

Probably the best move. When people have fixed mindsets you can't change them in any reasonable time if ever.

No matter what you did or said, that teacher should not have treated the child unkindly.

The teacher was probably taught to teach reading one way. If that didn't work, there was nothing that could be done/nothing they could do differently. An IEP wasn't needed because your child was mastering material/educational standards. As a parent, I want my child to be taught 'life skills' - skills that can be applied to 'general' situations. How do you learn a new word if you cannot sound it out? It's like the old saying: If you give a man a fish, you feed them for a day. If you teach a man to fish you feed them for a lifetime. You don't want to teach a child words one by one. You want to teach them strategies so they can tackle whatever they happen across on a page. (With some people, there is no way to get through to them & change their minds. Keep in mind that your child was learning what they were being taught.)

there is nothing you could have said/done that would have had a different impact.... Sadly, there are educators who are so set in their ways, and take input so personally. Hopefully over time she has remembered why she became a teacher in the first place and gained some confidence.

Honestly, without hearing her take on the conversation, it would be hard to gauge what was actually said and heard

I think asking for a meeting to talk about her reading challenges would be appropriate. Explaining to her your concerns. Asking her about what she sees. Then asking to team up tThat will only work if the teacher's mind is open. In many cases the teacher takes any questioning at all as an attack. And many teachers have been told that phonics is awful and damaging go children so when parents talk about phonics they should be given runarounds like "Oh we do teach phonics" (a couple of worksheets).together to create an action plan where you have a role in supporting her at home.

that's true but how else would she have that discussion? I'm not saying the teacher is guaranteed to be open but if mom approaches it with a team approach she'll get information. If she thinks she's going to change the teachers' teaching practice she's probably going to be disappointed.

I think perhaps starting off with questions that show you genuinely want to know why things are done the way they are. For example, I noticed that you are using the three cueing system. Can you help me understand why this is used? I noticed my child is not progressing, can you take me through your approved literacy curriculum, so I can understand what they are learning each day?

I think if you open up the dialogue from a place of genuine interest and curiosity, it comes across less judgmental and might not raise someone's hackles.

99.9% of teachers are doing their best with what they have been taught and with the curriculum that is approved for them to use. Once someone understands what is happening in the classroom, they can start advocating for change at the levels where policy is made.

It will vary by district. I know some districts screen for dyslexia and provide appropriate instruction. Others use Fountas and Pinnell and you need to hire an attorney to get appropriate instruction. And... there's a good chance the attorney won't be able to help.

Many districts do not want to deal with dyslexia.

I only ever had 2 teachers in 20 years of dealing with schools respond without getting offended. Both were highly qualified, been in the trenches for years, and constantly in search of more training. With the first teacher (3rd grade), I asked why they were having such a hard time with the assignments and so much struggle with reading and spelling. We researched together what the best approach would be. My 2nd child had the same teacher a couple years later and she did the same with them.

The 2nd teacher (Kinder) asked all the regular teacher questions (do you read to them 😊 and such) at conferences and when I gave the printed list of every story we had ever read and I asked if they were teaching the letter sounds (they weren't- Thanks F&P 🙏) we agreed to start learning how to actually teach reading together. I gave her every resource I could find that wasn't on Facebook (she doesn't have social media accounts) and tips to help other students like mine who might come through her room. She was a special education teacher for 15 years and NEVER learned how to teach reading. She was devastated when she realized she could have been doing so much better, but now that she's been doing SoR in her room, she's not had a single student leave her without at least a solid grasp of CVC words and most are well into multisyllabic words before heading off to first grade. We still chat at least once a year.

3 children who attended schools all over, and nearly 100 teachers total between them.

Sadly, I think that many teachers have trouble receiving input because they lack the proper training and experience and end up feeling threatened. I had a similar experience with my younger daughter and writing.

Also they often don't have a choice and it might be more beneficial to address central office or who ever is in charge of curriculum.

I tried that. I discussed with the Principal, assistant superintendent.

You get nowhere. They do not feel it's their job to teach kids to read.

I don't agree that they don't think it's their job. I think they truly believe (based on their credential and PD training + experience) that most students will learn to read with small group instruction, lots of read alouds, time reading at home, etc and "time/maturity." It's those of us who were troubled by the kids who were bright and didn't grasp any type of patterns- word families, rhymes, common HFW....and continued to ask, "WHY?" and seek out more training until we finally found the SoR, O-G, and learned how to explicitly teach

reading. Because so much of a child's reading looks okay in the early grades, many teachers and admin don't understand...and then in the upper grades, they say it's a fluency/comprehension/vocabulary issue.

