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Parent-Child Guide

FREE

February/March 2025

Vol. 30 - No. 6

Est. 1995

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**THE DEBATE:
PHONICS VS.
WHOLE LANGUAGE**

**ASPERGER
SYNDROME**

**STRAIGHT
TEETH
WITHOUT
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WHAT YOU
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MARCH BREAK & SUMMER CAMP GUIDE pg 10-12

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Asperger Syndrome

By Claudette Bouman

Dear Parents,

Some time ago, I wrote an article about dysgraphia. Now I'm writing about Asperger syndrome because the daughter of a long-time friend was just diagnosed with this disorder as a young adult. This young lady is intelligent and aware enough to seek help, learn about, understand and come to terms with her diagnosis. She referred me to an online StatPearls Publication by S. A. Hosseini of Kern Medical Center and M. Molla of Kern Medical (2025) and I supplemented that with Wikipedia and other online sources.

There's a great deal of difficulty to systematically describe psychiatric disorders especially in children and adolescents. Asperger syndrome is a diagnostic label used to describe a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, along with limited, recurring patterns of behavior and interests.

It has been combined with other conditions into autism spectrum disorder. Though characterized by reduced social communication and interaction, it is also categorised by average or superior intelligence, and no significant language delay as may occur in autism. Its causes may be due to genetic and/or environmental factors.

What does it mean to be diagnosed as an adult with Asperger's and would an earlier diagnosis have changed anything? Medical specialists and psychologists stress the need for early diagnosis and intervention for any troubling behavioral disorder in order to promote healthy child and adolescent development. Since early intervention did not occur in this case what are we left with? The adult must then take charge and manage many things for herself.

Perhaps generations of adults have had some degree of undiagnosed Asperger's that went untreated yet many of them went on to lead productive lives. But is that the best we can hope for? While labelling something may point in the direction of pragmatic changes to alleviate negative symptoms and associated difficulties, labelling can also scar by pigeonholing and stereotyping. But psychological assessment is recommended for treatment planning as it aims to help identify an individual's areas of strength and weakness as a start.

Professional help can offer therapies, some of which are nowadays controversial, designed to manage effective intervention programs for children and life-skill strategies for adults. Where deficits in an individual's communication abilities, sensory, and motor skills impact to impair daily functioning, practical strategies to remedy these can be developed and implemented.

There is no easy answer to complex human developmental issues. Intense focus on specific interests in children may sometimes impede wider learning abilities. For adults, practicing communication skills to establish meaningful relationships among peers and to advance vocational and/or academic skills toward suc-

