



## Orton-Gillingham Private Tutoring Student Policies & Procedures

**Who are we?** Literacy Nassau is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization that has been assisting individuals with low literacy skills for over 50 years. Thanks to a one million dollar grant from the John and Janet Kornreich Charitable Foundation, we have developed the infrastructure to bridge the gap between teacher training and student success for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. Our private learning center offers traditional tutoring as well as donation-based tutoring, which sets us apart from other Orton-Gillingham practitioners because it eliminates the financial barrier that creates the cycle of poverty for those who cannot afford access to services like ours. We believe everybody has the right to learn how to read, and money should not be an obstacle. To that end, we provide 1:1, personalized, multi-sensory instruction for children, delivered by professional educators who are either certified by (or in the process of becoming certified by) the Academy of Orton Gillingham (AOG). The instruction can work for any child, but is particularly effective for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities.

**What is Orton-Gillingham (OG)?** OG is a multi-sensory approach that engages multiple pathways in the brain to help students learn to read and write. This means we use sight, hearing, touch, and movement to help students connect language with letters and words. Orton-Gillingham, developed by Samuel Orton (neuropsychologist) and Anna Gillingham (educator and psychologist), has been helping children with dyslexia for almost a century.

OG is highly structured and breaks reading and spelling down into smaller skills involving letters and sounds. These skills build over time. There is a strong emphasis on understanding the *how* and *why* behind reading. The English language can seem complicated, but it is almost 90% phonetically regular. This means that once we explicitly teach students the rules and patterns, they are able to decode words more successfully.

**Why isn't OG offered in schools?** For years, most New York public schools have been denying students proper treatment by failing to identify them with dyslexia, which is often not recognized until at least third grade. Until recently, in New York, the term "dyslexia" was not even allowed to be included on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Now, New York State law requires schools to recognize dyslexia, and other similar challenges, on students' IEPs. Teachers need effective training and a proven approach to guide their instruction. Unfortunately, state law does not mandate this training, taxes are already high enough, and school budgets are tight, so often, districts look for the least expensive alternative possible. As a result, many schools use Wilson or other reading programs.

By contrast, Orton-Gillingham is a scientific, research-based *approach*, not a program. A program, like Wilson, is curriculum-based. Students can only move through the program once they have demonstrated mastery of a given level. Many commercial reading programs are derived from the Orton-Gillingham approach but they do not offer the student flexibility. In real OG instruction, each lesson is thoughtfully crafted based on the student's errors from the previous lesson. No two students will take the same path. Previously learned material is reviewed as new concepts are introduced in a diagnostic and prescriptive manner.

**What type of training do the tutors receive?** Our OG trainees volunteer their time to work with our students in a supervised practicum setting, through which they strive to achieve their first (Associate) level of certification from the Academy of Orton Gillingham (AOG). Trainee practicum is supervised by Jennings Miller, an OG Fellow, with assistance from Karen Micciche (LN's Executive Director) and Kim Nau (Tutoring Center Director). Ms. Miller has over eight years' training and experience with the Academy. Mrs. Micciche and Mrs. Nau have four years of training and experience. The chart below illustrates the levels of certification.

Academy of Orton-Gillingham Levels of Training	Coursework Required	Practicum Requirements	Achieve Certification
<b>Associate Level Trainees</b>	Accrue 60 hours of coursework and must complete 10 supervised lesson observations.	Complete a 100-hour practicum with one student.	At the end of the practicum, the tutor must apply to the Academy with a student profile and accompanying lesson plans. They must meet criteria outlined by the Academy's rubric to receive AOG certification.
<b>Associate Level Practitioners</b> <i>Literacy Nassau has one staff member who is an Associate level practitioner.</i>	Must attain 10 contact hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for professional development each year.	A minimum of one year of an Academy supervised practicum. To maintain Associate certification, tutor must be working under the supervision of a Fellow.	Once this level is achieved, the tutor may opt to stay here or go on to Certified. Either way, certification must be renewed annually.
<b>Certified Level Practitioners</b> <i>Literacy Nassau has one staff member who is training for the Certified level.</i>	Accrue 100 additional hours of coursework and complete 10 supervised lesson observations.	These independent practitioners complete a total of 300 practicum hours with at least 3 different students over a minimum of 3 years.	Apply to the Academy with two student profiles and accompanying lesson plans, which must meet criteria outlined by the Academy's rubric to receive AOG certification. Must renew certification annually.
<b>Fellow Level (highest level)</b> <i>Literacy Nassau has two staff members who are training for the Fellow level.</i>	Accrue an additional 150 hours of coursework and supervise trainees.	Complete a total of 600 practicum hours over a minimum of 6 years and participate in 3 Associate and Certified level trainings. Must also conduct research-based presentations at the regional/national level.	Apply to the Academy and receive certification based on the criteria outlined by the Academy's rubric. Must renew certification annually in order to train/supervise other literacy professionals.