Perhaps. I shared a lot of information on dyslexia with teachers and administrators. I've talked with other parents in the district. I think they intentionally try to make dyslexic's lives difficult. Some genuinely don't know. Some do. In my district, they know.

I am sorry to hear that. I have been a teacher for 39 years and I think most teachers are wonderful, dedicated people but many have not had proper training in reading. I also think it's common that administrators know very little about reading instruction. Change is difficult to achieve but it does need to involve administration.

I think it varies by district. Some seem to put not so smart people at the top.

I've found that most admin come from a background in secondary education. They have little, or no first hand knowledge or experience with actually teaching reading.

Sped directors that know nothing about dyslexia is a problem. A former algebra teacher with a degree in curriculum providing professional development on reading instruction didn't make sense to me. But...all of the Principals reported to her. I get the impression that people do what they're told to do by their boss in most districts.

I had discussions with the Principal at my daughter's school. I offered to apply for grants for professional development. I won't share the response.

This is such a great question. As a parent, the process of trying to get an IEP evaluation for my dyslexic child was very difficult. I often wonder how I could have gone about it differently. I came to this group to gain perspective and the progress I see here gives me so much hope. I understand so much more about reading/writing curricula, SOR and the obstacles teachers face now than I did six years ago when I first broached the issue with my son's school, but I still don't know whether there was any approach I could have taken that wouldn't have put the school on the defense, other than accepting the school's wait to fail model. We ended up pulling our son from our highly rated local district to send him to a private school for dyslexic children, but this was a difficult option for us and is not an option for many. He is thriving in his reading and is making gains in his writing, but he has missed out on the joys of attending school in his local community and the after school activities he could be participating in if not for his long commute. It shouldn't be this difficult.

I haven't gotten very far with talking to the teachers. We've had teachers with years of experience and so far haven't been open to hearing my concerns. When I bring up concerns I'm usually told things like "she needs to stop sounding out words and just memorize them and at some point reading will just magically click." Even now that we have a diagnosis and an IEP we're dismissed. At the last IEP meeting someone said that since she's making good

gains this year, maybe online learning last year was the real problem. Even pointing out that her gains are due to private tutoring didn't spark any interest. I'm not sure that a conversation from a parent will drastically change things. I'd be interested in knowing which situations more often lead to change, conversations with parents, conversations with colleagues, PD, have your own child struggle to read...

I find it interesting that if highly qualified educational professionals aren't open to being challenged, they are 'threatened.' Do you challenge the other professionals in your life? How do you offer those suggestions to your tax accountant or medical practitioner? How do they take your "expert" advice? Converse as you would those folks. That's all we ask, the respect we have earned.

If you don't like your doctor, you find a new one. If they make a mistake, you sue them. Same with your tax accountant. They have strict ethical guidelines.

If a teacher provides instruction that does harm, can you sue?

Exactly. There is very little parental choice when it comes to a child's education. I think as teachers we need to appreciate how vulnerable families are to the decisions made by the education department and support families whenever we possibly can to reduce that feeling of vulnerability.

when medical professionals go against the established science they can lose their license. When teachers do it it's "how it's always been done and we're highly qualified so stay in your lane"

And... we're legally required to send our children to school even if it provides they benefit.

Thank goodness the courts are getting involved.

Where are you? I have only heard of this in Germany.

United States

We've got truancy laws.

Home school is an option

It's difficult to do when you work.

Homeschooling is legal in all 50 us states

Where are you located?

Illinois. It's legal but challenging if both parents work.

Parents run into challenges when kids don't want to go to school, which is common when the teachers know nothing about dyslexia. Elementary was torture for my daughter.

It was just the wording I guess. No one is legally required to send their child in the US. It just may be more convenient for them.

More convenient? We are required to send our children to school or homeschool. We pay significant taxes. It is meant to provide education to children. In many places, the tax revenue is not used what it's meant to be used for.

Agreed. Children are expected to receive an education, and in most places property taxes pay for public schools. Still no legal requirement to send kids to public school.

Exactly. Which is why I'd love for tax dollars to go to the private school if a parent chooses to send their child there.

In some places it does in the US. Something you can work on in your area.

