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QuickPoint! – Oregon Parents Need More Options for Children with Learning Challenges

By **Miranda Bonifield**

For students born with learning disorders like dyslexia, learning to read without a specialized program is an incredibly difficult task. Instead of being a satisfying challenge, it becomes a demoralizing chore.

Consider the [experience](#) of Tara Mixon, who quit her job to homeschool her dyslexic first grader. His self-confidence had plummeted when he couldn't learn to read alongside his Kindergarten class. Transitioning to a single income meant she couldn't afford specialized tutoring, which often costs more than \$50 per hour. Tara's hard work means her son can enroll in fourth grade this year, but she is far from confident in the public schools' ability to address his needs. Like many parents of dyslexic students, Tara fears her son will fall behind his peers again and lose the confidence he has built over the last two years.

New legislation recently passed in Oregon makes an admirable effort at early identification of reading disorders, but experience has shown parents and children alike that good intentions don't guarantee results.

Instead of trying to shoehorn students with unique needs into a single system, [Oregon should empower families with school choice](#). Implementing a system like Education Savings Accounts would allow parents like Tara to enroll their students in specialized programs or pay for tutoring—turning reading from an insurmountable obstacle back into the joy it should be.

Miranda Bonifield is Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.