For Concerned Parents

Helping a child who has dyslexia can be a challenge, but there are ways to be supportive

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Actor Rockmond Dunbar speaks highly of Understood.org, a website created to educate children and their families about dyslexia and other learning and attention issues.

Dunbar suggests that the first thing a parent who has a child with dyslexia should do is visit the site. “For parents who don’t have dyslexia themselves, it may be hard to understand what their child is experiencing,” he says. “On the Understood.org website, there’s a section called ‘Through Your Child’s Eyes’ that allows you to experience some of what it must be like for a child that some people may believe is lazy or not trying hard enough. This is an eye-opener for lots of parents.”

Understood.org has information about some common myths concerning dyslexia as well. “There’s so much misinformation about what causes or what contributes to or what’s associated with dyslexia and learning disabilities,” Dunbar says. “This is the mythology that a parent needs to get on the other side of.”

Parents who have children with dyslexia must become educated consumers. “Know enough about your child and, specifically, be a good observer of your kids,” Dunbar suggests. “Also, know enough about dyslexia to know what it is and what it isn’t, and then know how to request information from schools and how to work with other professionals.”

When parents visit Understood.org, the website offers them targeted information that can answer many questions about dyslexia. Dunbar also suggests parents get their child evaluated if they think he or she might have learning issues.

Understood.org offers invaluable resources to help parents “unpack what’s really going on with their child,” Dunbar says.

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