

Lauren 00:06

Welcome to the LDA podcast, a series by The Learning Disabilities Association of America. Our podcast is dedicated to exploring topics of interest to educators, individuals with learning disabilities, parents and professionals to work towards our goal of creating a more equitable world. Hi, everyone. Welcome to the LDA Podcast. I'm here today with Laura Jackson. She's a writer, advocate and mother of a child with dyscalculia. Laura, thank you so much for being here.

Laura Jackson 00:33

Yes, it's my pleasure.

Lauren 00:35

So to start off, could you tell us just a little bit about yourself?

Laura Jackson 00:38

Yes, as you said, I am a mom, I have two daughters, preteen and a high schooler. And our oldest daughter is dyscalculic. We discovered this about six years ago, when she was in elementary school. So we live in the Seattle area in the Pacific Northwest and I, a couple years ago, quit my job and have been pouring myself into work with supporting families and individuals with dyscalculia.

Lauren 01:16

Amazing. So for our audience who may not know, could you tell us what dyscalculia is?

Laura Jackson 01:22

Yes, you probably more recognize it on an IEP or just in conversation as it's usually termed a specific learning disability with an impairment in math. Or people might call it a math learning disability. I know I have a lot of parents who will reach out to me and say, My child has a math learning disability, but I don't know if they have dyscalculia. And just to clarify, yes, as of how things are right now, that is dyscalculia. So it's known as a learning disability, which I have a little qualms with the term 'learning.' Because I think it kind of implies that it just impacts individuals when they're in school. But having a learning disability in math impacts so many different areas of life, and it's also something that you have or that you struggle with your entire life. So it's a real difference in how not only working with numbers, but how they experience and visualize numbers. So it impacts math, yes, but it impacts really, everything involving numbers in life.

Lauren 02:42

Yeah, and I'd really like to dive into that with you later. But first, I wanted to talk about how you learned about dyscalculia when your daughter was diagnosed, right? Could you tell us a little bit about that process?

Laura Jackson 02:53

Yeah. Um, so my daughter was in third grade. And she was really struggling in math class. And I remember I had a conversation with an old friend, who I actually just got done interviewing a couple hours ago, she had a math learning disability. And she mentioned that to me, and I thought, What is a math learning disability? Like I just, I didn't know much about learning disabilities in general. And I had

a lot of misconceptions about what a learning disability was. And so it wasn't on my radar. But after our lunch together, I looked up 'math learning disability' on Google and found the understood.org website. It wasn't quite as robust as it is now. But I found just all the signs and symptoms of dyscalculia. And I remember just being shocked, like, wow, this describes my daughter and I hadn't really even pieced together all the different parts of math at that point that were difficult for her what was standing out was that she, on the multiplication drill every Friday, she just could not get past the one times tables. And it seemed funny because she loves school. She's very articulate, she was doing really well and everything else. And the teacher said to me, I don't know what's going on. But she's trying 10 times as hard as everyone else, and not getting what we're talking about in math and multiplication. So that was kind of my first clue of what is going on. And so I, from that search, one thing led to another and I started just gathering any information I could. I met with the school, but they didn't know anything about it. And their suggestion was let's wait till next year and see what the teachers has to say. And the more I read, the more I thought well that's not going to work, that's actually not going to help her to just put it off. So that's when I started the process of let's get an evaluation at school. And it was also recommended to me that we had a private evaluation done. And both of those confirmed that, yes, she was dyscalculic.

Lauren 05:22

That's really great that you were able to find some resources and recognize that, you know, this shouldn't be put off, the longer often that people wait to get diagnosed the trickier it can get.

Laura Jackson 05:32

Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

Lauren 05:34

And I wanted to talk a little bit about the resources that you found a couple years ago, are there a lot of resources out there for dyscalculia?

