

CRUSHING DYSLEXIA



*The “How-To” Book of
Effective Methods for
Helping Dyslexics and
Other Struggling
Readers*

FOR
PARENTS,
TEACHERS, AND
TUTORS

CAROL S. FITZPATRICK, M.S. ED.

Crushing Dyslexia

Sampler

Dear Parents and Teachers,

Welcome to Crushing Dyslexia! This is the Sampler of my new book. I've spent many years working with people who suffer from dyslexia, including my own two sons. It has been a lifelong passion of mine to discover methods and tips that can turn their reading struggles into reading successes. Nothing brings me more joy than watching a child realize he or she can read. I want you to also experience that joy. Sometimes, the simplest change in a routine can make a huge difference in whether or not a dyslexic person can learn or not. I have found many simple techniques I want to share that really work. This book is the result!

Everything I'm suggesting is Orton-Gillingham-based, and has been tested by me with my own students. I know these methods work, or I wouldn't have included them. The "Table of Contents" will show you what is covered in the rest of the book. You will notice a few things . . .

Every chapter contains:

- 1. A Struggler Success Story to encourage you .*
- 2. A separate Appendix full of other resources.*
- 3. Fun games and activities to reinforce what you are teaching.*
- 4. Step-by-step, simple instructions that cover every subject that should be included in quality reading (and writing) instruction.*

Don't wait! Order your new printed book or e-book today at www.crushingdyslexia.com.

Thank you for your interest,

Carol

New Video Series

We are also excited to announce our new companion video series. We've condensed the weekend seminar, "Crushing Dyslexia" into five hours of hands-on instruction, demonstrations, and testimonies. (These videos are also great companions for our original book, "Help, I Can't Read!"). You'll want to watch these over and over again.

Crushing Dyslexia

Crush the Disability – Enjoy the Gifts

The “How-To” Book of Effective Methods
for Helping People with Dyslexia
and Other Struggling Readers

Carol S. Fitzpatrick, M.S. Ed.

Crushing Dyslexia Press

Chandler, Arizona

Carol S. Fitzpatrick is a teacher with over thirty years of experience working with struggling readers in the classroom . . . as both a reading specialist and a home schooling mom. Her action research has been published internationally, and she has served on an advisory committee for the Oregon State Superintendent of Schools.

Crushing Dyslexia Press, Chandler, Arizona, U.S.A.

www.crushingdyslexia.com

Copyright © 2018 by Carol S. Fitzpatrick

All rights reserved. Published in May, 2018

Printed in the United States of America

Purchasers of “*Crushing Dyslexia*” are granted permission to photocopy the “Blackline Masters” and other pages where permission is granted (see note at bottom of pages) for their own personal use, either at home or in the classroom. However, none of the forms may be reproduced in order to generate revenue for any program or individual. Photocopies may only be made from the original book. Any unauthorized use beyond this privilege is prosecutable under federal law.

Chapter 1 contains three drawings from *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level*, copyright © 2003 by Dr. Sally Shaywitz, pp. 78-86, reprinted with permission of Alfred K. Knopf, a Division of Random House, Inc.

Chapter 3 contains two drawings developed by Zoo-phonics®, which are reprinted with permission from Zoo-phonics®, Inc.

Chapter 5 contains “The Six Basic Syllable Types and Consistent Generalizations about Spelling and the English Language,” developed by C. Wilson Anderson and used with his permission.

Chapter 9 contains the handwriting technique as taught by the Slingerland® Method, and is used with permission of the Slingerland® Institute.

Note: This book contains much of the same material presented in Carol’s first book, “*Help, I Can’t Read!*” *How to Respond to Struggling Readers in Your Classroom* – which was written specifically for classroom teachers and published in May of 2009. That material has been significantly revised, updated, and simplified in order to benefit a wider audience.

ISBN 978-0-9822628-1-8

Ebook: ISBN 978-0-9822628-2-5

For Roy and Lois, who made it all possible,

For Bill, who has never stopped believing in me,

For John and Drew, the reasons I write,

and

For you, my reader, with hope that I can help you in some small way.

