

Arrowsmith Program: Changing Your Child's Future

“Akiva picked up the Yated Neeman last night (something he never did before) and proceeded to read an article about the state of affairs in Gaza. He said he understood most of it so I asked him a few questions and he was right on target.”

Akiva is a 13 year old boy with learning difficulties who enrolled in the first Arrowsmith Program class at Yeshiva Tiferes Yisroel in Brooklyn. His parents couldn't be more thrilled at the sight of Akiva reading *and understanding* a newspaper article written about the current situation in Israel.

A resounding ‘Thank You, Tiferes Yisroel’, is echoing through the halls of the yeshiva from the voices of many of the 15 parents who enrolled their children in the program that started in September of 2008.

In November Mrs. Brocha Neuman, the Arrowsmith teacher at Tiferes Yisroel, wrote;

“At this time I would like to share with you how the boys are progressing in Arrowsmith. The program is up and running beautifully. The boys are working on their exercises diligently and conscientiously. They are mastering and moving ahead. Some boys are mastering in areas they said they could not do. They are beating their own speeds. They are understanding new concepts, applying them and achieving 100% accuracy in their work. Boys come early and get started before I even tell them to. They love the activity that I thought would be their greatest challenge. They beg me to continue when the period is over.

The approach of most of the boys is one of challenge, of goals that are attainable, of feeling the taste of success. For some of the boys it may be the first time that they are understanding what is expected of them and able to meet their goals.

I am very excited about how the boys are progressing. I look forward to seeing the boys continue to progress each on their own level and at their own speed.”

Within four months of starting in the Arrowsmith program parents and students at Yeshiva Tiferes Yisroel began reporting changes they were noticing in academic performance.

For example, one student who previously found it difficult to sustain attention in class wrote: “Arrowsmith is helping me a lot. I like it. My brain is really being sharpened. It's helping me in remembering. Last year when my mother told me to get a diaper for the baby I would go upstairs and I would forget things. Now it's much easier for me. Arrowsmith is also helping me in concentrating. Last year I had no clue what was going on in class, I would just sit there and space out. Now I know perfectly. Also last year I was sleepy in class, now I'm not, I know everything much better. The main idea is Arrowsmith is helping A LOT!!!”

Learning difficulties have plagued students as far back as any of us can remember. While some are being helped through special education and a variety of therapies, many others still struggle through school leaving them disillusioned and with a feeling of inadequacy. The Arrowsmith Program comprises a suite of cognitive exercises for students with learning difficulties that was developed from research in neuroscience. Instead of using methods to compensate for weaknesses in the brain, the Arrowsmith Program, based on the theory of neuroplasticity, strengthens the weak cognitive areas and thereby changes the students' capacity to learn. The result is that after a 3 - 4 year program students can participate in full Hebrew and English academic curriculum without the constant need for tutoring.

The program addresses Kria, both in English and Hebrew reading, Dyslexia, English, math and Gemara comprehension, conceptual thinking, fine motor skills, handwriting, long and short term memory, organizational skills, auditory processing, social skills and attention deficits. Many research studies have shown that when the cognitive areas are strengthened the children begin to learn at an accelerated rate as is happening at Tiferes Yisroel, Bais Yaakov of Boro Park, Yeshiva Degel Hatorah in Monsey, the JEC in Elizabeth, NJ, the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach in NY, Maimonides Academy in Los Angeles, Toras Emes in North Miami Beach and publicly funded as well as private schools in Canada.

Parents have started initiatives in Lakewood and Baltimore to bring the Arrowsmith Program to their communities for September 2009.

Read about the Arrowsmith Program in Chapter 2 of the New York Times best selling book "The Brain that Changes Itself" by Dr. Norman Doidge.

Visit the Arrowsmith website at www.arrowsmithschool.org.