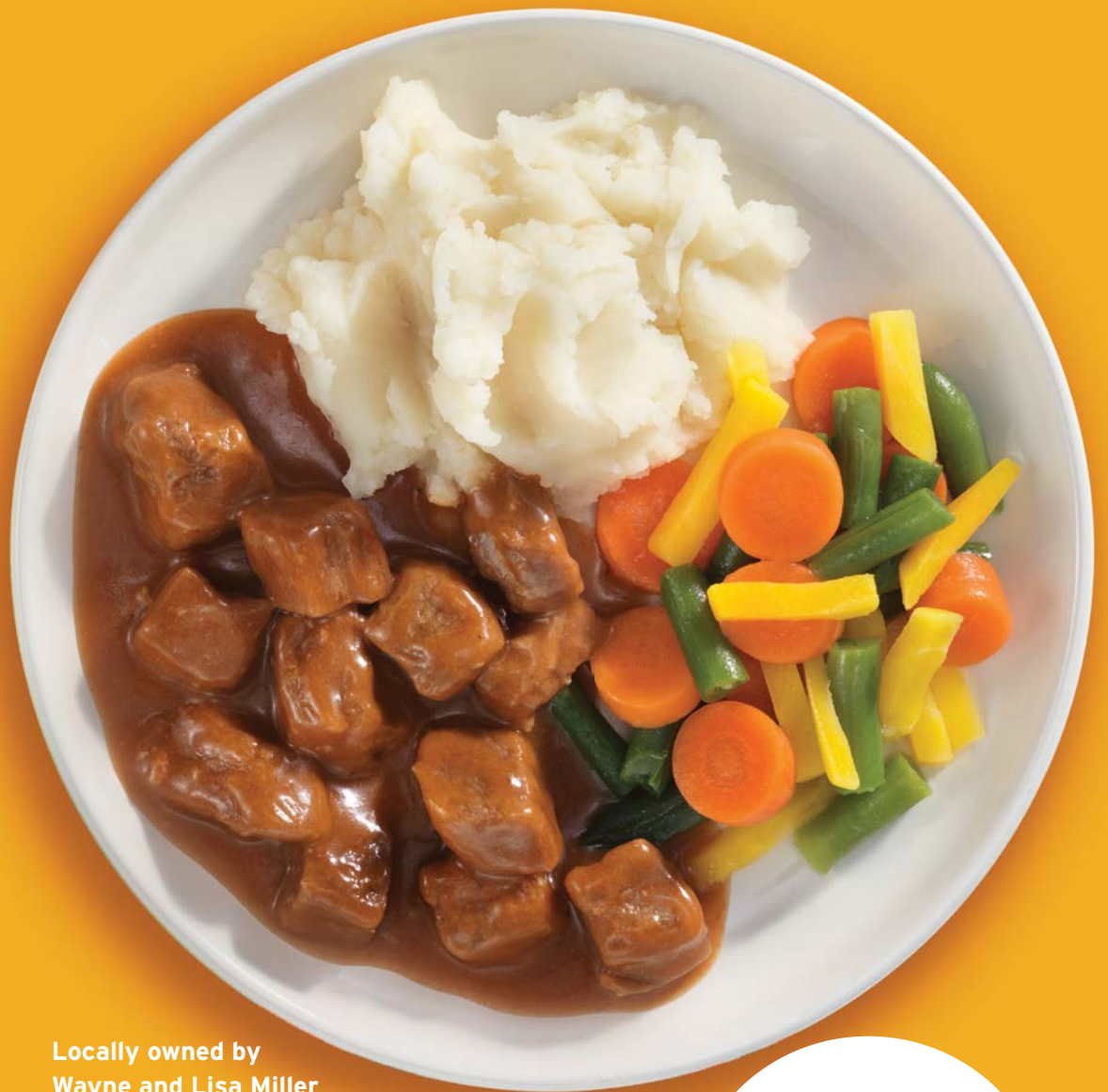
cessful work and career aspirations and experiences are essential goals for autonomy and self-sufficiency. Among other things, I suggested to my young friend to find a sport that she enjoys to increase her physical activity. She has already joined a field hockey team for its exercise and team spirit benefits.

Claudette Bouman retired after teaching for 30 years in Barbados, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. Her memoir, Failing Forward in Saarland published by FriesenPress, is available from her at: claudette.bouman@gmail.com. It is sold at Helen Creighton House in Dartmouth, and Atlantic News and Bookmark stores in Halifax.



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also including Fun Places to Go, Health & Wellness, Seniors' Living Care, Education, and More!
Printing on April 16, running to June 25, 2025
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...AND MUCH MORE!



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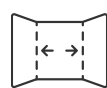
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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

Update From Your MP

By: Hon. Lena Metlege Diab, Member of Parliament for Halifax West

HERITAGE DAY

Happy Heritage Day, Halifax West! Celebrated the third Monday in February, Nova Scotia Heritage Day is an opportunity to honour the remarkable people, places and events that have contributed to this province's unique heritage. I was proud to have been part of the provincial government that created this special day in 2015. This year, we honour Mi'kmaw activist Nora Bernard of Millbrook First Nation, a key figure in the fight for justice for survivors of the residential school system. This year, Heritage Day falls on February 17, and I hope to see you and your family at the free community skate at the St. Margaret's Centre (12 Westwood Blvd, Upper Tantallon) from 1:00-3:00pm.

COMMUNITY BOWLING

With March Break quickly approaching, I want to share that I'll be holding a free afternoon of community bowling at the Fairview Bowlarama (3459 Desmond Ave) on March 14 from 1:00-3:00pm. I encourage you to bring your family

out for some fun on the lanes! Space is limited. Residents of Halifax West can reserve their spot by emailing my office at lenametlege.diab@parl.gc.ca. Hope to see you there!

SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Whenever I speak to seniors they tell me the same things: they want to continue living independently in their homes and they want more opportunities to connect, give back, and enjoy their golden years in comfort and security. These are priorities that I take to heart. To help make them reality, each year the federal government provides funding support for organizations across our city that provide services and programming to older folks. I'm incredibly proud to say that, over the last three years, senior-serving organizations in Halifax and Halifax West have received over \$708,000 to support their important work. That funding goes to groups like the Fairview Resource Centre, Chebucto Links, Bedford Lawn Bowls Club, the Upper Hammonds Plains Community



Lena Metlege Diab
MP, HALIFAX WEST | DÉPUTÉE, HALIFAX-OUEST

Happy Heritage Day!
Joyeuse Journée du patrimoine!

To volunteer in my office, contact me

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Development Association, Hike Nova Scotia, and many more. I'm proud to help secure these investments and I love seeing the good they help do for our older neighbours.

A NEW CHAPTER

As you may know, Canada will have a new Prime Minister on March 9. As your MP and your voice in Ottawa, I see this

as the perfect moment to hear from constituents about the vision they want to see for Canada. I encourage you to write to my office and to complete the survey in my upcoming newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support!

A Message from Claudia Chender, MLA Dartmouth South

Spring has finally arrived in Dartmouth South, bringing fresh beginnings, warmer days, and plenty of opportunities to get outside and enjoy our community. After a long winter, it feels wonderful to breathe in the fresh air, soak up the sunshine, and watch as flowers and trees burst into bloom.

There's no shortage of fun activities for families this season. The Zatzman Sportsplex offers a free youth gym every Saturday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. for ages 12 to 15. With 75 spaces available each week, be sure to register in advance on Halifax MyRec. Their spring programming has something

for everyone, and on rainy days, you can still stay active by taking advantage of their free track days on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

For a midweek adventure, visit the Alderney Market, now open on Wednesdays from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. After exploring the local vendors, take a stroll along the scenic Canada 150 Trail through Dartmouth Cove or let the kids burn off some energy at the playground in Ferry Terminal Park.

If you're looking for a dose of culture, Halifax Theatre for Young People is bringing *The Book of Ashes* to Alderney Landing this April.

Written by Emil Sher, the play is set during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and follows Amir, a young book lover, as he discovers his country's history and the power of community while helping to save a library.

The MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning provides incredible opportunities for children and youth to explore their creativity. The centre aims to eliminate barriers to creative education by collaborating with local artists, educators, entrepreneurs, and community partners. Through high-calibre creative learning programs, young people can develop their artistic talents, build confidence, and connect with like-minded peers in a supportive environment.

Spring is the perfect time to explore all that Dartmouth South has to offer. Whether you're staying active, supporting local businesses, or experiencing the arts, there's something for everyone to enjoy this season!



Claudia Chender
MLA
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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

A Message from Darrell Samson the Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook

MESSAGE FROM YOUR MP



February marks National Flag Day which is celebrated on February 15th. The House of Commons passed the design on December 15, 1964. Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed the new flag on January 28, 1965, and it was inaugurated on February 15th in the same year.

Since then, Canada's red and white maple leaf flag has become a symbol of the common values of equality, freedom and inclusion that unite all Canadians.

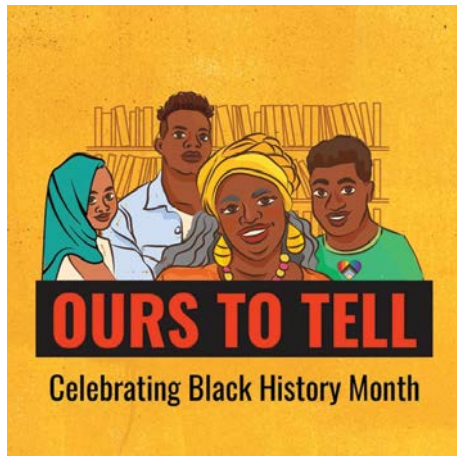
Happy National Flag Day!



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

I would like to encourage everyone to take time during these next few weeks to recognize the dedication and excellence of Canada's Black and Afro descendant communities, as well as the contributions they've made towards the advancement of human rights, equity and justice for all Canadians.

Happy Black History Month!



