

TAKE ACTION Maryland!

A Few Things You Can Do Today to Help Close the Reading Gap in Maryland



1. EMPOWER YOUR FAMILY: LEARN about Dyslexia

- a. **Join Decoding Dyslexia MD** -- In 3 years we've grown from 2 families to 500 families and have 8 **regional groups** who tailor activities to the specific needs of their community.
www.decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/join & **Regional Groups:**
<http://dyslexiasomd.weebly.com/countyregions.html>
- b. **If you are an organization concerned about reading**, please join Decoding Dyslexia Maryland and Right to Read Maryland: DDMD Partner: <http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/join.html> Right To Read MD: <http://righttoreadmd.org/who-we-are/>
- c. **Join the International Dyslexia Association** and its local branches: the Capital Area Branch and the Maryland Branch: <http://eida.org/ida-branches/>
- d. **Understand the Knowledge & Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading and the new certification exam** – the standards lay the groundwork to teach students how to read so that **all boats rise**. <http://eida.org/knowledge-and-practices/>
- e. **The Maryland Task Force to Implement a Dyslexia Education Program and Pilot** is putting together recommendations for a report to the legislature:
<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?present=true&id=1817779>

2. Raise AWARENESS: Tell Your Dyslexia Story...

- a. **To Decoding Dyslexia Maryland:** <http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/tell-your-story.html>
- b. **State Board of Education:** <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/index.html>
- c. **Present to your Local School Board** during public input time – you get three entire minutes!
- d. **Start a Local Parent/Student Dyslexia Group:** Learn from other parents and share successes and strengths with other students! Share your stories with each other to become more empowered.
<http://dyslexiasomd.weebly.com/set-up-a-group.html>
- e. **State & County Special Education Advisory Committee (SECAC, SESAC):**<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/earlyinterv/sesac.html>
- f. **Ask for a Dyslexia proclamation** for 2016 from your county elected officials, school boards and PTAs. You can model it after the Maryland Proclamation issued by Governor Hogan or Senate Resolution, Senate Resolution 275 co-sponsored by Senator Barbara Mikulski, that calls on States and school districts to address dyslexia in public schools and designates October as National Dyslexia Awareness Month (SR 275): <http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/blog/resolution-to-designate-october-as-national-dyslexia-awareness-month-introduced-in-the-us-senate>
- g. Work with your **local tech center to create a video** on reading struggles in school – you will be amazed at the creativity of their students!

- h. To your local newspaper: talk about dyslexia, what it is and how your child learns – talk about DDMD and the grassroots effort to change reading instruction in Maryland. Call the reporter or send an email. It's listed online!

3. **ADVOCATE for changes to education policy, practices and procedures:**

- a. Connect with **your district's [family support services contact](#), [Parent's Place](#), your county **Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee** (required by law) and learn about the [State Parent Advisory](#) – these are parent-focused organizations for students who receive special education and they often will organize workshops on dyslexia and reading struggles in your district/area if you ask.**
- b. **Meet with your state legislators**, tell your story and talk about DD-MD's 6 legislative goals -- particularly the fact that many Maryland teachers, including special education and reading specialists, don't have a deep understanding or practice in the foundations of reading. This is not a problem with teachers – it is one of access to teaching and learning in the foundations of reading for teachers at the higher education level and in professional development:
<http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/appt-letter.html>
- c. **If you have an IEP, ask that dyslexia be added to your form or included in the 504.** A recent Guidance Letter from the Department of Education makes it clear that dyslexia can be named in the IEP and included in the evaluative and IEP development process. DOE Guidance:
<http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/news/say-dyslexia-maryland-doe-guidance-action-for-school-districts>
- d. **Email your Member of Congress** and thank them for supporting the **READ Act, HR 3033**, which is now law. It directs the National Science Foundation to allocate funding for dyslexia research, teacher training and education, and provides grants to states to bring this research into practice.
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr3033/text>