

Camperdown Academy ~ Arrowsmith Program

Parent FAQ Sheet

What is the Arrowsmith Program? *The primary goal of the Arrowsmith Program is to improve cognitive weaknesses.* First, it is important to understand the difference between *achievement weaknesses* and *cognitive weaknesses*. Children with learning disabilities struggle with reading, writing and math, which are considered areas of achievement weakness, and achievement tests look at these abilities. Cognitive weaknesses relate to specific aspects of brain functioning that may hinder school performance, and cognitive weaknesses are often the underlying reason why a child has difficulty with an area of achievement.

For example, if a child struggles with auditory speech sounds or visual memory for symbols (cognitive skills), then reading acquisition (an achievement skill) is affected. The primary goal of the Arrowsmith Program is to improve cognitive weaknesses. In doing so, the child builds the neurological capacities to improve learning outcomes in reading, writing, adding or subtracting numbers in memory, understanding math word problems, following a classroom lecture, planning and organizing ability, or reasoning through a science class concept.

Camperdown Academy provides the dyslexic student the best of both by offering Orton-Gillingham training to overcome weak reading skills and the Arrowsmith Program to strengthen the underlying weak cognitive skills. It is highly recommended that parents read the three books listed below for a thorough overview of the Arrowsmith Program and neuroplasticity.

How does the Arrowsmith Program improve cognitive weaknesses? The Arrowsmith Program, based on 30 years of research, is at the forefront of neuroplasticity in education. The program identifies a person's strengths and weaknesses in 19 cognitive areas and creates an individualized cognitive exercise program that targets and stimulates those weak brain areas until the area is strengthened. The program includes written, visual, auditory, and computer exercises. The exercises are intensive and gradually increase in difficulty in order to provide the constant stimulation necessary for permanent cognitive change.

Students, parents, and teachers can expect to observe signs of cognitive improvement within three to four months of active engagement in the program. Students are enrolled in the Arrowsmith Program only until their individual program is complete, which generally takes two to four years.

What does a typical Camperdown school day look like for students in the Arrowsmith Program? A Camperdown student in the Arrowsmith Program attends four cognitive training classes a day, Orton-Gillingham tutorial, math class, and an elective class. They also have two recess breaks and a lunch break. In addition, students have 30 minutes of cognitive training homework five days a week.

What happens during the first month of the Arrowsmith Program? New students will complete Arrowsmith testing after being enrolled in the program. During this time, parents will be emailed an online Arrowsmith Parent Questionnaire which may take an hour or so to complete. (Please check your spam box daily as the questionnaire will be sent to you from Brainex.) The parent questionnaire should be completed within a week of the student's test date.

The first two weeks of school will consist of Arrowsmith program training during all cognitive class periods. During this time the students will learn about the Arrowsmith Program, receive training on the proper procedures for the cognitive exercises, and begin their individual exercise programs.

What will my child's individual Arrowsmith exercise program look like? Based on the Arrowsmith assessment results, each student will receive an Arrowsmith Individual Learning Profile which describes the student's cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Your child's Arrowsmith classroom teacher will meet with you to review your child's test results and explain their individualized cognitive training program.

What is the Arrowsmith homework requirement? Completing the 30-minute cognitive homework exercise each day is essential to achieving maximum results from the Arrowsmith Program. Homework

will be assigned once the Word and Tracing exercises have been learned in class. In addition, the student must complete 10 minutes of journal writing each day.

Camperdown offers a free after-school "Arrowsmith Homework Club" from 3:10-3:45 Monday-Thursday, and from 1:00-2:00pm on Fridays. (Students bring lunch and eat from 12:30-1pm.)

Will my child receive grades in their cognitive classes? Students will receive a Cognitive Progress Report each trimester that will summarize the student's goals for each exercise, what was achieved, and teacher observations during the reporting period. In addition, parents will be asked to complete an Observation Sheet noting any observations of change or progress as a result of your child's work in the cognitive classroom.

Why is motivation so important in the cognitive classroom?

The cognitive exercises are designed to challenge and stimulate the students' weak cognitive areas. Students may find some exercises challenging yet fun and find other exercises very difficult and taxing as the exercise strengthens a weak area of the brain. The cognitive classroom teachers will focus much of their time and energy encouraging and motivating students through these challenges, and then celebrating their accomplishments. Many reward systems are utilized the classroom, but the ultimate goal is that the students become intrinsically motivated as they see the positive changes within themselves.

How can I learn more about the Arrowsmith Program?

Completing the Arrowsmith Program Cognitive Profile Questionnaire for your child (or yourself) is a great place to begin understanding how cognitive training helps students with learning disabilities. Click on the questionnaire link here: <http://www.arrowsmithschool.org>

Additional Arrowsmith Program Resources...

www.arrowsmithschool.org

to view a Video Introduction to the program

www.eatonarrowsmith.com

The Woman Who Changed Her Brain

by Barbara Arrowsmith Young

"If you have a son, a daughter, a parent, a spouse, or a brain, this is a must-read book. It will open your mind to new possibilities on how to deal with 'traffic jams in the brain'." Alvero Fernandez, CEO & Co-Founder, SharpBrains.com

Brain School

by Howard Eaton

This is a link to a free e-copy of *Brain School*:
<http://www.arrowsmithschool.org/arrowsmithprogram-background/pdf/brainschool-by-howard-eaton.pdf>

The Brain That Changes Itself

by Norman Doidge, MD