NOVA SCOTIA HERITAGE DAY ANNUAL FAMILY SKATE



Date: Monday February 17th, 2025

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Location: Sackville Arena, 91 First Lake Dr, Lower Sackville NS B4C 2S8

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Valentines for Vets is a great opportunity to show appreciation to Veterans for their accomplishments and sacrifices. Canadians are invited to create a handmade Valentine and send it to the address below by February 1st to be distributed to Veterans in long-term care.

Valentines for Vets
Veterans Affairs Canada
Commemoration, Distribution Unit
125 Maple Hills Avenue
Charlottetown, PE C1C 0B6

For more information and tips for making a Valentine for a veteran, please visit: www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/classroom/valentines-for-veterans - Remembrance - Veterans Affairs Canada



HAPPY GROUNDHOG DAY!




Happy Groundhog Day!
Sunday February 2nd, 2025

What do you think?

If our beloved Nova Scotia groundhog Shubenacadie Sam emerges from its burrow and sees its shadow, it will retreat back to its den and winter will go on for six more weeks.

Or, if does not see its shadow, spring will arrive early!

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I would like to extend warm greetings to the community and wish everyone good health, peace and happiness in the new year.

Darrell

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Places To Go!

Discover March Break Magic: Family-Friendly Activities at Ross Farm Museum

By Rhea Hamlin, Ross Farm Museum

March Break is the perfect time to create lasting memories, so why not start at Ross Farm Museum? On March 8th, 9th, and from the 12th to the 16th, step back in time and explore the magic of historical farming amid the scenic beauty of the grounds. Each day features themes such as 'Tasty Treats', 'The Great Outdoors', and 'Games Day', providing an exciting mix of hands-on activities that cater to all ages. Whether you are sampling a delicious treat, crafting bird feeders, or playing old-fashioned games, Ross Farm Museum's March Break events promise to entertain and educate. Come and discover why this charming farm museum is one of Nova Scotia's must-visit attractions for families and history enthusiasts alike.

participate hands on activities throughout the museum.

- 'Games Day' will take place on Thursday, March 13th. Enjoy a fun-filled day discovering old-fashioned games!
- 'Spring Time on the Farm' will be celebrated on Sunday, March 16th. It is time to get out the seeds and see what baby animals have arrived on the farm.

The Hearth Room Cafe will be open from 9 am - 2 pm this week, following the same schedule as the Museum. Please note that the museum site, The Pedlar's Shop (gift shop), and The Hearth Room Cafe will be closed on Monday, March 10th, and Tuesday, March 11th.

- 'Tasty Treats' will be celebrated on Saturday, March 8th; Wednesday, March 12th; and Saturday, March 15th. Explore the museum site and sample a few tasty treats.

- 'The Great Outdoors' will occur on Sunday, March 9th, and Friday, March 14th. During the "Great Outdoors" days, you can make a bird feeder, learn about different animal scat, and partici-

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2025 March Break Schedule

Saturday, Mar. 8	Sunday, Mar. 9	Monday, Mar. 10
Tasty Treats	The Great Outdoors	CLOSED
Tuesday, Mar. 11	Wed., Mar. 12	Thurs., Mar. 13
CLOSED	Tasty Treats	Games Day
Friday, Mar. 14	Sat., Mar. 15	Sunday, Mar. 16
The Great Outdoors	Tasty Treats	Spring Time

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March Break & Summer Camp Guide • March Break & Summer Camp Guide

Looking for a fun and educational way to spend March Break? Look no further!

Enjoy **FREE admission to the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 from March 8th to 16th**, thanks to the generous support of a donor.

Inspired by the Museum's new upcoming exhibition eat make share: a taste of immigration opening May 10th, 2025, visitors are invited to embark on a culinary adventure with **daily food workshops** from Monday, March 10th to Friday, March 14th. Workshops will be held at 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Pre-registration will be required. Participants will learn and prepare recipes from Mi'kma'ki, Philippines, Italy, the Caribbean, and other cultures. These workshops will include an opportunity to take home samples or a copy of the recipe learned that day.

Also offered will be a new **scavenger hunt** filled with counting, coding, and search activities designed to have fun while learning about 400+ years of immigration history alongside many other **family-friendly crafts**.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore our **national museum** and **national historic site**. Our interactive exhibitions are interesting for all ages and our **guided tours** are not to be missed. Curious about your family roots? Stop by our Scotiabank Family History Centre to get help from one of our expert researchers. The Museum is located at the Halifax Seaport. Paid parking is available (free on the weekends!).

