

My name is Mindy Craig and I live in Wichita, KS. My son is 14 years old and is an 8th grader in the Maize USD266 School District.

When he was in preschool, his teacher noticed he was not up to speed with his classmates as far as letters and sounds were concerned. This concern was monitored during the school year. By his first grade year, the problem seemed to get worse. As he studied sight words, he would "forget" from night to night and frustration levels began to rise for him as well as me. Sometimes he would not even recognize a sight word after just seeing it 20 minutes earlier.

By his 2nd grade year, the problem was interfering with his school work. Reading, writing, and math were become a struggle for him and it was obvious he was not up to standards with other 2nd grade children. The school recommended he be test to see if he qualified for Special Education. He did qualify. Unfortunately, this process takes time, so his Individualized Educational Program did not begin immediately. Luke didn't receive special education support and para support until towards the end of the year and into the beginning of his 3rd grade year.

During his 5th and 6th grade year, the coop recommended summer school. Luke attended this for 2 summers. By his 5th grade year, reading, writing, and math were still a struggle even though I was reassured by the school that he was improving vastly.

Once Luke started 6th grade his differences were more noticeable to not only him, but to me and his classmates, which caused much stress and a lack of self confidence for Luke.

By the time Luke was in 7th grade he was still at a 2nd grade reading level demonstrating that his time in the Special Education program was not a benefit to him. It was in December of 2012 that his dad and I decided we needed to take action to help our son since the school could not. We took Luke to the Fundamental Learning Center in Wichita, where he was tested.

We were told that he had all the symptoms of a dyslexic, dysgraphic, and dyscalculic child. The public school systems in Kansas are not equipped to teach dyslexic children, so kids like Luke are truly "children left behind". The schools do not have the resources, training, personnel or time needed to spend with these students. For every repetition needed to teach a nondyslexic, it takes a dyslexic person at least 5 times more repetitions. These children need equal and fair opportunities available to them so they can succeed.

We decided the best way to help our child was to hire a private tutor trained by the FLC to teach Luke to read. I didn't want my son to have to go see a tutor afterschool or on the weekend especially when he had been so frustrated already in the classroom. These kids need that time for sports, play, family, and relaxation. My son learns differently and should not be punished for it. 10 to 15% of the population is dyslexic yet only 5/100 are recognized and receive assistance. We are very fortunate that we have the financial ability to help Luke. I want Luke to have every advantage that 85 to 90% of the population already has....**a fair and equal opportunity to a free, public education.** I want Luke to have a promising, literate future. We need to assure equal access to a high quality education. Please remember Luke and

all the other children like him struggling in Kansas schools with dyslexia and not receiving the assistance they need to learn. **They all deserve a FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education.**

It was in January of 2012 that we found a private tutor through the FLC to work with Luke. Since we have found her, Luke has made vast improvements in reading and writing. My only wish is that Luke's dyslexia would have been diagnosed earlier so Luke would have received the benefits of his tutor years ago. There were too many wasted years in the Special Education Program that we cannot get back.

Please consider Luke's story and many other stories like his when you are presented with an education bill to help students in the state of Kansas struggling in school with dyslexia.

Thank you,

Mindy Craig

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