



Wordbound

remedial tutors. They deal with the theory of dyslexia and management of dyslexics in the classroom.

Consultation facilities

This is provided to those parents who would like to know whether their child has any learning problems. The child's background is discussed at length keeping in view his /her academic weaknesses. With the help of this service the parents can then decide whether their child will require further assistance from READyslexics. **By ZTE**

A brainchild of Farizeh Durrani, Spell Bound Centre for Educational Development blossomed from solitary endeavour to a successful team of 14 teachers, and several consultants and specialists on learning disabilities.

Fareze considers herself fortunate to have studied Child Development, while in the US (93 — 96). She stumbled into this thinking it would help her with her two children who were around 8 years and 4-years-old as she was a single parent. This was as far as she thought when she saw this subject in the applied sciences list. It helped her to know, how children develop, how they think, how they learn, how they feel, how they grow, what a child is... the different stages of development, it gave Fareze an insight into their psyche, learning and coping strategies.

On her return she joined Bayview School as a nursery teacher, but held teacher training workshops for teachers at St. Michael's, the Jamali Montessori, City School in Karachi, and the Grammar School in Lahore also.

Once the word got around that Fareze was qualified to help children with special needs, a number of children came to her and she started to help them on a one-to-one basis with some needing special help and others for supplementing their school work.

In July of '97, Fareze invited her professor from Community College in Texas, Dr Marie Welsh, to conduct a training course for the teachers. Two months later she was all set to launch Spell Bound.

The mission of Spell Bound, as stated in their brochure, is to provide an enriched and motivating environment where learners are encouraged to reach their full potential and develop powerful literacy skills with respect to individual learning styles. Students are helped to enrich academic as well as compensatory skills. At Spell Bound they are committed to help children learn and develop language, thinking and motor skills and most importantly, they strive to help children feel good about themselves.

Spell Bound offers Remedial Programme which are to help with speech impairment, language delay, attention problems, developmental delays, learning disabilities, emotional/social problems, poor coordination and dyslexia. There is also an enrichment programme to help enhance language/math skills, mild language difficulties, children experiencing subtle developmental difficulties or learning difficulties or children who need extra assistance are helped and also those transferring from other countries or cities who may require extra help.

Training teachers creates an awareness as to the fundamental rules of what is needed to know, what is the basic requirement, what it entails to work with children and to teach children with special needs and learning disabilities. They teach English and math, one to one, for one hour, five days a week, in the afternoon. Some children do come in the mornings, but the main idea is not to isolate them but to let them continue in the mainstream while helping them to catch up and reach their potential.

It is the positive attitude of adults and children around them which goes a long way, it is important not to label them. We must instil this attitude in people. A child's self-esteem and self-concept are affected, if kids with mild to moderate weaknesses, or language delays are admitted to a school for severe retardation.

About Milestones

Milestones is the first school for Cognitive and Language Development in Pakistan, where the environment and curriculum is specifically designed to teach children with mild to moderate language delays and intellectual weakness. The purpose of the centre is to equip these children with the required academic skills so that eventually they may flow into the mainstream in a regular school environment.

The Milestone curriculum is based on Piaget and Erickson's Theory of Child Development and developed by Fareze Durrani, Mahvish Akberali and Sabah Habib. The curriculum is going to be tailored to each child's needs and his profile of strengths and weaknesses. How receptive and accommodating the schools will be to this is yet to be seen. However, through Milestone, we are hoping to project a positive attitude towards tolerance in diversity, educating people, both parents and educational institutions in eliminating the stigma, attached to the concept of developmental delays and of mental retardation in Pakistan.

We must learn and accept that DIFFERENT does not mean LESS. It is important for these kids to be accepted, and not be labelled. ■

By Hasina Sajun