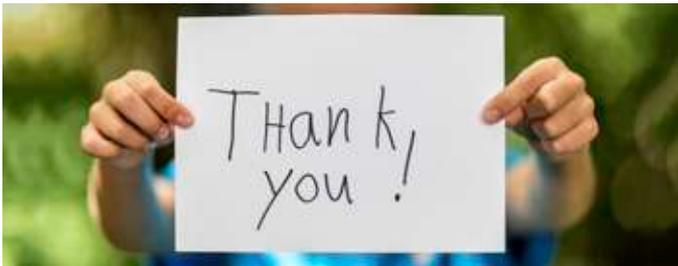
We always welcome SPELD NZ student contributions! Please keep sending us your stories, poems, photos and art work for future issues. You can post or email them to us at:

The Record, SPELD NZ, PO Box 24-617, Royal Oak, Auckland 1345
or nationaloffice@speld.org.nz

(NB: If it's a long story, please ensure you email it to us in Word format.)

Thanks!

Thank you to our sponsors for 2017



From everyone involved with SPELD NZ, we'd like to express our thanks and appreciation for the grants, donations or other assistance we have received over the past 12 months.

As a not-for-profit, SPELD NZ tries to keep all fees for families as low as possible to make our services accessible. We receive no government funding, so grant money is essential to help cover our operating expenses and ensure the continuation of SPELD NZ's work. Our heartfelt thanks to:

Acorn Foundation, Antis Garland Charitable Trust, Bowls Southland, Cambridge Dyslexia Trust, COGs, Community Trust of Southland, DV Bryant Trust, Estate of Gordon Isaacs, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Foundation North, Hawkes Bay Foundation, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust, L W Nelson Charitable Trust, Soroptimist International of Wellington, Bowls Southland, Eastern & Central Community Trust, Gwen Rodger Trust, Hinemoa Kairangi Charitable Trust, Hutt Valley Freemasons, Invercargill Licensing Trust, Julie Goodyer, Kings College Trust, Lion Foundation, Lottery Grants Board, Mary Lloyd SPELD Auckland Trust, Mr and Mrs George Denton Trust, Network Tasman Trust, NZ Community Post, Otago Community Trust, Philip Dallow Trust, Rata Foundation Canterbury, Redwood Trust, Riccarton Youth Trust, Riley Trust, Rotary Invercargill, Rotary Keri Keri, Rotary Kihikihi, Jean Rouston, SkyCity Auckland, Soroptimist International of Wellington, TG McCarthy Trust, The W Duncan Bickley Trust Fund, Wellington Children's Foundation, Winton and Margaret Bear Charitable Trust and J N Williams Memorial Trust/HB Williams Turanga Trust.

Our thanks also to:

- The many individuals who have made donations or who have volunteered their time
- Our auditors, William Buck Christian Gouwland, for their support and guidance and their amazing free NFP workshops attended by staff and Board members from time-to-time
- Our volunteer librarians
- The volunteers who stuff invoices into envelopes each month
- The two young men who regularly help out with admin 'housekeeping' in the holidays.

Leaving a legacy of hope

A bequest in your will to SPELD NZ is an amazing way to help transform the lives of people struggling with learning difficulties. If you would like more information, you are very welcome to contact our Executive Officer Jeremy Drummond eo@speld.org.nz or 09 624 0839 Ext 5.

Give the gift of reading to a child in need

SPELD NZ believes that all children deserve the chance to read and succeed at school, and we are continually fundraising to help subsidise our services for low income families. We desperately need donations to meet the demand. Please consider assisting children who would otherwise not have an opportunity to be assessed and receive the one-on-one tuition that could transform their lives. Here's what one mum wrote:

"His confidence and self-esteem has improved 1000%! There are no more tears at drop-off and he is smiling when I pick him up! In his own words, the work is 'getting easier' – I am absolutely ecstatic with his transformation! This would not have been at all possible without your generosity... THANK YOU, WITH ALL OUR HEARTS".



SPELD NZ also raises money to help adults with dyslexia who would otherwise struggle to afford our services. Here's what one wrote to us about getting a diagnostic assessment:

"Through getting access to such an important service, I have been able to understand how my brain works and how I am best at absorbing new information.... The kindness that I have felt in receiving your donation gives me the motivation to be the best doctor I can be and further express compassion and kindness that I have seen in people while working in the health sector."

Donations over \$5 are eligible for a tax rebate. You are welcome to make payment directly into SPELD NZ's account 12-3061-0395660-00 and email accounts@speld.org.nz with details to request a receipt.

