Gemm Learning

Caroline's Story
What Academic Ceiling?

Caroline

Age: 12
Location: AL
Diagnosis: ADHD-PI, dyslexia

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Protocol

Caroline worked for 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week, for 9 months. She completed Fast ForWord Literacy, Literacy Advanced, and two modules from the Reading Series.

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Results

Caroline continues to work toward her true potential. Mistakenly informed that she would not make progress by a school system that seemed to give up on her, she is now working successfully on grade level.

Caroline has ADHD and severe dyslexia. She had difficulty progressing in reading and math, as well as challenges with short term memory. She took an IQ test at the end of her fourth grade year and didn't perform well. During a meeting with the resource teachers afterwards, her mother was told that Caroline had reached her academic ceiling. They explained that she would not be able to progress beyond where she was, then suggested her challenges were severe enough to warrant looking into supplemental security income or SSI disability. Caroline's mother disagreed. She saw her child's potential, but felt the school had given up.

Caroline's mother considered enrolling her in a private school known for helping students with learning challenges. Unfortunately, it was too late to register Caroline for the upcoming school year, so her mother searched for alternatives. She found an online program that focused on listening to stories and reading them into a microphone. Caroline worked on the program over summer, making dramatic improvements in her reading by the beginning of 5th grade. "But I thought she'd reached her ceiling?" her mother explains. The growth reinforced her belief in what was possible for her child. She was now reading on a 2nd/3rd grade level, but there were no gains in math, and progress had stalled. Caroline's mother felt something more was needed. It was then that she came across Gemm Learning.

Her mother had heard of Fast ForWord before, but knew little about it. She was intrigued by website descriptions of how the program addressed underlying issues and liked that it would go at her daughter's pace. "It wasn't a one size fits all type program. That's the other thing I found really attractive about it."

> "There is a self confidence that she has now that she didn't have before." –Caroline's Mother

They started Fast ForWord that June. Caroline had always been a hard worker and wanted to improve. She worked diligently on Fast ForWord and Dreambox Learning throughout the summer, needing little parental intervention. Frequent conversations with staff about strengths and strategies helped them understand Caroline's progress and challenges. "They regularly called me and reached out to me. And if I needed to talk to them, in the meantime, they were always available."

Caroline began making progress in math and reading fluency. She asked her mother if she could read higher level books and did well with the new titles. With the start of her 6th grade year came enrollment in a different school. The change complimented the work she was doing on her Fast ForWord and math exercises. Caroline made the A/B honor roll every quarter and enjoyed sharing the news with others. Vocabulary and subject tests no longer meant morning refreshers after repeated review the night before. Caroline was doing 6th grade work in science, history, and religion, and a discussion with her resource teacher conference revealed that she had advanced nearly two grade levels in math. "Somebody they were going to write off, that had reached their ceiling, and yet, she's able to do grade level work and make A's and B's." Her mother shared.

When asked what she'd like other parents to understand, Caroline's mother explained, "I don't understand how it works, but whatever these exercises that they have these kid do, it does impact the functioning in the brain. And in turn, when the child begins to make progress, begins to feel more confident, it's building momentum. You're going to come out with a more confident child. If somebody has self-confidence, they can do anything."