Laura Jackson 05:45

Well, there's a little more now, but I will tell you, I think I checked out, we lived then in Seattle, at that point. So big city, extensive library system. And I checked out all the books on dyscalculia. And there was two of them. So I read those. And then it was really hard at that point. This was, yeah, about six years ago, it was really hard to find information. Nobody at school knew anything about it. There were people that kind of were familiar with our kid's struggles in math, but they didn't really understand what that meant, or what to do about it. So it was a lot of hours of looking online. I did at that point, find some books by Ronit Bird out of the UK. I remember it being very expensive, because I started at that point, ordering books off of Amazon. And you know, they're like \$40 books, \$60 books, just not something readily available for people. So I started just reading everything, everything I could and growing my own library because it wasn't available at the public library, and no one that I knew knew much about it. So that was where it started, was basically growing my own library of books.

Lauren 07:17

Wow, there really isn't as much out there. I mean, especially if you look at resources for dyslexia, you're gonna find so much more than dyscalculia. So that that's just huge. All the different outlets you had to go through to get just a couple of resources.

Laura Jackson 07:33

Yes, yes. I found a couple of YouTube videos. There's a TEDx talk in Denmark with Line Rothmann, which you probably know about, and I'm trying to think I think there might have been another one, but there wasn't...I wasn't finding as much. Looking back, I did later find some early work of my favorite dyscalculia expert, which who is Brian Butterworth in the UK. He's a professor at the University College London. And I have since now found some videos that were available back then. But for some reason, they just weren't coming up when I was looking. So yeah.

Lauren 08:14

So what are some common some common signs of dyscalculia? I know that you mentioned with your daughter in particular, the teacher even noticed that she was trying 10 times harder and it just wasn't clicking for her. So what are some signs that parents can look out for?

Laura Jackson 08:27

Yeah. So that struggle or inability, like we mentioned, of not being able to learn the times tables also with that she struggled with we would have tears over flashcards, you know, working on simple addition and subtraction. She was able to do addition by counting up but just couldn't make the connection with subtraction and didn't understand the concept and couldn't imagine something being you know, quote taken away or 'minused.' So those were some of the signs. Now looking back, I can see that there were signs as early as kindergarten, a real lack of interest in working with numbers. And she would spout off these number sequences that sound fun, they sound kind of playful. And they were off, like missing numbers. Not able to count backwards reliable reliably. She could do, you know, sections but if you had to cross a decade line, so like 21, 20, 19 like couldn't do that. First and second grade she started...the teachers said you know, I think she could use some extra pullout help. So she had two years, actually in second and third grade of small group extra instruction and still wasn't making progress. So extra help and still not tracking. She really struggled. with not being able to read an analog clock, she can now she's 15. But for years, and I thought it was just, I remember yelling at her one day, doesn't the school teach you how to read a clock? You know, I had my own problems and just didn't know what was going on. So and then not only reading o'clock, but then being able to calculate the time. So if I say we're going to eat in 20 minutes, she wouldn't know what that looked like or what time that would be. And vice versa. Some other signs are alike. So one big sign that I did not recognize early on, but is a real clear likelihood of being dyscalculic is that inability to subitize. So I didn't know that when she looked at a dice that she couldn't automatically see there were three, or four, or five dots on it. So she was in her mind counting each one. And that's why it took her a little while with dice when we play games to say, oh, that's five. And I didn't realize that. And she was terrible at Connect-4, the game where you drop the coins in, because she could not see that she was getting close to four, she didn't know there were...she's just dropping in things until it filled up. So that was, that was a sign that I learned later. But I know other parents don't usually notice that, like I had a mom in my workshop, she said, Well, my son told me that when he's setting the table, he doesn't just look over and see that there's four glasses on the table. He actually counts 1, 2, 3, 4. And she had no idea that that was going

on. So my daughter counted on her fingers. And I know there's people like to debate whether that's okay or not. But I think what I've learned is when that's the only method available that can be assigned dyscalculia. Not that you count your fingers, we all do that. But when that's the only way they can add something up. It can be assigned struggles with left and right. And I know that can happen with dyslexia too, but no sense of like direction. And oh, man, it's just everything related to numbers like you think about the addresses on the street and how you know, you're getting closer to your house because the numbers? Well, those numbers are so random to her. They're just out of nowhere, and she can't remember the sequence of the numbers of telephone numbers. Remembering dates, dates are very confusing. I could really probably talk for an hour on that. But that just gives you a few.