**How does the tutoring work?** At your child’s intake appointment, the Tutoring Center Director, Kim Nau, will administer a comprehensive phonetic assessment called the Gallistel Ellis Test of Coding Skills, which is a test of decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling). The test takes anywhere from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the child. At the conclusion of the test, results will be shared with the parent. *This is not a diagnosis as we are not a medical practice.* However, the results of this assessment can be used to inform instruction. We will discuss your child’s needs and match him/her with an appropriate tutor. If there is no tutor available, your child will be placed on a waiting list.

**What are Literacy Nassau’s tutoring options?**

There are two tutoring strands that we offer (please refer to the chart below). You may choose the one that best suits your needs. Options are also based on tutor availability and student candidacy.

	Donation-based Tutoring	Fee-based Tutoring
<b>Commitment</b>	Contract for one year (3x a week from September through June; 100 hours total).	No contract is required.
<b>Pricing</b>	\$250 refundable deposit is required once accepted into the program. Parent decides the cost per tutoring session at contract signing. Donations are then automatically billed to the credit card on file on the first day of each month.	No deposit is required. Payments of \$150 per session are billed at the conclusion of each tutoring session. Payment may be made by cash, check, or credit card.
<b>Cancellations</b>	Make-ups are required if a session is canceled by either the tutor or the student.	If you cancel a session (or do not show up) with less than 2 hours’ notice, you will be charged an inconvenience fee of \$75.
<b>Location</b>	Tutoring sessions are held in Wantagh at Literacy Nassau’s Tutoring Center. Lessons may <i>only</i> be virtual in times of a pandemic or extreme absence.	Lessons may be held in our tutoring center in Wantagh or they can be conducted virtually. It is up to the parent to decide. For insurance reasons, we do not provide in-home tutoring.
<b>Tutors</b>	Tutors are trainees who are completing their Associate-level practicum.	Tutors are certified at the Associate level or higher by the Academy of Orton-Gillingham practitioners.
<b>Availability</b>	There may be a waiting list since new students are typically accepted in the fall. Only available for new students.	Wait times are likely to be shorter and students are accepted on a rolling basis.

There is no set cost for the Orton-Gillingham donation-based tutoring. Parents determine the price based on what they feel is the value of the tutor’s time and what they are financially able to donate. Typically, private tutors (who may or may not be properly credentialed Academy of Orton-Gillingham members), charge up to \$200 per lesson. Our suggested donation is \$50 per lesson, which is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Upon acceptance into the donation-based program, you will be required to submit a \$250 refundable deposit. You will receive the \$250 deposit back once your child achieves 100 hours of instruction. ***100 hours is the benchmark because that is the number of hours needed to satisfy the Associate-level practicum requirement.*** Our goal is to help as many teachers as possible become AOG certified. This will, in turn, help our community’s public schools by providing its teachers with the gold standard of training without costing the schools a dime.

If we do not have any availability in our donation-based tutoring program, we have a select number of AOG certified staff members who are available for tutoring. (Please refer back to the

blue chart on page 2 of this document.) Please keep in mind that we have limited staff who provide this highly specialized service. Tutoring is offered at a rate of \$150 for each 40-60 minute session. Lessons are held at our tutoring center in Wantagh (or virtually). Our fee-based tutoring services help offset the cost of sustaining Literacy Nassau's donation-based tutoring program.

