

# PC READS ADVOCATE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

## ABOUT OUR ADVOCATE PROGRAM

One of the most meaningful services PC READS offers is family advocacy. Our Certified Dyslexia Advocates have assisted over 150 families and continue to assist many of these families on an ongoing basis. This work includes developing action plans to ensure children receive the support needed to become successful students and confident individuals.

Providing this personalized assistance requires a depth of knowledge about dyslexia, special education laws, interventions, accommodations and test interpretation. Assisting families often includes reviewing both school and private assessments, explaining school procedures and services, and reviewing and revising IEP goals and 504 accommodation plans. Such advocacy work is invaluable to local families and truly a unique service PC READS offers.

Our success in broadening dyslexia awareness is rapidly increasing the number of families and educators seeking our knowledge and assistance. Dyslexia is the most common learning disability and affects reading, writing and spelling with various degrees of severity. In fact, upwards of 80% of struggling readers are likely dyslexic. The National Institutes of Health estimate that as much as 20% of our population may be living with dyslexia. With 4,700 students enrolled in the Park City School District, at any time, there may be over 900 dyslexic students. To ensure that we are able to continue offering this service, and meet the needs of families in our community, we are recruiting and training additional Advocates.

## TRAINING AND WORK EXPECTATIONS

Upon completion of training through The Dyslexia Training Institute, newly Certified Dyslexia Advocates will begin providing professional advocate services to families during the 2020-2021 school year. Advocates will also share their expertise during meetings, special events and Dyslexia Awareness Presentations. PC READS will cover the costs of training and ongoing professional development opportunities.

### ***(1) Application Period (Present – September 2020)***

Link to application: <https://parkcityreads.org/advocate-program/>

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis through the September 20<sup>th</sup> due date. Up to 2 individuals will be selected to participate. Selected participants are required to commit to the Advocate Program for two school calendar years (Fall 2020 – Spring 2022). Any Advocate who does not fulfill this commitment will be asked to reimburse PC READS for their training costs.

### **TRAINING COSTS (Covered by PC READS)**

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Cost</u></b>
Prerequisite: What is Dyslexia? An In-Depth Look (if chosen)	\$199.00
Dyslexia Advocate Certificate Program	\$850.00
Textbooks: including all required by The Dyslexia Training Institute and supplemental books identified by PC READS	\$109.50

## **(2) Initial Training (October – December 2020)**

**Dyslexia Advocate Certificate Program:** Chosen applicants will enroll in The Dyslexia Training Institute's ("DTI") online Dyslexia Advocate Certificate Program. This course is offered from October 5, 2020 – December 11, 2020. Participants chosen by PC READS are expected to submit an application to DTI within a week of receiving your acceptance notification from PC READS. Full information about this graduate level course can be found here: <http://www.dyslexiatraininginstitute.org/certification.html>. Below is the course description:

*This program is designed to teach participants about the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act (IDEA), FAPE, IEPs, 504's, appropriate accommodations, letter-writing, how to request and receive appropriate services and interventions, dispute processes and resolution, as they all relate to a student with dyslexia. Upon completion participants will have the information they need to effectively work with families and school districts to ensure the laws are respected and that children are receiving the services they need.*

Applicants are also required to either complete the 4-week prerequisite course, *What is Dyslexia? An In-depth Look* (offered August 10<sup>th</sup> – September 4<sup>th</sup>) or to "test out" through a DTI exam. PC READS will provide the prerequisite text to all selected participants.

## **(3) Certified Dyslexia Advocate Work (January 2021 – June 2022)**

New Certified Dyslexia Advocates will begin individually working with families in January 2021. Advocates will be assigned specific families and be responsible for completing intake forms, planning meetings, keeping detailed records, taking phone calls and checking in for updates. Every family in our Advocate Program is proactively contacted at the beginning of each school year to inquire about changes needed on IEPs and/or 504 Plans. Each family is also contacted at the end of the school year for feedback and to plan for the upcoming year.

As a DTI Certificate Program graduate and Coordinator of the PC READS Advocate Program, Elissa Aten holds monthly Advocate Program meetings, during which all advocates share information and collaborate on cases. Advocacy work is not consistent, as each family has different needs. Advocates will be required to track their hours in 15-minute increments. PC READS is currently making plans to pay Advocates for their work beginning in the 2020-2021 school year.

## **(4) Continued Professional Development**

Approximately 50 hours of training is available during the school year. In addition to the monthly advocate meetings, we plan Quarterly Specialist Sessions with local experts. We also cover the costs for Advocates to attend the Wasatch Reading Summit and will cover the costs to attend the WrightsLaw Seminar hosted by PC READS. Advocates are also encouraged to attend all PC READS meetings and special events, which include local and national speakers.