

**FYI:
ALARM
CLOCKS**

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AN ARROW POINTING UPWARD

Arrowsmith's brain-building program takes
kids from struggles to success



WITH THE RISING OF THE SUN

NURSES ON THE NIGHT SHIFT

Working through the darkness
and into the light of day

HOLDING A SIDDUR AT SUN-UP

How davening Vasikin impacts
the lives of early risers

MEDITATIONS ON MODEH ANI

Every word holds a
world of meaning

AFTER YEARS AS ONE OF THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS IN MONSEY'S EDUCATION CIRCLES, THE ARROWSMITH PROGRAM IS NOW MAKING RIPPLES, WITH TEACHERS, EDUCATORS AND EXPERTS EMBRACING THIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO OVERCOMING LEARNING DISABILITIES. THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

"My child is very bright, but..."

How many times have we heard a sentence begin like that?

"...But she struggles in school."

"...But he's forgetful and distracted."

"...But she has trouble communicating and understanding others."

For most people, the obvious solution would be to focus on the problem at hand and try to mitigate its effects as much as possible. But in recent years, the world of educational resources has taken note of a movement that is showing spectacular results in and out of the classroom — the Arrowsmith Program.

In a publicly released video, Rabbi Aaron Fink, the

or students who've had an inability to process information and were then able to take information, see what they've learned, and become independent thinkers."

The Arrowsmith program and its training methods are not easy to implement, nor do they promise a quick fix. What the program does is provide the child with cognitive exercises to strengthen the areas in the brain that are the root of their struggles. Arrowsmith doesn't teach subject material and doesn't directly focus on scholastics. Instead, the training specifically targets the cognitive areas needing improvement. Once strengthened, the results are global. With better cognitive ability, a more successful child, a happier individual, and a transformed student triumphantly emerges.

The focus is no longer on a lifetime of accommodation, compensation and modification; the plan is for a healthy brain that's ready for life and whatever it throws at the child.

DECades of Success

In the late '70s, a young woman named Barbara Arrowsmith Young stumbled upon a life-changing realization. Barbara was a graduate student who was able to use her sharp memory to compensate for her severe learning disabilities. At age 26, she couldn't tell time and had difficulty processing everyday conversations. She had been told that there was no hope and that she should just learn to live with her disabilities.

In her mid-twenties, Barbara came across research by famed psychologist Mark Rosenzweig that explained that brains continue to undergo structural and physiological changes throughout life due to stimulation (neuroplasticity). Barbara also learned the fascinating story of a Russian soldier named Lev Zazetsky whose brain was pierced by a bullet, and despite severe limitations, was treated with success by Russian neuropsychologist Alexander Luria. She set out to find a way to exercise her brain and strengthen



popular Dean of Ateres Bais Yaakov, said: "The students we have sent to Arrowsmith have done remarkably well; I would even say, miraculously well; whether they're dyslexic children who've become avid readers,

A Goal in Mind

BY: HERSCHEL RUBIN





the weak parts that were causing her such distress.

Barbara was determined to learn how to tell time and understand the relationship between the two clock hands — a task that had always given her much trouble. Success in this area led her to begin understanding other concepts. She slowly added more exercises to address other struggling parts of her brain. And as her cognitive functioning was completely transformed, she eventually realized that she had created a life-altering program.

This incredible discovery was the catalyst for the Ar-

INTENSE, TRANSFORMATIONAL AND RESULTS-DRIVEN

One educator gave this analogy to describe the program: Think of a child with weak arms who struggles to swim. Parents can tell the child that swimming isn't for them. They can be helped every time they're in the water, or perhaps an instructor can be hired to help them modify their technique. But there is another way. If the child can work on exercising their upper body muscles and their core so that every part necessary for swimming becomes stronger, then the results will be more genuine and substantial, and will quickly carry over to other athletic pursuits as well. The brain operates in similar ways!

The exercises aren't easy, and that's by design; exercises that come easy probably aren't doing their job. Surprisingly, the children excitedly look forward to the sessions where they work harder than they ever did before. The program runs for an entire school year, and every day, students come down for two hours of cognitive learning. There's exercise homework seven days a week because, after all, the brain works and shapes itself seven days a week.

The learning regimens are individually tailored to each child and their weaknesses. The initial evaluation is extremely thorough and assesses fifteen areas of cognitive ability. The targeted exercises sometimes begin showing results within weeks as parents first notice something different about their child. The quiet, withdrawn girl who seemed to live in a bubble is now happily playing with friends. The boy who never knew which *parsha* it was wants to repeat a *dvar Torah* at the meal. The changes start out slowly, but then pick up steam. Before long, *rebbis* and teachers see a new student in front of them, one with a bright future ahead.

Rabbi Benzion Brodie, Sgan Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ohr Reuven, LCSW, says that Arrowsmith is a "game changer" and that he has seen his students go "*me'afailah l'orah*," from darkness to light, as a result of the program.

Some parents balk at the cost of the program, but those who have joined and seen success say unequivocally that the savings on future tutors, therapists and special education — let alone the cost of the child suffering for a lifetime — far outweigh any monetary concerns.

As educators, parents and students continue to realize the power of this revolutionary program, it appears clear that the arrow is firmly pointed upward for Arrowsmith and our children with learning difficulties. ■

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