I challenge doctors the same as I do teachers: "Show me the data". Surprisingly, doctors actually respond better than teachers

Me too. And I don't deal with ones upset by my self advocacy.

I've been asking for my daughter's reading levels. They wouldn't give them to me. Had to pay for outside testing. Again. I'm not sure why the kids spend so much time on these assessments.

I haven't a clue why they spend so much time on them either. They don't use them as a means to inform instruction, so... 🙄

I have read some of the comments.

Wrong is wrong and right is right, no matter who has the info. We are not talking about belief systems or narratives. We are talking about what research has proven.

My opinion is that if a teacher gets offended because a parent has read the research and they haven't, they need to take their discomfort up with their therapist and read the research. We cannot expect to be treated as professionals if we don't behave as such.

If I went to an accountant, he did my taxes, and screwed them all up, I'm not even about to have conversations with him; I'm going to report him, try to recoup any losses I may experience, and try to find out how to prevent him from doing it to anyone else. And I DOUBLE DOG DARE him to have an attitude with me when I am making him accountable!

It drives me nuts when teachers in this group use their "I'm a professional" to discourage parents from advocating for their children. And I'd be willing to put money on the fact that these same teachers will do this to the families they serve. Do better.

My favorite line from the 3rd grade teacher after she approached me when she saw my daughter struggling...

Her: "I can tell m is very smart but.... "

Me: "yes... she is very smart but has great difficulty with reading- we're pretty sure she's got dyslexia and we're working with a tutor."

Her: “good luck with that! I had one other mom with a kid that had dyslexia and she had a heck of time getting what she needed for her son.”

I'm glad you had access to a tutor.

So am I. I advocate for school choice now. Others don't. The teachers in her school know nothing about dyslexia. My daughter was the first. I wonder what happened with the others.

I despise school choice because while it seems relatively easy to move a child, it isn't always. When families get choice, so do schools. And when schools get to choose, especially those that are for profit or run by for-profit management companies, they refuse to serve kids who are costly to educate. They defund public schools while saddling them with all the most difficult and costly to educate kids. This means that those kids don't get the support they need, and they also don't have any choices.

There are more states that are opening up school choice and will take anyone. Most are tied to highly respected universities.

I'm all for defunding schools that do not want to educate children.

Respectfully, you're wrong. I am from Michigan which is where Betsy DeVos and her homies have been pushing school choice since I was a child.

And I have seen disabled children being turned away from many charter schools and private schools. The phrase they use is: We do not have the resources to serve your child.

And that's the end of it.

Any good advocate who works with children with more complex and expensive disabilities than dyslexia will tell you that charter schools routinely violate disabled children's rights. And it's perfectly legal for private schools to do it.

This is especially true for children who need self contained classrooms or one to one paras. It's also true for children who have complex medical conditions that require nurses on staff. Public schools serve these kids. Charters and private schools usually don't.

I have watched district after district go bankrupt because the redundancy in the system spreads the kids too thin to be efferent. There's also the issue of fly by night charters and charter churn. Schools closing abruptly in the middle of the school year. And don't get me started on trying to find your records if the school you attended closed. I have a friend whose school closed so she dropped out. A year later, she was trying to enroll in another school. They told her she had to do 9th-11th grades over because her records are gone.

I can go downtown today and get my high school transcript because I went to public school.

And when the charters first came out, the teachers weren't even licensed. They did a number on my baby cousin that the public schools straightened out when his parents finally moved him. If he'd have stayed, he'd have never learned to read.

Are you for real? They violate the rights of dyslexic students every.single.day.

Not one person in my district has an understanding of how a child learns to read. Nor do they want to.

Our English Learners rights are violated every.single.day. We are in a highly ranked district (because everyone does tutoring) but they are satisfied with our Hispanic scores being significantly below state average. I won't share the response I got from the principal on that one. I will say they seem to hire administrators that aren't very smart.

I'm not a fan of Betsy. I'm not a fan of educators that don't feel it's their responsibility to educate children.

I hear you. But at the same time, the kids can go to school in those public schools. I grew up in Detroit, and if the public schools had been allowed to be decimated the way they were headed (and I won't get into all that), there are kids who would not have had access to ANY school. Children who need to be self contained, children with behavior problems, children who need paras, children who need nurses... they are getting turned away from choice schools. Without public schools, they have no school at all. None.

And so I'm always going to support my local public schools. I'm always going to push for them to be better. I'm always going to encourage parents to empower themselves to know their rights and advocate for their kids.

