

The brain must feel safe in order to learn.

It's crucial to get your child hooked on books, audiobooks, and conversations with you, as discussed in these books:

The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child by [Donalyn Miller](#)

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Faber & Mazlish  
A Walk in the Rain with a Brain by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.

You Can I Can: You don't have to be an "I Can't"! by Marcia Mouron and Ernie Eldridge  
Predictive Parenting by Shad Helmstetter

Thirty Million Words: Building a Child's Brain by [Dana Suskind](#)

Get hundreds of free foldable ideas: [foldables images](#) These are interactive 3D study guides, like arts and crafts for learning.

Keep your magnificent brain READY TO LEARN by giving it the BIG THREE:

**Nutrition** - Water and healthy foods throughout the day

**Rest** - The brain needs a good night's sleep to consolidate memory and learning from the day.

**Exercise** every day and do bursts of exercise throughout the day!

Some favorite resources: (I think the library also has these in audio)

SPARK! The revolutionary new science of exercise and the brain by John Ratey, M.D.

(Reading the intro and first chapter gives the idea of the book, but it's all good with chapters on learning, stress, anxiety, depression, ADHD, addiction, hormonal changes, and aging.

The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan by Ben Foss

Learning to Love Math by Judy Willis, MD (or watch some of her YouTube videos)

Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.

The Whole Brain Child by Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson

[Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity](#)

[Dyslexic Advantage/](#)

[Understood](#)

[DyslexiaHelp](#)

[International Dyslexia Association - Alabama](#)

Awesome documentaries:

The Right to Read

The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia

DISLECKSIA: The Movie

Creative Brains: Gifted, Talented and Dyslexic



## Journey Into Dyslexia

The SWAG (Study With All Gears) multisensory strategies are a magic key -- as are doing 10-20 jumping jacks, push-ups, running or something like that frequently throughout the day and during homework - we need to wake up our brains with a burst of exercise as often as we can.

Act out/ role-play new words and concepts - Make everything physical (see, hear, talk, touch and move simultaneously while learning) as much as possible.

Basically, my magic keys are:

1. Tons of listening to chapter books on a higher but still appropriate for age and interest level (from an adult and from audiobooks - it's crucial for the student to get hooked on audiobooks (-: to build receptive expressive vocabulary, syntactic complexity, story elements, experience with literature, getting a passion to hear more, etc!!)

2. Multisensory teaching and study strategies

It is recommended the student be taught using multisensory, "hands-on" techniques throughout the curriculum as much as possible, and to incorporate movement when studying. Adding movement throughout the day will improve the success of all students because it increases dopamine and therefore increases memory, focus, and joy in the

brain. Moving while learning will significantly improve success in all subjects; the “SWAG (Study With All Gears) triangle” of simultaneously seeing (occipital lobes), hearing/talking (temporal lobes), and touching/moving (parietal lobes) is the magic key to open the doors for learning in all students. These strategies are the same for all ages, grades, and subjects! (-:

3. SPA to keep brain OPEN to begin with (-: It’s crucial to help your child feel like she’s always right by pointing out ways she IS right instead of pointing out what’s wrong. SPA stands for **S**elf-talk, **P**oint out only what’s right and **A**dvocate for yourself.

Here are the steps in **P**oint out only what’s right:

First brag on what your child got right ("You got 3 letters right! You got 4 states! You got 3 numbers!")

PAUSE while s/he feels good about getting something right. Avoid saying “but” - saying “Now” instead of “but” works well for me.

Then say something like, "Now, let's check this part", or "Now, let's look at this one...Let's put this sound on your hand... Can you check THIS part?...What do you hear for ---? ...You want to lead your child to the answer by giving as much scaffolding help as needed.)

Brag again!

The idea is that I want him to feel like he’s always right and to not feel like he’s always making a mistake. Then the amygdala will calm down and keep the doors in the brain OPEN!

Let your brain KNOW what an awesome person you are by using positive self-talk! Be kind to yourself.

You are such an incredible person; you are the only person ever with your unique personality and talents. You have outstanding gifts to share with your friends and with the world. I can't wait to see how you will blossom in using your gifts! Please let me hear from you about your successes!

It's crucial you pick out positive things to say to yourself and get rid of any discouraging things you have been saying to your brain. Your brain believes what you tell it and acts on what you tell it. Instead of telling yourself, "I can't." Tell yourself things like: "I'm just having trouble with this-I can DO it! I'm GOOD at this...I'm getting better every day! ... Nothing is as hard as it seems...I LOVE this!"

Be proactive to get accommodations as needed. Be your own best advocate. Ask your teachers if you can sit "front & center" so you can learn better in return for their agreement to not call on you to read aloud unless you volunteer; this is also in return for

your promise to do your best work and always come to class prepared and ready to learn. Then you can focus and learn without fear.