

I want to tell you about my son. My wonderful, silly, active, loving, brilliant son. Wade is currently in 3rd grade. He is a math whiz. His school has tested him and says that he has the math abilities of a child at least 2 grade levels higher. It was emphasized that his math ability is innate, that he can do it quickly and in his head, not necessarily following standard methods taught in school but in ways that make perfect sense to him. This was no surprise to me, he has always been this way. Doing math for fun at home and in the car since before 1st grade.

Wade is tall, strong, and good looking. He has the body of an athlete. He has a big wide smile that makes me smile back every time. He is a charmer too. I have somehow always known that he will be my ladies man.

He is active, preferring to play outside running around or riding his bike than sitting inside watching TV. We own Air Capital Drop Zone (skydiving) in Wichita and he loves to be at the airport. Enjoys flying with his Dad and learning to pilot the plane.

Yes, I am another proud parent bragging on my son! Did I mention the school tested his IQ and that he scored in the High Average area? Why did his school run all of these tests? Because I asked them to. I believed my son needed some special services. Why? Do I think he should be in a gifted course for Math and possibly Science? Sure I do, but that is not why. My son struggles *struggles hard* to read. What? His IQ is above average! I am a parent that reads with my kids every day! I love to read! My older son loves to read!

I want to tell you about my son Wade, he is dyslexic. Dyslexia is a much misunderstood language processing disorder. It is not recognized as a learning disability in the state of Kansas. I know my son is dyslexic because we (his father and I) had him tested independently last summer. Once tested we provided him with a tutor trained specifically to help with dyslexia. As school started this year, I informed school staff and requested that he be tested for Special Ed. Being diagnosed with dyslexia isn't enough, but the school will test a child at the request of the parent. Many dyslexics will not meet the requirements to qualify for a learning disability, Wade did because of the discrepancy between his IQ score and his tested performance in reading related areas. Wade is fortunate because his school did an excellent job and the full report is a very accurate representation of the child I know him to be. Wade is also fortunate because his parents both work within the education system and are aware of the rules and regulations, what to push for etc. I, like most mothers, will not give up when it comes to doing what is best for my children. Thankfully I knew some signs to look for, knew to get him tested. My husband is very responsible financially. Thankfully we have the means to pay for testing, pay for private tutoring. Not all kids who need this help can receive it.

I started by telling you about my wonderful son. Wade will thrive. He will struggle with his dyslexia all of his life but his coping skills are great and his mind is amazing. Being dyslexic does not prevent a person from being brilliant or successful especially if a person gets the help they need. My son will have that.

What worries me. Undiagnosed dyslexics deal with shame daily. Many struggle through school without ever knowing why. Many drop outs are dyslexic. Many lose their self-confidence, their self-worth. My own son has felt that shame. He knew he 'should' be able to recognize his alphabet before he could. He knew the other kids could actually read the words in first grade when he was simply echoing them. Yes, I have seen my son beat his head against the wall, hit himself in the head, call himself stupid. He was acting out and being disruptive in class last year. How bad would it have gotten if I wasn't his mother? What would he be like in Middle School if I hadn't gotten him help? **What about those kids that don't call me mom?** Would you believe that in most schools teachers are not even supposed to say anything to a parent if they suspect that I child is dyslexic?

What can we do to help those kids? I know that I want to help them, do you?

Angie Myrtle, Proud Mother of Wade and Kent

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