I'm never going to be a fan of charters. I have had too many bad experiences and I see them as a worse equity issue than public schools are.

I agree with the last comment and have a similar response. I have always used phonics to teach kids how to read in a balanced literacy program even though most classrooms did not have a balance that included phonics but I learned really early on in my career that my kids who became independent readers (most grade one but K also for a couple years) had a way to attack / decode words that they had not seen before.

Then I became a parent whose children needed a systematic way to learn how to read and unfortunately did not have the same opportunities as my students. When my own children need something more or something different I simply ask as kindly as I can "what are you doing in the classroom to help r be successful?" It really does not matter if that offends the teacher. And truthfully it rarely does offend them! But it is my job to make sure my students are successful in my classroom and beyond, and it is my children's teachers jobs to make sure that my children are successful in their classrooms. I'm not with them for those six hours every day and every child deserves to thrive!

I am sorry that your child's teacher responded that way but you did the right thing to notice that your child was struggling and reach out to find out how your child could be more successful

Being respectful is foremost. If you aren't respectful, then your audience will tune out, even if you're knowledge is research based. That said...when my daughter was in kinder, her teacher was brand new. I went out of my way to approach her in a manner that was kind, but suggestive. I would start conversations with, "Have you heard about..." or "Have you tried..." or "Sometimes when "A" happens, I'll do "B"..."

She was very receptive to my help. HOW you approach someone is just as important as what you share.

I would say, state your concern and ask how you can help at home.

I think part of the problem is that the teacher is getting directives/information from the parent and administrators at that point, which likely conflict. The problem is higher in the hierarchy than the teacher. While we need teachers who understand that these other reading programs and curriculums are problematic, what we really need are for administrators and district personnel to see how problematic they are.

Good leaders will make sure their employees have the tools necessary to be successful.

They don't have the tools.

A lot of kids are being set up for failure as a result. Unfortunately, most seem content with status quo.

I agree. The problem is that the local decision makers about curriculum aren't sold on SOR in far too many places.

I realize there are some that question some curriculum, like O-G. It is known that Fountas and Pinnell is a problem. A serious problem. The fact that it's being used everywhere is concerning.

I would approach by doing the following:

Requesting a meeting with the teacher on her timeframe!

Then I would kindly ask the following:

I've noticed that _____ is scoring well on her weekly spelling tests; but I've noticed at home when we do our nightly reading she struggles greatly with reading.

I'm looking for insight/information as to why this might be the case?

Do you see this scenario with other students?

What do you observe when she reads with you or in class?

I know she can read the weekly story for you; but do you read it 1st to the whole class?

Then kindly wait for her responses...

Let her know that you are noticing many inconsistencies with your daughter's performance in terms of reading, writing, and spelling and it has you wanting to learn more about how a child first learns to read?!

And your 1st thought was to reach out to you, her teacher.

Maybe phrasing/wording it in a way that you want to learn alongside with the teacher will allow them to be more open minded.

I agree. Anytime you can phrase concerns in a way where you want to learn, so you're able to support the teachers efforts, while at home, is much better than coming in making accusations or acting like the parent knows more than the teacher.

Do some digging first to see if the district is mandating they use F&P (or whichever program.) Like the poster above me— sadly admin and district folks who have never taught reading dictate what is used.

It is a tough situation. Parent here. Going to parent teacher conferences, in Kindergarten. They tell you that your child is a model student. polite, well manured, does not talk out of turn. Next parent teacher conference, they say the same, but have concerns with her learning. We ask for an evaluation, they already were informed that the father has dyslexia. They say she is immature, young for the class, we do not read to her enough. We request for an evaluation. We are unaware that we needed to ask it in writing. Out of the three school employees at the conference not one of them informed us that our request should be in writing. So we talk to the pediatrician, he gives us a referral to a college that is working with dyslexic children and does extensive evaluations. It took two days for the evaluation. Came back with multiple learning differences. We turn this into the school and basically they poo pawed the report. How are parents suppose to feel. I do not believe we were confrontational at all. We just needed help with teaching her.

The norm.

What state are you in?