Contents

Introduction	vii
This Book is for Parents	vii
This Book is for Teachers	vii
This Book is for Tutors	viii
My Promise to You	viii
How to Use This Book	ix
Book Divisions	ix
Summary	x
Some Important Notes	xi
Struggler Success Story - Carol	xii
Chapter 1 - What is Dyslexia?	1
My Story	4
Brain Systems for Reading	6
What Are the Characteristics of Dyslexia?	9
Symptoms of Dyslexia	10
Other Related Learning Disabilities	11
The “Flip Side” of Dyslexia	12
The Five Essential Elements of Instruction	13
Conclusion	15
Struggler Success Story 1	17
Appendix – Chapter 1	18
Free Gift for Downloading (Rainbow Cards – Set 1)	18
10 Things I Wish Every Parent Knew About Dyslexia	20
Chapter 2 - Motivation	23
The Importance of Success	25
Plan for Success	27
Finding the Right Reading Material	28
Accommodations	31

Conclusion	33
Struggler Success Story 2	34
Appendix – Chapter 2	36
Lesson and Game	37
Lesson – “Famous Struggler Who’s-It?”	37
Game – “Famous Struggler Who’s-It?”	39
<hr/>	
Chapter 3 - Phonemic Awareness	45
Phonemic Awareness – Are You Aware?	47
Teaching Phonemic Awareness	50
Progress-monitoring	52
Conclusion	53
Struggler Success Story 3	54
Appendix – Chapter 3	55
Games	56
Game – “Sounds Abound”	56
Game – “I Hear with My Little Ear”	57
Game – “Spell It Well”	58
Game – “I Spy with My Little Eye”	58
Chapter 4 - Phonics	61
What Is Phonics?	63
Is Phonics Necessary?	64
Essential Features of Phonics Programs	65
Is Phonics Enough?	67
How Much Phonics Is Enough?	68
Breaking the Code by Level	68
Level PR – Pre-Reading	69
Level A – Crawling	69
Level B – Walking	71
Progress-monitoring	76
Conclusion	76
Struggler Success Story 4	78

Sampler ends here

Appendix – Chapter 4	80
Games	81
Game – “Red Rover”	81
Game – “Rhymin’ Simon”	81
Guidelines for Spelling the 44 Sounds of American English	84
Generalizations for Adding Suffixes	89
Chapter 5 - Reading “BIG” Words	91
Advanced Phonics (Alphabetic Principles)	94
Level C – Jogging	94
The Six Kinds of Syllables	96
Level D – Running	102
Latin and Greek Roots	104
Progress-monitoring	106
Conclusion	106
Struggler Success Story 5	107
Appendix – Chapter 5	110
Games	111
Game – “Word Soup”	112
Game – “The Amazing Word Machine”	113
The Six Basic Syllable Types	114
Suffix Generalizations	119
Chapter 6 - Vocabulary	123
The Importance of Vocabulary Instruction	126
Facts About Vocabulary	127
Vocabulary Instruction	128
Progress-monitoring	130
Conclusion	130
Struggler Success Story 6	131
Appendix – Chapter 6	132
Games	132
Game – “Crossword Puzzles”	132

Game – “Read-Aloud Bonanza Words”	132
Game – “Literature Concentration”	133
Chapter 7 - Fluency and Paired Reading	139
DIBELS	141
Fluency Basics	143
Paired Reading and Dyslexia.	144
Progress-monitoring	150
Conclusion	151
Struggler Success Story 7	152
Appendix – Chapter 7	153
Game	154
Game – “Paired Reading”	154
Chapter 8 - Comprehension	157
The Reason We Read	160
Explicit Teaching of Comprehension	161
Comprehension Skills and Strategies	166
Authentic Reasons to Read	169
Comprehension Challenges.	169
Progress-monitoring	170
Conclusion	171
Struggler Success Story 8	172
Appendix – Chapter 8	174
Games	174
Game – “The Comprehension Star Game”	174
Game – “Star Reporter”	175
Comprehension Star Game Board	176
Blackline Masters	177
Narrative Scoring Guide (Story-Telling in Sequence).	177
Expository Scoring Guide (Explanations, Reasons, Steps in a Process)	178
Book Report – Realistic Fiction	179
Book Report – Historical Fiction.	180

