



# Rhode Island Tutorial & Educational Services

*“Empowering students to realize their potential.”*

## What’s on the Inside Really Matters—Again!

When we featured this headline as the cover of our last newsletter, we were only beginning to look for a new office site. **Today**, we introduce our new offices! We are thrilled with them because they offer both families and professionals greater opportunities to grow and succeed.

**What’s the same?** We continue to provide individual multisensory lessons in reading, spelling, writing, math, test-taking, studying and organizational skills. We continue to provide experienced teachers who are trained in Orton-Gillingham and Project Read, as well as child advocacy with our Ph.D. child psychologist.

**So what’s different?** Rhode Island Tutorial & Educational Services (RITES) is now located in Pawtucket, in newly renovated space that includes:

- Five individual tutoring rooms
- A designated waiting room
- Plenty of free parking
- Computers and computer-assisted learning
- A lending library for our students and families.

**In this newsletter**, we highlight some of the extraordinary books in our new lending library for parents (see the back of this newsletter for details)! Many of us have

attended lectures and seminars presented by the authors of these books, to familiarize ourselves with new techniques and approaches to serve the children more and more meaningfully.

What’s on the inside really does matter -- both the inside of each child and the inside of our offices. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any suggestions or comments please call us at **401-723-4459**.



## **“Enrich Your Mind, Enrich Your Summer”**

*In response to great demand, RITES will be offering an exciting summer program!*

Would you like your child to retain what s/he gained this year in school? Would you like them to get a jump start on next year? Do you want your child to enjoy the assigned summer reading with a friend? Would the family dynamic improve if your child had stronger organizational skills? After hearing from parents, children and teachers, R.I.T.E.S. is offering a wide variety of summer courses and buddy book clubs to help students reinforce their accomplishments during the year:

- ⇒ Enrichment and Strength Training: Experienced teachers will offer 1-week courses designed for the fun and enjoyment of learning, exploring such topics as: creative writing and poetry, math and problem-solving, SAT math preparation, and organizational and study skills coaching programs.
- ⇒ Bring a Friend Book Clubs: Your child and a friend can complete their summer reading requirements with an expert teacher. Perfect for enhancing your child’s reading enjoyment while fulfilling his/her summer homework!
- ⇒ Individualized Tutoring: Orton-Gillingham, reading, math, spelling, writing, study and organizational skills.

**Be sure to look for the R.I.T.E.S. summer program brochure and registration forms coming soon in the mail and available on our web site: [www.ritutorial.com](http://www.ritutorial.com)!**

Winter/Spring 2003-2004

RITES Newsletter

## ***What our teachers are reading...***

*These informative books were read by RITES teachers; they are part of our lending library collection.*

**A Mind at a Time**, written by Dr. Melvin Levine; Reviewed by Pam Levanos, RITES teacher.

Mel Levine is a pediatrician who has dedicated his life's work to "helping children find success." He strongly feels that all minds are different and unique. In this book, he develops a thesis that schools, parents and teachers should all understand and enable children to find the strengths of their mind and bolster the areas where they are weak. Because he is a physician, with a strong interest in mechanical workings of the brain, there is some science in this book. However, it is all very readable, and important for all who are involved with how children learn.

Teachers need to discover what is the strongest avenue to a child's input in learning. Is it visual or auditory? Therefore, Dr. Levine asserts, schools need to look at individual learning styles and support kids who think differently. For example, a keyboard might be the answer for a student with graphomotor (writing) dysfunction. In addition, adequate time needs to be given to write down assignments, and teachers should be available for help by e-mail. Not every student works in the same time frame. Students who are not succeeding in school need to learn how to become a "strategist at studying" and develop critical thinking skills. Parents need to support their children in becoming critical thinkers. With regard to this, Dr. Levine gives many helpful tips at the end of each chapter.

One thing that truly struck me about this book is Dr. Levine's assertion that there is "no such thing as a perfect mind." His discussions on labeling are eye-opening. He writes: "I cannot bear to listen to young people who say 'I'm ADD.' Can you imagine someone saying, 'I'm asthma?'" This drives home the point about how dangerous labeling can be and those surrounding the child cannot allow a negative self fulfilling prophecy to prevail.

As an educational therapist, I found this book to be an incredible reminder that all minds are unique. It is essential in learning how to help children with memory difficulties, as well as social issues. In this book, Dr. Levine spends a great deal of time addressing how parents can support their child's strengths and deal with their weaknesses. We must remember that different people in this world are better at different things; some of us are artists, some are engineers. This book allows the reader to see how minds function and how this world would not be as wonderful and diverse if all minds were alike.

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**Parenting a Struggling Reader: A Guide to Diagnosing and Finding Help for Your Child's Reading Difficulties** *Written by Susan L. Hall and Louisa C. Moats, Ed.D.; Reviewed by Debra Nassau, RITES teacher.*

Parenting a Struggling Reader is a valuable resource for all parents who have ever been concerned about their child's reading progress. In this book, Hall and Moats outline a thorough plan of action for addressing a child's reading problems. As they describe each step in this plan, they provide answers to questions they have received on their website from parents and teachers. The detailed and practical information is presented in a straightforward manner and guides parents through the process of obtaining help to meet their child's needs.

