

# Home Schooling

Over two million students are home-schooled in the U.S. today. Some parents homeschool students with learning disabilities to customize education and provide one-on-one instruction. Interviews with these parents reveals that some have trained in multisensory structured-language (MSL) methods to equip themselves to help their children. Their experience offers insights for parents, trainers, and LDA chapters alike.

These parent-teachers received varied amounts of training in different programs. A Florida mother uses techniques she gleaned from Nanci Bell's work. A Pennsylvania parent reported progress with Davis strategies. A Virginia mother received informal training from her son's Wilson Language tutor. Several parents learned from Sue Barton's training videos.

Other parents took intensive training of thirty hours or more. Several homeschoolers studied at the Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center. In Rochester, New York, a homeschooler trained at 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Masonic Learning Center for Children. Several parent-teachers received Wilson Language Training from UNC Chapel Hill's Augustine Project, which, like the Masons, provides free training. Others took sixty hours of training with Orton Gillingham Fellow Fran Bowman of Maryland, and one completed a thirty-hour class with the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education. Most of these programs also required 100 or more hours of supervised tutoring practice.

Many parents think they do not have time or money to learn MSL techniques. But these parents disagree. Amber Basener of Rochester explained in her first two years of homeschooling her oldest daughter, she had tried "lots of programs and tricks." Although she had been a teacher, she could see she needed more expertise. So Basener had hired tutors. She not only found them expensive, but saw that their techniques were very similar to her own methods. Realizing that her four-year-old also showed signs of learning disabilities, Basener decided that becoming trained herself would be more economical than continued tutoring. "We have to be the experts on our child's education. ... When you get to the point where traditional means aren't working, you need either informal or formal training."

In Maryland, Stephanie Lockwood saw her training at ASDEC as an investment, not only investing in her child, but in developing her ability to help her child. Her training was less expensive than the private school her son had spent first grade in, and it gave her "confidence. I was very concerned how to get him to learn," Lockwood explained. The course "gave me a road map forward how to proceed."

Two parents found an extra benefit. They have already begun tutoring other students using the MSL techniques, helping them recoup their training expenses.

By homeschooling, parents could provide MSL instruction five to ten hours a week, al-

lowing their children to make greater progress. Susan Harris said her son "was nine years old and wasn't able to read at all," when she started homeschooling. "In one year's time, he went to reading on the fourth grade level. You can teach a child to read if you can find the right things to do with him."

Parents found other advantages to home-

## HOME SCHOOLING

*continued on page 16*

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helping students  
overcome learning problems*

### **HOMESCHOOLING YOUR STRUGGLING LEARNER**

*by Kathy Kuhl*

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