

IDA Ontario welcomes Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Right to Read" inquiry

For immediate release

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The Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Right to Read" inquiry will draw attention to the unique needs of students with reading disabilities such as dyslexia to ensure they are getting the support they are entitled to at school. The Commission launched the inquiry after hearing from families throughout the province, who shared their experiences and the issues they faced while trying to get help for children struggling with reading difficulties.

In recent years, [parent-led dyslexia advocacy efforts](#) have enabled [legislative changes in 43 U.S. states](#), as well as curriculum and policy changes in England, Ireland and Australia. We see this inquiry as a first step for the province of Ontario, and Canada, in joining this global movement.

As outlined in the [Position Statement](#) on Supporting Students with Dyslexia in Ontario's Schools, IDA Ontario calls on the province to:

- Eliminate systemic discrimination and inequity in literacy instruction in Ontario public schools.
- Provide effective reading instruction in classroom and intervention programs by replacing the three-cueing system in the Ontario curriculum with Structured Literacy instruction.
- Implement early literacy screening of all students in Kindergarten or early Grade 1 and ongoing literacy assessment to guide instruction.
- Provide teachers with training and support in implementing Structured Literacy instruction, early screening, effective interventions, literacy assessment, and knowledge of learning disabilities, including dyslexia.
- Provide ongoing support for students with dyslexia, including appropriate accommodations.
- Use the term 'dyslexia' when referring to specific learning difficulties related to word recognition, decoding and spelling, as is the practice with researchers, governments and other educators around the world.

"I hope that this inquiry will be both a moment of reckoning and a turning point for the culture of education in this province and that the findings of the inquiry will help us move forward together and embrace the science of reading, so that every child can realize their right to read and no more children will sit silently at their desks wishing they didn't exist." — Alicia Smith, IDA Ontario

Background

Dyslexia is a common, hereditary, neurologically based condition that is not linked to intelligence but makes learning to read, write, and spell more difficult. Research shows that students with dyslexia can learn to read and write well when literacy problems are identified early, they are provided with systematic, explicit instruction that addresses all of the foundational components of reading and writing (Structured Literacy), and given timely access to more intense and targeted interventions. Evidence shows that such instruction is beneficial to all students, harmful to none, and essential for students with dyslexia.

[IDA Ontario](#) is pleased to offer our full support for the Ontario Human Rights Commission's inquiry into systemic and structural human rights issues affecting children with dyslexia in Ontario's public education system. We strongly believe individuals with dyslexia have the right to achieve their full potential and that social, educational and cultural barriers to literacy must be removed.

About IDA Ontario

[IDA Ontario](#) is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 2004. The branch is operated by volunteers, providing information and support to individuals with dyslexia and their families, educators and other professionals. IDA Ontario's parent organization, the [International Dyslexia Association](#) (IDA) was founded in the 1920s, has 47 branches in the U.S. and Canada, and 24 global partners.

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<p>Alicia Smith President-Elect IDA Ontario president@idaOntario.com (705) 427-9544</p>	<p>Alicia Smith is the President-Elect of IDA Ontario. She has dyslexia and is the parent of a grade 6 student with dyslexia.</p>
<p>Dr. Louisa Moats louisa.moats@gmail.com</p>	<p>Louisa Moats, Ed.D., has been a teacher, psychologist, researcher, graduate school faculty member, and author of many influential scientific journal articles, books, and policy papers on the topics of reading, spelling, language, and teacher preparation. She was Co-Principal Investigator of an NICHD Early Interventions Project in Washington, D.C., public schools and Principal Investigator on two small business innovation research (SBIR) grants from the National Institutes of Health. In addition, she led the committee that developed the International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.</p>
<p>Dr. David Kilpatrick David.kilpatrick@cortland.edu info@equippedforreadingsuccess.com</p>	<p>David A. Kilpatrick, PhD is Associate Professor of Psychology for the State University of New York, College at Cortland and teaches courses in learning disabilities and educational psychology. He is also a New York State Certified School Psychologist and has done over 1000 evaluations of students with reading difficulties during his 27 years with the East Syracuse-Minoa Central School District. David currently conducts research on reading difficulties and does professional development workshops for educators. He is also the author of <i>Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties</i> (Wiley, 2015).</p>