

Training Children For Lifelong Success:



By Alissa Nagle

You're frustrated. Your child is frustrated. Classroom assignments and homework have progressed from a challenge into a daily struggle. Your child is falling behind and you can't figure out why. You know your child. He is intelligent, creative, and gifted. So what's holding him back?

Does this seem familiar? The road to academic success is paved with more than just hard work and tutoring. Your child may be struggling with an underlying issue preventing her from excelling. For 43 years, Learning Foundations has helped children in San Antonio overcome their learning challenges by identifying problem areas and using research based programs to transform hundreds of struggling students into independent learners.

Center Director Rafael Scarnati, a middle school teacher before joining Learning Foundations, understands the challenges teachers face every day in their classrooms. Scarnati recalls being increasingly concerned about the children in his class that were slipping through the cracks and quickly falling behind.

"I wasn't equipped to deal with the children in my class that were struggling due to underlying conditions like dyslexia, attention and focus, and difficulties with reading, spelling and math," explained Scarnati. "When I approached more tenured teachers, they too were at a loss as to how to help them."

The public school system, often overburdened and overpopulated, is equipped to help children with more severe learning disabilities. However, students undiagnosed but still struggling slip further and further behind, grow frustrated, and have low self-esteem and behavioral problems as a result.

Founded by NFL Quarterback Fran Tarkenton in 1969, Learning Foundations helps these children who are struggling to learn by identifying what exactly is inhibiting them from processing information. Leslie Jernigan M.A., Program Director, worked in the public school system for 10 years before joining Learning Foundations in 2004; a place where she feels children are receiving innovative, new instruction and training they need and, more importantly, deserve.

"Each child is treated on an individual, case-by-case basis," explained Jernigan. "The children we see here aren't dumb – they're actually quite intelligent – there is just something inhibiting them from learning properly. We have the ability to help identify and then work around that roadblock to help these children succeed."

Prior to meeting with their one-on-one trainer, students are tested by Jernigan. Based on her findings, she then shapes an individualized program to help each student unlock his or her potential.

"To see a child's face light up when they realize that they, too, can learn and be successful is amazing," said Scarnati. "I think back to the students in my class that I couldn't help and I know that this is where they belong."

Approximately 30 percent of children in the U.S. are struggling to learn in school despite having average to above average intelligence. IQ is not related to issues including dyslexia and ADD. Learning Foundations works primarily with elementary school aged children, but has helped students of all ages.

"Children who seem lazy, unmotivated or are acting out in class are often just struggling and trying to cope with their frustrations," explained Scarnati. "Our sessions are intense yet full of stimulation and movement to keep children engaged. Working one-on-one helps them stretch

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their thinking while the trainer provides feedback in order to make significant changes in a short amount of time."

Kevin, a student at Learning Foundations, was frustrated with his schoolwork and lack of progress at his afterschool tutoring program. He was acting out in school and struggling with low self-esteem. Tested at Learning Foundations, Kevin was diagnosed as dyslexic. He recently completed his program and has experienced life-changing results.

"Learning Foundations has taught my son how to spell, read and write," said Kevin's mother. "Every teacher working there is patient, friendly and always ready to listen and answer questions. Kevin is now excited to learn. It's amazing."

Dyslexia is often an inherited condition that makes reading, writing and spelling extremely difficult. Dyslexia is not related to overall intelligence, but instead, the ability to process individual sounds in a word. Kevin's mother was also diagnosed with dyslexia. Learning Foundations implements different strategies and programs that specifically address the unique and varied needs of dyslexic students of all ages. Sofia, Scarnati's wife, was diagnosed as dyslexic by Jernigan after her husband starting working at Learning Foundations.

"Growing up, I made good grades but I always struggled with words, and I hated to read," Sofia explained. "I found more creative ways to study, using colors and shapes, that worked for me. I never knew that I was dyslexic."

If your child is struggling in school, if homework is a never-ending battle, if you're spending hours in parent-teacher conferences to no avail...contact Learning Foundations for a free initial consultation. Every child deserves the one-on-one instruction and innovative teaching methods available at Learning Foundations. No child deserves to slip through the cracks.

"Dusty has started to bring his homework home, sleep through the night, and his headaches are few and far between," shared Dusty's mom, another satisfied Learning Foundations client. "In a nutshell, my son came back to me."

Learning Foundations provides FREE Parent Information Seminars every Tuesday night at 7 p.m. Parents can also sign up for free homework tips on Learning Foundation's website. Part of Learning Foundation's mission is to help the entire community – teachers and parents alike – understand and realize how to identify and help children struggling with cognitive learning issues.

"We're a family-oriented business," said Scarnati. "We take a whole-child approach, listen to the parents first, and make sure that they know they aren't alone."

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L to R: Center Director Rafael Scarnati, Office Manager Sofia Scarnati, and Program Director Leslie Jernigan.