Book Report – Science Fiction	181
Book Report – Fantasy	182
Book Report – Folklore	183
Book Report – Biography	184
Book Report – Poetry	185
Book Report – Informational (Non-fiction)	186
Back Page (Use for All Book Report Forms)	187
Introduction to Writing Skills	189
Chapter 9 - Handwriting	191
The Benefits of Teaching Handwriting in a “BIG” Way	194
How to Teach Letter Forms	197
Progress-monitoring	202
Conclusion	202
Struggler Success Story 9	203
Chapter 10 - Spelling	205
Phonemic Awareness and Spelling	208
Phonics and Spelling	208
Tips for Teaching Spelling at the Phonics Level	209
Tips for Teaching Sight Words	210
Sight Word Drawings	211
Personal Sight Word Drills and Word Banks	211
Homophone Posters	211
Word Walls	212
Personal Dictionaries	213
Progress-monitoring	213
Conclusion	213
Struggler Success Story 10	214
Appendix – Chapter 10	215
Games	216
Game – “Magic Spell Man”	216
Game – “Charades”	217

Chapter 11 - Writing	219
A Simple Writing Plan	222
How to Write a Research Paper	224
Writing Composition and Spelling	226
Progress-monitoring	227
Conclusion	228
Struggler Success Story 11	229
Appendix – Chapter 11	231
Parent Connection Letter for Developing Writing Skills at Home	232
 Chapter 12 - Conclusion	 237
A Few Foundational Truths from Each Chapter	241
Conclusion	243
Future Struggler Success Story	244
Appendix – Conclusion	245
Glossary	246
References	253
Periodicals of Interest	258
Websites of Interest	258

Introduction

Mission Possible

This Book is for Parents

If you're a parent who has a child struggling with reading, you're probably feeling desperate, because you know how important the ability to read is to your child's future success. There may even be some anger on your part, but its causes may be less defined. You could be angry with teachers, because you feel they've failed your child; or you could be angry with your child, thinking, "If only Johnny would try a little harder!" Maybe you blame yourself, because you've heard that learning disabilities are hereditary and you know where this learning disability came from. Perhaps you struggled when you were a child, and know "up close and personal" how painful it is to struggle with alphabet sounds when the kids around you are already reading books. The terms "dyslexia" and "reading disability" sound like they are a disease or a deformity. Maybe you're filled with fear and shame because you think something might be wrong with both you and your children. Please don't give up hope – there's nothing wrong with you or your children! ***This book is for you.***

This Book is for Teachers

Are you a teacher who is honestly trying to help your struggling readers succeed, but no matter how hard you try, they are still struggling? If you were satisfied with your success, you wouldn't still be searching. But, the fact remains that no matter what you've tried, or how many long hours you've put in, your struggling readers are falling further and further behind. You're probably experiencing feelings of inadequacy, ranging from frustration to anxiety to guilt. I know – I've been there.

Failure is a rotten motivator for both you and your students, but you keep trying because you care. You know their chances of having a decent life require that they read well. Some teachers give up, or go into denial, blaming the problems on the students – their lack of motivation, intelligence, or support in their homes. But, you know in your heart that these things aren't the whole story, so you keep on trying, hoping that someday you'll find a way to succeed.

If any of these scenarios fit you, I understand. I am a dyslexic who had to watch my two sons battle with the alphabet. I've also been a teacher who tried my hardest to help my struggling readers – with little success in the beginning of my career. But times have changed!

Over the last forty-plus years of teaching, I have been able to help many struggling readers improve; and several have even made as much as four years' growth in one year! As I learned **how** to use the **right methods**, my struggling students' growth averaged more than two and a half years per school year, and that result was consistent for two consecutive years with a total of around 50 students. I'm a good teacher, but not that good. ***Their success was the direct result of the methods I used – the same methods I will share with you in the following chapters.***

So, if you're a teacher who's willing to at least consider making a few changes – as long as they make sense, and don't cost too much money or time – Good News! ***This book is for you.***

This Book is for Tutors

Last, but not least, this book has been written for tutors. I have been tutoring dyslexic kids for almost as long as I've been a parent and a teacher, so I do understand the unique challenges we face. I also understand the unique advantages we have. We are able to work one-on-one with our struggling readers, so we can pace our student's learning perfectly, and focus precisely on his or her greatest needs, both academically and emotionally. Parents already have this advantage. But tutors also have the objectivity and training of teachers. Again, this is a wonderful advantage. Throughout this book, whenever I refer to parents or teachers, I will always be including you as well. Thank you for making the effort to perfect your tutoring methods. ***This book is for you, too!***

Now, there is no reason for dyslexics to be doomed to a life of frustration, shame, and illiteracy. They can learn to read just as well as anyone else, but they need to be taught using the right methods.

