

## **NILD=Hope** Trix Bradley

Frustration, tears, confusion...homeschooling families are often challenged by the need to homeschool a child with learning disabilities or other learning challenges. A program that has been very helpful for many families is **NILD educational therapy program** (or Discovery Program) developed by the National Institute of Learning Development and introduced in Canada about 20 years ago. NILD Educational Therapy offers students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges intensive, individualized interventions designed to remediate their specific learning problems. It focuses on building cognitive processing and academic skills such as reading, spelling, written expression, mathematics and handwriting in one-on-one sessions. Skills are developed through a combination of direct instruction and mediated learning strategies. **A student learns not just what to learn but how to learn. As a result, not only do academic skills improve but also self-confidence, motivation and attitude.**

Parents have the opportunity to take the training and become educational therapists. One mom writes: "I took the first level of training to become an NILD therapist in the summer of 2005 when my daughter, who has learning difficulties, was 10. It was then that I really started to understand how hard it was for her to learn and how to better meet her needs educationally. The NILD training was excellent, though challenging, and completely changed the direction I took with my daughter's education. She had struggled with the basics of reading, spelling and math. I had struggled with lack of patience with her memory problems. **The NILD training gave me a direction, the tools and the optimism that I needed to help her.** In 2009, I took the level 2 training which gave me more options and a deeper understanding of her needs. Both of us have had challenges, with me being the mom, the teacher and the therapist, but our relationship is stronger for it. I understand her learning difficulties and am able to help her so much more than if I had not taken the training and my daughter has blossomed into a gentle yet confident young lady with a deep faith in the Lord."

You may ask, "Why this program?" Another homeschooling mom and therapist shared her story. "We had tried everything else and nothing seemed to help. The NILD educational therapy works. The parent is encouraged to be involved. **Our son is motivated to keep working because he can see big changes.** He's noticed changes in spelling and writing- 'It's much easier'. He says he feels like he was asleep with his eyes open and now feels more awake. As a parent I am noticing that he is remembering things and able to follow through independently--from self-care and chores to school work. He is able to play with and enjoy other kids his own age. As a homeschooling parent I have found that it has given me some FREE time since I don't have to hover over him and help him with every little thing. I can ask him to do something and sometimes it gets done. As a homeschooling parent NILD training equipped me to help my children with their learning difficulties. I look forward to helping others once my children have completed the program."

One more homeschooling mom comments: "I had home schooled for 13 years when I became an NILD Educational Therapist. Although my purpose was to work with paying clients, I soon found myself incorporating elements of therapy into my home schooling. I began to recognize learning needs in my own children that would not otherwise have been addressed. I have been able to incorporate therapy with school subjects to improve both my children's ability to learn and the efficiency of our school day. I can also assess more accurately the effectiveness and suitability of any given curriculum for any given student. **NILD Educational Therapy has been a huge blessing to our family.**"

A mother of a son whose problems were evident from an early age writes: "I sent my son to public school in grade three, because I was beginning to believe that my efforts to homeschool him were not successful. His teacher phoned one day to tell me she suspected my son had a learning disability and thought I should begin researching nonverbal learning disabilities as a very real possibility. After crying with disappointment, I breathed a huge sigh of revelatory relief. After many years of research, I learned about NILD therapy. I was encouraged to become a therapist so that I could provide my son with the one-on-one therapy that he needed. **After a year of hard work I can see how we have both reaped huge, life-changing benefits**

**already.** Where my son once was frustrated over tying his shoelaces, writing in cursive, following multi-step directions and making small talk with strangers, he now excels; no, he thrives! Tears of discouragement have been replaced with tears of joy. My son has now begun high school. So far, so good. We are continuing therapy because we have seen firsthand that it works. Tutoring only seemed to prolong the agony of “busy work” whereas therapy has meaning, both during the technique, and afterward, as my son applies the skills of a newly awakened brain to schoolwork, socializing, cleaning his room and planning his weekly activities around homework etc. **In short, NILD educational therapy is giving us our lives back, one session at a time.”**

*To find out more about NILD educational therapy visit us online at [www.nildcanada.org](http://www.nildcanada.org) or call us at 519-886-8633.*