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Stellar Academy's Academic Program Description and Student Eligibility Requirements:

Stellar Academy for Dyslexics provides a successful learning environment for children with dyslexia. Special attention is given to language arts instruction through the implementation of the research-based, IMSLEC (International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council) & IDA (International Dyslexia Association) accredited, Slingerland® method. The research basis for the National Reading Panel Report identifies five key elements, or pillars, of effective language instruction, namely: vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, & comprehension. The Slingerland Multisensory Structured Language Approach® addresses each of these 5 key elements for effective reading instruction.

The Slingerland Multisensory Structured Language Approach® includes instructional strategies for speaking, listening, reading, spelling, handwriting, and written expression. It is designed for classroom instruction as well as for teaching small groups and individual students. Procedures to establish and extend competence in the areas noted above are systematically introduced and practiced. This methodology is structured, sequential, systematic, explicit, as well as multisensory; utilizing auditory, visual, & kinesthetic-motor sensory channels simultaneously to generate new neural pathways, in effect “rewiring the brain”.

We start the day in our grade level Homerooms focusing on Executive Functioning; as EF and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. The first 10 minutes of the academic day are devoted to concise oral language expression (Question of the Day). This allows students to practice organizing their thoughts and responding to questions in full and complete sentences.

Then, students move through our Writing and Reading classes according to individual proficiency levels. Writing instruction then progresses to a structured lesson to develop spelling (encoding, understanding base words, affixes, and suffixes) and written language skills. Students do a lot of cursive writing practice to ensure automatic sound-symbol understanding and written letter formation. The next class is Reading, with structured lessons devoted to reading mechanics, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Each day consists of a total of 205 minutes of direct Slingerland® instruction, as well as a 30-minute Read-Aloud listening comprehension block at the end of each full school day.

Math classes are also assigned according to individual proficiency levels. We use multisensory approaches to math instruction including utilizing Making Math Real®-based strategies and methods. Students also participate in hands-on, outdoor, real-world applications of concepts taught in class. These structured learning approaches are well-suited to the learning needs of children with dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Students rejoin their Homeroom groups to move through the afternoon enrichment blocks. Our afternoon enrichments expose students to grade-level subject matter while accommodating our students' needs. Art, Science, Physical Education, and Social Studies are core classes. ASL, Cooking, and Health are additional subjects presented intermittently.

Students have a nightly independent reading expectation. No additional routine homework is assigned as students work quite hard while in class. Occasionally, long-term projects (book reports, historical biography speeches, & science fair projects) are assigned and explicitly introduced in class with large research standards and independent writing pieces broken down into smaller, manageable assignments.

Student Profile & Program Purpose: Children who have been identified as having a Specific Language Disability (SLD) also known as Dyslexia. Students may also have additional identified learning difficulties, including dyscalculia, dysgraphia, ADD, Anxiety, etc., in conjunction with their language disabilities.

Early intervention is best, but it's never too late to provide support for learning difficulties. The social/emotional consequences for undiagnosed learning issues are real: frustration, fear, anxiety, avoidance behaviors/misbehaviors, and feelings of inadequacy. Strong, consistent, supportive relationships with at least one adult who believes in the child's worth will make a difference.

Our entire program is a targeted modification and students do not need an IEP to guide accommodations here.

Daily Schedule:

8:15 - 8:30 am Executive Functioning (planning, organization, time management, self-control, self-monitoring, working memory & adaptable thinking) practice.

8:30 - 9:45 am Learning to Write: Auditory/Decoding

9:45 - 10:00 am RECESS/Brain Break

10:00 - 11:00 am Structured Reading

11:00 - 11:15 am RECESS/BB

11:15 - 12:15 pm Maths

12:15 - 12:45 pm LUNCH

(12:45 - 1:30 pm Read Aloud/Early FRIDAY Dismissal)

12:45 - 1:40 pm Enrichment Block 1

1:40 - 2:30 pm Enrichment Block 2 > PE, Science, Soc Studies, ASL, Arts

2:30 - 3:00 pm Read Aloud/Dismissal

Enrollment Process:

The first step in joining our program is to attend a Visitor's Day tour or to meet with the Head of School for a one-on-one interview. Next, enrollees will get a Slingerland® Screening (*or provide a copy of their psychoeducational evaluation, or other screening identifying SLD*) for review. The student will then attend a Shadow Day to check for placement appropriateness by both parties. Families then submit their student's application and application fee. If their application is approved, they will be provided the necessary paperwork for submission with payment.

How long will the student's literacy remediation take?

It will take "as fast as we can, and as slow as we must" for students to progress through the program. The complexities of reading-based learning differences make it difficult to predict how long it will take for an individual student to be successfully remediated. Some students will become confident readers and writers; while others will gain tools and strategies but continue to struggle in certain areas. The rate and degree of success have been found to depend on the degree of the learning difference, the age at which it is identified and remediated, the inner drive of the individual student, and lastly, the skill of the teacher. Typically students are enrolled between two to four years.