My Promise to You

One of my goals in writing this book is to give you a clear plan for meeting the learning needs of your kids in the most effective way. The fact that you're investing your precious time and resources to improve your parenting and teaching skills is much to your credit. I don't take your interest lightly, and will try to show you the respect you deserve by:

- keeping my words simple and concise,
- focusing on the most important issues,
- breaking each chapter down into easy-to-follow steps, and
- using methods that are research-based, and that I've used successfully myself.

Every chapter in this book could be a large, detailed volume with much more information. In fact, there are many excellent books already published on most of the chapter subjects, but competing with them is not my purpose. ***My goal is to give parents and teachers a place to begin – a safe harbor from which to launch . . . “Start here!”***

Consider this “The Big Picture” book. I'm going to help you find the simplicity behind successful reading instruction for all your students – and discuss the patterns beneath the truths. ***I'll show you the “how's” and “why's,” not just the “what's.”***

How to Use This Book

If you can't explain it simply,
you don't understand it well enough.
~ Albert Einstein ~

Every Chapter Contains (as applicable):

- **Struggler Success Stories** – If you want some encouragement, read the success stories. They're all true and happened with people I know (except one).
- **Useful Tools** – Every chapter contains at least one game, tool, or idea that you can use immediately to help your struggling reader.
- **Easily Accessible Vocabulary** – Many of the words which might be new or confusing to you are defined in a footnote, or at the end of the chapter. There is also a complete Glossary at the end of the book.
- **A Resource List for The Chapter's Topic** – There is a select list of only the best resources at the end of specific chapters, so parents and teachers can focus on the most appropriate ones. A complete list of References is also available at the end of the book.

Book Divisions

This book is organized by topic in order to make it simple for you to use. You can easily skip to the chapter (or chapters) you are most interested in reading, but there are some basic facts in Chapters 1 and 2 that you should understand before reading any of the other chapters. The book is divided into four parts, plus an Appendix filled with useful resources, as described below:

- **Part 1 – Preparation** – Chapters 1 and 2 – **Very Important!** This part should be read at least once, or the rest of the book might not make as much sense.
- **Part 2 – Basic Reading Skills** – Chapters 3-5 – The beginning elements of reading instruction are Phonemic Awareness and Phonics (Alphabetic Principles). They are sequential, ordered, and continuous – like mathematical formulas, musical compositions, or the scenes of a movie. If you skip a step, the following ones won't work. People teaching older students may be tempted to skip these chapters entirely, but if you have struggling readers, please take the time to skim through them. The age of your students doesn't matter! The problems many struggling readers face are caused by a weakness in these foundational skills, no matter what their age. Unless they are given a chance to develop “automaticity” in hearing the sounds of our language, their reading will never become completely automatic.

If students can't easily blend and break apart
the sounds in words (phonemic awareness),
reading will never become easy for them.
It doesn't matter if they're 5 or 105!

- **Part 3 – Advanced Reading Skills** – Chapters 6-8 – The higher dimensions of reading instruction are Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. I have also added a few other topics which I feel must be covered in a complete and balanced reading program. These are not sequential, so you may read them in any order that works best for you.
- **Part 4 – Writing** – Chapters 9-11 – Dyslexia refers to problems with reading, but writing difficulties are so common for people with dyslexia, I have also covered how to teach Handwriting, Spelling, and Written Composition.
- **Appendix** – Please take some time to review the extra resources included for your use.

Summary

If you already feel comfortable with the information being given in any chapter, you can move through it quickly. The format has been designed for easy skimming. Once you've read a chapter, you can always review it again later at your convenience.

So, let's get started! Please allow me to be your guide to effective and meaningful change. I'll take you step-by-step through a plan which I know works, so you can also help your students to become great readers!

- If you're a parent, you will find many ideas on how to work with your children and become their strongest and most effective advocate.
- If you're a novice teacher, my plan will help you get started quickly and easily.
- If you're a master teacher, I can help you chart a course that will save you many hours of research and development (not to mention the time and energy wasted in trial and error).

“Crushing Dyslexia” is a book where both the science and the art of teaching meet. So let's get those kids reading! Let it become your Mission Possible! It can be done!

