

# FREE YOURSELF

OUR BRILLIANT  
SECTION  
LOOKING AT  
ALTERNATIVE  
THERAPIES

**Around one child in 20 in the UK is recognised as being dyslexic and thousands more children and adults have other learning difficulties. Although drugs are commonly used, there are alternative ways to help the problems. FRANCES IVE reports**

**D**ESPITE a heightened awareness of learning difficulties, many children with an illness such as dyslexia still suffer the humiliation of being labelled stupid by their classmates.

Although such illnesses, including dyspraxia — when nerve messages from the brain are not transmitted to the rest of the body — are now being detected more quickly than ever before, they remain frustrating and distressing for both parents and children.

ADHD — attention deficit hyperactivity disorder — is now so rife that 186,200 prescriptions for the controversial drug Ritalin were written out in England alone last year. But recent studies have claimed that Ritalin has a more potent effect on the brain than cocaine.

Now millions of parents are searching for alternative ways to help their children's learning difficulties.

Nutritional expert Jacqueline Stordy says: "One of the reasons these children aren't good at paying attention is that they are often thinking faster than the teacher and they get bored. They are usually very good at computer games which work at the same pace as their brains."

Schoolchildren used to be given a daily dose of cod liver oil which gave them the essential fatty acids needed for brain function, development and growth. Diets rich in oily fish provide the nutrition children need but unfortunately most British children don't eat very healthily.

Here, three families tell how alternative methods changed their children's lives.

*Tamara Nathan, 45, from Stanmore, Middlesex, became a special needs teacher after realising that her son, Joshua, 10, was dyslexic. She found light and sound therapy improved his condition.*

I noticed signs of dyslexia when Joshua was just four but when I took him to a psychologist he didn't agree. It wasn't until Joshua was eight that we discovered he wasn't processing sound properly and therefore he often wrote letters the wrong way round.

Because of my job Joshua has had a lot of extra input. Although he is very bright and has a high IQ, he couldn't write down words correctly and even spelled his own name wrongly sometimes.

I decided to take him to Pauline Allen, a light and sound therapist who practises at the Hale Clinic in London. Pauline found Joshua's hearing was overactive and that he hears a vowel more acutely than other sounds in the word. So even if you spell a word out to him he

couldn't write it. He told us he could hear children whispering on the other side of the room.

Joshua went to Pauline for 10 days twice a day in the summer holidays and during the sessions music which had been deliberately distorted was played to improve his hearing.

Pauline also discovered that Joshua has a reduced field of vision. He has to read one word at a time, which obviously slows down the reading process. So Joshua sat in front of a machine which pulsed full spectrum light through the eyes into the brain.

When he finished the course I cried because there was such a difference in him. It used to be a real struggle to get through his spellings because he would always panic when he was tested.

On the first day of this term he came home with 13 spellings to learn. This time he got all the words right, and he even looked forward to the spelling test the next day. When he did his maths homework he had no problem copying out the question, whereas he used to keep losing his place. Joshua's self-esteem has improved so much — he's more his own person.

*Debbie Froom, 40, and her husband Graham, 39, from Southampton, had suspicions that their son Aaron, now 11, might be dyslexic when he first started school.*

Aaron couldn't form letters or hold his pencil well. Graham and I are both dyslexic and we thought he might be the same. The school thought it was too early to tell when he was just five, but by Year 1 the teachers said Aaron was crying when he was given a task to do.

We then took him to a clinical psychologist who said Aaron had visual problems. They drew a picture of a table with three legs and he didn't notice that one leg was missing.

I had read about Efalex, a supplement which contains essential fatty acids needed for brain development, and decided to try Aaron on it. After he had been taking it for a short while there was a huge difference in his behaviour. He used to have 15-minute temper tantrums when I asked him to go to bed, but now he just goes quietly. In just a month he started to tie his own shoelaces for the first time and learnt to ride his bike without stabilisers. He became calmer and made progress at school.

Aaron became very enthusiastic about his new school and packed his bag four weeks before the beginning of this term. Now he makes up poetry which he reads into

**WRITE APPROACH:**  
Joshua Nathan can now spell words correctly thanks to light and sound therapy



## Learning to cope

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