The book highlights the steps that parents need to go through to effectively advocate for their child. For example, Hall and Moats offer sample questions to ask teachers and school principals early in the process of identifying a child's reading problems. The authors explain ways to identify a reading problem, and present assessment tools that can effectively detect reading difficulties in very young

children. They offer guidance about having a child evaluated and diagnosed, and describe several multisensory structured language approaches such as Orton-Gillingham, that have been shown through research to be effective with children with language-based learning disabilities. By emphasizing the importance of using reading interventions supported by research, Hall and Moats share valuable information with parents trying to find the appropriate instructional method for their child. At the conclusion of the book, Hall and Moats provide a comprehensive list of resources that parents will find helpful in answering many of their questions.

Hall and Moats are nationally recognized experts in the fields of reading instruction and dyslexia and are board members of the International Dyslexia Association. In addition to this guide, they are the coauthors of the award-winning book [Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Make a Difference During the Early Years.](#)

Check out their website at [www.proactiveparent.com](http://www.proactiveparent.com).

## What our teachers are learning...

*One of our teachers attended a Lindamood-Bell seminar on a multi-sensory approach to helping students read successfully ...*

Linda Giordano recently attended a Lindamood-Bell training program. The overall goal of this program is development of phonemic awareness, that is the ability to think about and manipulate individual sounds within words. Phonemic awareness is closely related to the skills needed to master the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds in words.

The "Lips Program" stresses how sounds "feel." The student becomes aware of the mouth actions which produce speech sounds so s/he can feel sounds within words. In this way, the student can use his/her tactile sense in addition to visual and auditory senses as another way to check a sound for reading, spelling, and speech.

This program would be indicated for students who may add, omit, substitute, or reverse sounds in words. It would also be helpful to students who have difficulty spelling phonetically. For example, the student who reads "steam" for "stream", "clasp" for "claps", and spells "gril" for "girl" is displaying sequencing errors which may be helped by the Lips Program. Pronunciation errors such as "wif" for "with" or "remember" for "remember" may also benefit from this type of approach.

The Lips Program has been well accepted by her students because it teaches letters and sounds in a different way. "The children especially like having their own mirror and watching themselves produce the different sounds. Any program that allows 'funny faces' in the mirror is bound to capture a child's attention."

☆☆

### **"Overcoming Dyslexia,"** by Jane McJennett, RITES Teacher

*On January 15, 2004 several educators from the Rhode Island Tutorial and Educational Services attended a conference at the Masonic Learning Center for Children (RI) by Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz entitled "The State of Science in Overcoming Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities."*

Dr. Bennett Shaywitz addressed the neurobiological basis for dyslexia, suspected for over 100 years and now able to be convincingly seen from functional brain imaging investigations. The study not only verifies the neural signatures for dyslexia but dramatically shows the success of individual intervention over time, to improve reading accuracy and fluency. Using specific interventions by trained educational therapists or tutors, actual brain function changes in dyslexic brains can occur so that they look like normal brain systems for reading.

Dr. Sally Shaywitz then spoke about the necessity of taking research into practice. Effective instruction needs to be brought in line with the

scientific evidence found by the National Reading Panel of the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development, the NIH. Teachers must be knowledgeable in order to effect early identification and intervention. Five essential components should exist for effective instruction in reading: the alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies. Teaching must be explicit, systematic and of sufficient duration. In short, reading instruction needs to reflect scientific research.

It is important to recognize that dyslexic children and adults put forth great effort and need access to accommodations.

"Accommodations," remarked Dr. Shaywitz, "don't produce success, the person does." Recent research provides us the opportunity to better understand the nature of the disability and to offer appropriate means to treat and perhaps even prevent dyslexia.

Dr. Sally Shaywitz's book, Overcoming Dyslexia, represents a major contribution to the understanding of dyslexia and provides important reading for parents, as well as professionals in the field of learning disabilities.

An *autographed* copy of this important book is available in our lending library.

**“Do you want your child to have fun, and learn math playing games?”**

My name is Caroline Fitzgerald and that kind of game is Flash Master! I have one myself. It looks complicated, but it’s not. I can set it up, and I’m only 9! Flash Master looks like a big calculator, but you play it like a video game. I found myself coming back to try to beat my score from last time! It’s so much fun. I usually play it for hours at a time! It’s good for all ages, because it has different levels. If you want a game that is fun and helps your child learn math, get the Flash Master.”

*Caroline is a RITES student. Special thanks to Joyce Ball, Wheeler School academic support teacher, for telling us about this great teaching tool.*



**R.I.T.E.S. NEW LENDING LIBRARY **

Our new office has a dedicated lending library for both students and parents. The purpose of the library is to help guide students to appropriate reading materials and to provide support material for families.

The National Reading Panel has stressed the importance for children of all ages to read at least twenty minutes each day. We support this recommendation by offering a variety of books

to borrow. Your child's teacher can help you pick out books at the right reading level and for parents we have books of interest, such as those reviewed in this newsletter.

We also ask that if you have any books you have outgrown and are in good condition please consider donating them to our lending library for others to enjoy.

We hope you will take advantage of our new library!

**★ New Offering at R.I.T.E.S.! High School Math★**

To complement our high school English and study/organizational skills tutorials we now offer high school math: Algebra I, II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus.

**★ Now Available in the R.I.T.E.S. office:★  
Game Packs for Learning!**

Our teachers often use these fun and effective games during Orton-Gillingham tutorial sessions. They are now available for you to purchase for home, to reinforce the skills your child works on at RITES. See order forms in the office.

**R.I.T.E.S.  
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