Thank you! I would love to hear from you.



Contact Information:

Carol@crushingdyslexia.com

Carol@rainbowreaders.com

480-999-4449

Some Important Notes

1. If you have already purchased a copy of my first book, *“Help, I Can’t Read!” How to Respond to Struggling Readers in Your Classroom*, you may find this new book to be a little redundant in places. As stated earlier, this book contains a lot of the same materials presented in my first book; but it has been revised, updated, and simplified for a broader audience. I wrote that book specifically for classroom teachers back in 2009 when “Response to Intervention” was becoming a major influence over how teachers were expected to teach. It was written to help them succeed on several levels, and (in my opinion) is still an excellent resource for teachers working within the new MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System) framework. But since then, I have also been helping many parents, home schoolers, and individual tutors – while still continuing to work with teachers in the classroom. I felt the need to share some of the newer insights I’ve gained, especially in the area of working with dyslexics, and to make the information contained in this book more accessible to everyone. So, if you already own a copy of *“Help, I Can’t Read!”*, please contact me (using the information given above) and I will be happy to allow you access to the *“Crushing Dyslexia”* e-book for free, or refund your money if you have already purchased it.
2. A quick word about my use of pronouns in this book: For the sake of simplicity, I will frequently refer to your struggling reader using the male personal pronouns “he,” “his,” “him,” etc., (in the generic, “gender-neutral” sense). I realize that dyslexia is not “gender-specific.” Research has shown that there are just about as many girls with dyslexia as there are boys. But I’m sure you can imagine how complex my original text draft was becoming by using a lot of “he or she,” “his or her,” and “they or them” pronoun combinations in order to clarify the specific application of many passages. In addition, I will usually be using the singular when referring to a student being taught by his parents at home, and the plural when referring to students in a classroom setting.
3. Finally, a note about repetition. If you notice that I am repeating myself from time to time, it is probably because of two factors: 1.) I feel that the point or concept being discussed is important enough to emphasize it, or to view it from more than one perspective; and 2.) Since this book has been designed for easy skimming, I can’t just assume that a person who is reading a later chapter has already read the earlier chapters. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Endorsements:

“Carol Fitzpatrick’s book is a must for anyone dealing with struggling readers. Fitzpatrick understands the teachers’ real world and all the challenges they face. Bottom line – the entire book is about success – kids’ success and teachers’ success!”

~ Dr. Steve Wisely, former Oregon “State Superintendent of the year” and national speaker ~

“As an elementary classroom teacher for over a decade, my own reading classes are now more meaningful, focused, and effective because they are based on the concepts from Carol Fitzpatrick’s book. I highly recommend it for experienced teachers looking to refine and maximize their teaching efforts, as well as for those just beginning to develop their own approach to teaching reading.”

~ Jennifer Behnke, 6th Grade Teacher, Medford, OR ~



Struggler Success Story - Carol

It's only appropriate that I begin my series of Struggler Success Stories by explaining why I have such a burning desire to see changes made in how learning-disabled students are treated: I am one of them, and so are my two sons.

I was born with a natural understanding of music. This is not a matter of pride; it's simply a fact. I had nothing to do with it; it just is. When I see a piece of music, I can read it in my head. After I read the individual lines on an orchestral score, I can put them all together in my mind and hear the whole orchestra play the piece.

The musical patterns just stick and make sense to me – but I still don't know my multiplication facts! I can't memorize worth beans!

My gift is very lopsided. I can write music, but I can't perform it because my visual processing speed is too slow. And it takes me forever to memorize my own music. Talk about a disability! I wrote it and I can't even play it! (But I love listening to other people perform what I write!) Today, I can use a computer to play the music I've written – and what a joy that is!

In college, I had terrible trouble reading all those textbooks (except music theory). You might not believe this, but I had to take some "extraordinary measures" in order to solve my learning problem. I ended up reading the texts into a tape recorder, and then listening to the tape play it back – pausing the tape while I took notes. I couldn't process the information until I heard it. I had to listen to someone read it aloud, even if that someone was me!

Learning to live with my disability has been a long battle, but I haven't let it stop me from following my dreams. The publication of this book is only one of them. I've achieved many successes up to this point, and I'm satisfied that my life has counted. Several people are better off because I have lived, and that's a good thing . . . but I still dream of piloting a helicopter someday!