Scan to see the full schedule of March Break Programming and to sign up for workshops:



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Planifiez votre visite



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Canadian Museum of
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Musée canadien de
l'immigration du Quai 21

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March Break & Summer Camp Guide • March Break & Summer Camp Guide

March Break and Summer Camp registration is open for Stagecoach

by Stagecoach

Is your child looking to try something new, fun and exciting this year? Look no further than a Stagecoach School for the Performing Arts Kids Camps! Stagecoach Kids Camps are the perfect place for your child to explore and grow their passion for singing, acting and dancing. No experience? None needed! At Stagecoach they can turn the shy into shining and the budding stars of tomorrow into stars of today.

One of the biggest benefits of enrolling your child into a performing arts camp is the opportunity for them to explore and develop their creative side. Whether it be through singing, dancing, or acting, performing arts camps provide children with a unique outlet for expressing themselves and exploring their own creativity. By participating in these activities, your child will learn to think outside the box and develop their own unique style and voice.

The classes and workshops provided during Stagecoach's camps help kids develop their skills in a relaxed, fun environment. Each week campers participate in exciting and interactive theatre games and creative activities all guided by their friendly and talented instructors. Everyone works

together to make friends and have fun over the break.

Another benefit of enrolling your child into a Stagecoach Kids Camp is the opportunity for them to develop their social skills. The performing arts are a collaborative endeavor, and children will be working together in order to create a scene or learn a song or dance. Through this process, they will learn to work as a team and develop the ability to take direction and constructive criticism. These are all valuable skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Not sure if your child will fit in? Inclusivity and teamwork are the core of Stagecoach Kids Camps and classes. Their camps are specifically designed for kids 5-12 and their professional teaching of team work and encouraging everyone to participate in fun and engaging activities.

March Break and Summer Camp registration is open now so be sure to secure a spot and unlock your child's interest in the performing arts. For more information, visit www.stagecoachschools.ca/halifax-ca today.

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War Amps key tag mailing celebrates 50 years of CHAMP

As The War Amps begins to mail key tags to residents across Canada, it is also celebrating 50 years of its Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program, which supports young amputees thanks to donations from the public.

Gabriel Ferron-Bouius, 21, is a right leg amputee who grew up with the support of the CHAMP Program since he was born, including financial assistance for artificial limbs, peer connections through CHAMP events and so much more.

"I had never met anyone else who was an amputee until my first CHAMP Seminar. There, I met older Champs that I could look up to and who showed me that my amputation didn't have to limit what I could do. I learned to walk by watching Champs like me and learned all about life as

an amputee," Ferron-Bouius says. "Now that I'm older, I get to pass this knowledge along to the younger Champs I meet. I would not be the person I am today without the support of War Amps donors."

The Key Tag Service is a free key return service for Canadians that generates funds for The War Amps many programs, including CHAMP. Since amputee veterans started the service in 1946, it continues to employ amputees and people with disabilities and has returned more than 1.5 million sets of lost keys to their owners.

Each key tag has a confidentially coded number. If you lose your keys, the finder can call the toll-free number on the back of the tag or place them in any mailbox in Canada, and The War Amps will return them to you by courier, free of charge.



Gabriel grew up with the support of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program thanks to donations from the public to the Key Tag Service.

The War Amps receives no government grants; its programs are made possible through the public's support of the Key Tag Service. For more information, or to order key tags, visit waramps.ca or call 1 800 250-3030.



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Health & Wellness

Straight teeth without conventional braces? What you need to know!

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C),
The Brace Space Orthodontists



You have probably heard that there is a different alternative to conventional braces when it comes to straightening teeth! Invisalign has become a household name for magazines, TV shows and among the many adults and teens who sport them. But although many people can tell you they are familiar with the term; few people understand exactly what Invisalign is and how it works.

Invisalign is a brand name for a clear aligner product that aligns teeth. Invisalign works by having the patient wear a series of clear aligners, in sequence, that gradually guide teeth to their ideal position. Small, tooth-colored attachments are often temporarily bonded to teeth that have especially difficult movements. These discreet attachments aid the aligner in distributing forces to the teeth so that the proper movements are achieved.