Kansas. This was when she was in Kindergarten she is in 3rd grade now. Was home schooled by grandmother for 2nd, do to remote not working for her. She is doing well with reading now, one of the top readers and spellers in her class. Was worked with 1.5 to 2.5 hours 5 days a week with a Linda Mood Bell program, Lips and seeing stars, while being home schooled. Now we need to do extensive work on her dyscalculia.

every person that applies for SS for medical reasons is denied the first time around, and maybe the 2/3 time until they hire an attorney. No different. You don't HAVE to all in writing, but if you definitely want to evoke the law, then you do. Simple letter. Thank you for your meeting and thoughts. Test my child. They have 60 days. You want to move the process forward because dyslexia does not go away. At every level there is another obstacle. At the very least, you want a 504 for 1 reason. There is one test in all of education that matters- ACT/SAT. She will need time extension for that. No class or placement matters except HS, and regardless of "recommendation," you sign off where you want her. If AP/IB classes are too much paperwork, do dual enrollment. You are driving the train. Her education isn't going to look like anyone else's. Do what is right for her. There will be progressions from great educators. Others will feel like a regression. Those are derailments. She'll get where she needs to be, but you need to keep all your resources focused and working for her.

thank you for the information and encouragement!

I'm a teacher, and I'm at a point in my career where I'm very open-minded and constantly on the look-out for better ways to teach my students (hence being in this group). When I was younger and less secure, I'm not sure how I would react. I probably would be a little offended at first, but the seed would have been planted and I believe that I would become curious. Perhaps you could bring a book or an article that you read that helped you learn about dyslexia/SOR and explain why you think that approach might help your daughter. As a teacher, even if I was offended, I might pick up the book out of curiosity.... I would also see if there is a literacy coach/reading specialist/learning support teacher, etc that you could talk to for a second opinion and to also share what you've been reading.

Gosh. What an incredibly important question you bring up.

Sadly, it didn't go well for me as a parent. I work (and parent) in a Lucy district and my best strategy was connecting with literacy coach within the district that I knew followed the science. She assessed my child and I became a student of her practice and her genius. We taught my daughter to read. I actually had to "undo" what she was learning in class. (Damn you, "picture power"!)

Sadly, my advice is sometimes you have to go beyond the teacher and the district's curriculum....

And then be a voice for others.

This is why I am impassioned to get our teacher ed programs training teachers in the science and get Lucy Calkins out of schools.

some of us are with you. I have noticed educators slowly speaking up at board meetings. YOU as a parent have a voice. You may get only 3 mins, but be the voice to the board. It's public and on the record. Others will follow. There will be no response, but they are listening. A few years later, change will come.

Be honest and express your concerns. As a teacher, I try to always have an open mind.

I gave public comment at our BOE and brought the data with me...62% of kids in third grade were reading below grade level. I funded several teachers to attend SOR oriented PD. I also educated my children how to advocate for themselves to not guess using MSV strategies when they read at school. Definitely offended some people along the way, but planted seeds of change.

how do you fund several teachers to attend PD?

your wallet. This did happen at a previous school a mother bought books and training.

Another equity issue. 😞

What I'm learning is that getting support for kids with disabilities (and the kids who need systematic and explicit instruction) is one equity issue after another.

yes, I funded the PD from my own wallet. It is an equity issue for sure. But I figured the funding of several teachers to attend a PD course was the most equitable and would reach the greatest number of kids.

I'm glad you were able to do it! ❤️

I'm not sure I view it as an equity issue as much as an accountability issue. If fountas and pinnell is used, they are actually creating reading difficulties with their students. And... when the assessments identify issues, they don't address the instruction issues, they change the assessments.

it's definitely an equity issue. I could never afford to pay for PD for my son. I have never worked in a school where parents can afford to fund PD for teachers. I never attended a school as a child where parents could pay for teacher PD.

How is this not an equity issue? If their parents cannot pay, the children get whatever the district buys. If the parents don't have the skills to figure out what PD to buy the teachers, the kids get whatever the district buys.

Teachers should have the training. Parents should not have to pay for professional development. And... I actually offered to pay for PD. They weren't interested.

I agree a zillion percent. And that would solve one equity issue.

This is hard. I was a teacher who thought I knew it all. I thought I wasn't teaching kids to guess. I thought I was using my knowledge from my two degrees so how could I be wrong?! Then. I had a child with dyslexia and my world blew up. Became OG certified. Ate alllllll my words. Called former students.

My point is. It's really really hard to understand that you're doing something wrong until there is an event that causes a shift. Had a parent told ME I was not teaching reading correctly, I think I would dismiss them. And this is why many teachers continue to be stuck where they are. They truly believe they are using best practices and that parents have no clue. So. Not a answer you were looking for but I hope she is more open minded then I was.