**Can my child's participation in the program be terminated?** Please understand that we have a long waiting list for our donation-based program. You must be able to commit to 100 hours of instruction, which is equivalent to 3 (40-60 minute) tutoring sessions per week, over the course of the school year (September through June). If your child does not complete the 100 hours of instruction, you will forfeit your deposit.

Once accepted, we reserve the right to terminate your child's participation in the program. More than five student cancellations without a doctor's note can result in termination from the program. If you need to cancel, kindly give your child's tutor 24 hours notice whenever possible. Cancellations disrupt instruction and negatively impact the tutor's requirements.

One of the requirements of the OG tutor's practicum is that there will be 10 supervised observations. These observations serve to provide valuable, constructive feedback to the tutor. These lesson observations will either be done in-person or recorded on video to submit to our OG Fellow (the tutor's supervisor). After the first or second observation lesson, there might be an instance when our OG Fellow feels that a student is not a strong candidate for the Associate-level practicum. This is rare, but if it should occur, your child may be placed on the waiting list for a tutor who is pursuing their certified (more advanced) level of training.

If your child is matched with a tutor and the tutor withdraws from the program, we may not have another tutor readily available. In this case, your child will be added to a waiting list. Literacy Nassau will do everything in our power to ensure that this does not occur but sometimes circumstances are beyond our control.

If your child's behavior impacts the tutor's ability to successfully complete her lessons and progress in her training, your child may be asked to leave the program. Please remember that the purpose of the practicum is twofold. It is for your child to learn to how to become a more proficient reader and writer but it is also for the tutor to cultivate her skill-set as an OG practitioner. We want the lessons to be successful for *everyone*.

**What is expected of me as a parent?** Literacy Nassau will host monthly parent meetings, either at our tutoring center in Wantagh or online via Zoom. There will be a parent orientation in the fall and subsequent meetings on topics that relate to dyslexia. We expect parents to be involved in the process of remediating your child's reading and writing skills and expect the same commitment from you that our tutors deliver.

We expect that you will take your child's tutoring seriously and prioritize it above other non-essential after school activities, canceling only if absolutely necessary and treating this service with the same reverence that you would have for a private tutor coming to your home.

**What can I expect at each lesson?** Each lesson is approximately 40-60 minutes and is customized for your child's individual learning needs. All materials and lessons are created by the tutor. All lessons will be held after-school, evenings, and/or on Saturdays. Donation-based lessons will be conducted three times a week for a minimum of 100 hours to fulfill the requirements of the tutor's OG practicum. Parents are encouraged to be present at the lessons and at the end of each lesson, you are welcome to ask questions or request feedback. You are your child's best advocate and are a critical partner in your child's education.

**What happens after the 100-hour practicum?** After 100 hours of 1:1 tutoring, your child may qualify for small group instruction at \$50 per session with an Associate level OG practitioner. This gives children the opportunity to work with their peers and continue to improve their literacy skills in a small group setting. This would be billed on a monthly basis with a commitment of one school year (September through June).

**Does Literacy Nassau provide in-school services?**

Literacy Nassau contracts our certified OG practitioners to school districts to provide 1:1 OG services in school; contingent on approval at the child's Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting and at the school district's board meeting.

**Where does the tutoring take place?** For insurance reasons, we cannot send tutors out for home visits. All donation-based tutoring will take place in Literacy Nassau's newly-renovated tutoring center, located at 1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh. Tutoring by certified AOG practitioners (not trainees) may be offered at the center or online, or via a hybrid model of some face-to-face sessions and some online sessions.

When there is inclement weather, please refer to the Wantagh School District's website. If the schools are closed, then so are we. Literacy Nassau follows the Wantagh School District's school holiday calendar as well. OG is intended to be in-person, but in the case of a pandemic or other extended absence we may opt to move the instruction online to virtual lessons.

**Questions?** Contact Kim Nau at (516) 867-3580 or at [knau@literacynassau.org](mailto:knau@literacynassau.org).

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