Although the technology has been around since 1999, recent years have shown major advances in improving the product resulting in widespread use of Invisalign and other clear aligners as an alternative treatment modality for patients seeking to improve their smile. But buyer beware, all clear aligners are not the same. Plastic quality varies between manufacturers and discount options do not include attachments on the teeth, which limits the amount of movement that can be achieved. Furthermore, software limitations mean an Orthodontist is best equipped to engineer your Invisalign plan to ensure your best outcome.

If at your initial consultation your Orthodontist recommends Invisalign, the next step is to obtain a 3-D virtual model of your teeth. Although traditional molds of your teeth can be made, digital scanners offer a more accurate method for capturing your bite that avoids any impressions. Before your custom-made clear aligners are manufactured, your Orthodontist

must use software to manipulate your bite in virtual reality until the perfect result is achieved. This step is the most important one as your Orthodontist's knowledge and expertise of this technology is paramount to the quality of your result.

Historically, Invisalign treatment was limited to simple crowding and minor bite issues. Orthodontists now have the opportunity to do further training on advanced Invisalign techniques, which means many challenging bite problems can now be treated with Invisalign. Many patients that have previously been told they are "not an Invisalign candidate" are now finding that they in fact are! Check with your Orthodontist as to their experience with Invisalign. The Invisalign website has a doctor locator that lists doctors with a high degree of expertise using this technology.

If that doesn't have you excited, Invisalign users are now benefitting from new technology that uses some AI to track wear and fit of the

aligner, ensuring your smile outcome is just as your orthodontist designed it!

Finally, Although Invisalign traditionally was for adults-only, it is now available in an Invisalign teen product and can even be an option for younger children. If you or your child are looking for an alternative to conventional braces, ask your Orthodontist if Invisalign or Invisalign teen is right for you.

Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Orthodontic Specialist with The Brace Space Orthodontists. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space in Bedford (Larry Uteck), Dartmouth, Sackville and Halifax, offering conventional braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact 902 455-7222.

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The Debate: Phonics vs. Whole Language

Submitted by Oxford Learning

Reading instruction falls into two categories: phonics and whole language. Phonics teaches children to break words down into sounds, or “phonemes,” which are then blended to form words. This method mirrors how children naturally learn language: by listening, distinguishing sounds, and eventually combining them to create meaning.

Whole language, on the other hand, treats words as entire units to be memorized rather than broken down. However, this method can be confusing for young children. Imagine trying to memorize thousands of words by sight alone! This approach can feel counterintuitive for children, relying on memorization instead of comprehension.

WHY PHONICS WORKS

Phonics aligns with the way kids naturally learn language. By understanding that words are made up of individual sounds, they develop the ability to decode new words. This gives them the tools to tackle unfamiliar words independently, boosting their reading confidence.

Phonics also encourages precision and persistence. Rather than guessing a word’s meaning, phonics encourages children to “sound it out.” This skill translates into better problem-solving and critical thinking abilities in reading and other subjects.

WHY WHOLE LANGUAGE FALLS SHORT

The whole language approach can limit a child’s reading progress because it relies on memorizing entire words rather than breaking them down into sounds. While this method can help children recognize a few familiar words, it doesn’t equip them to decode new words independently.

Whole language often encourages guessing based on pictures or context, which can lead to frustration as texts become more complex. Without the tools to sound out new words, children may struggle, impacting both their reading skills and their confidence. Over time, this can diminish their interest in reading altogether.

Phonics provides children with a roadmap for understanding words logically.

By learning to break words into sounds, young readers gain the skills they need to read independently, building confidence, independence, and a true love for reading.

BUILDING STRONG READERS WITH PHONICS

Opt for a phonics-based approach to give your child the best start in reading. Encourage them to focus on the sounds in words and practise “sounding out” letters and combinations. Not only does this lead to stronger reading skills, but it fosters a mindset of persistence and curiosity.

For over 40 years, Oxford Learning has helped young readers develop confidence and foundational skills through phonics. With a strong base in phonics, children don’t just become great readers—they become lifelong learners.

So, take a trip to the library, pick up a few books, and start reading. With phonics as your guide, your child is on the path to success.

Contact us today at bedford@oxfordlearning.com 902-405-4116 or halifax@oxfordlearning.com 902-423-4484

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