Lauren 12:49

Yeah, definitely. Well, and if you wouldn't mind expanding to it doesn't just impact a math class. Like you said, there's some real world examples. Can it impact other subjects? What are some other things that it can also impact other than just math?

Laura Jackson 13:03

Yeah. So measurements, so my daughter has always struggled being in the kitchen. We use some tools, some visual measuring spoons, and cups now from Welcome Industries. And they like give you, give her a picture of what the item is instead of the fraction. But anything to do with measuring amounts or estimating...I share a story in my book of calling out across the house like a year ago saying, hey, how many chicken nuggets do you want for dinner? And she had to come into the kitchen because she doesn't know that she eats about 8 to 10. Like she just...she had to see the actual pile and said 'oh, about that much' because she didn't know, she didn't have a number attached to that amount. Her other classes, we have to notify all her teachers. So in social studies, so much of that is around numbers and like she doesn't have a sense of like, when is 1751? Like she doesn't have: 'Oh, yeah, that's you know, this is hundreds of years ago or that was a few years ago, or this is when my grandparents were alive.' Like, she has no sense. And it's also hard for her to remember numbers when they don't have a context. So I looked at her social studies quiz recently. And this was in middle school. And half the questions were, what year was this built? How long is this river? When was the birthday of this person? Like half of it was numbers. And it was unfair because she really knew the curriculum. Like she could tell you why that landmark was important, even though she couldn't tell you when it was set up. So that's some things in social studies is that sense of time, of dates. In all her classes a struggle with time and having to ask when is lunch? When is this happening? Because when she looks at the clock, it takes her so long to calculate first what time it is now. But if the teacher says in 20 minutes, it's hard for her even still to be like, what will the clock say when it is 20 minutes? She's in theater right now in high school, totally confused about upstage, downstage, left, right. She's like, 'Mom, I don't know my left and right, and now we're turning it around. And the left and right is opposite of what it is for me on stage.' So that's a nightmare. That comes up. The other thing I forgot to mention early on is, so memory for numbers. So dyscalculics, they may spend a whole lesson and you think that they really got it, and you come back in the next day and the teacher is just flabbergasted because it seems like they haven't remembered anything of what they just learned. A student will study and study and study, cram for a test, go in and fail miserably. They can't hold on to these concepts that, in reality, don't make sense to them yet. And so, you know, the parents are flustered, like, did you not study? Or that's what you get for cramming. And it's like, no matter if they studied every day for a month beforehand, they might go in

and not remember. We've experienced that a lot with our daughter, and she would sometimes just sit and wait, she would just and the teacher would say what are you doing? Like, you're not doing anything? She's like, I'm waiting for the answers to come. Because in her experience, the numbers would come and go, like, sometimes the answer would be there. And sometimes it wouldn't. And she didn't know how to control that or make it appear when she needed. So that that's one of the reasons like the multiplication tables, memorizing those, it doesn't stick. And the amount of memory they have for numbers is very small. So when we're requiring that they learn and memorize as much as everyone else, they're at a real disadvantage. And they have to, we have to really pare down what is required to be memorized. And that's kind of getting into the teaching methods, but just being aware that their capacity for memorizing anything related to numbers and quantity.

Laura Jackson 17:40

It's very limited. It may be fine in other matters, you know, other subjects, but in math, the other subjects is really impacted is science. So they can do really well and a lot of aspects of science. But think about how much of those science classes have measuring and make you do calculations. And so those students who you may notice, they're doing really well on all THESE tests. And then THESE tests, they're doing terrible. What is it on those tests that they're not doing well at? My daughter is in biology right now. And she told me, I totally understand the material, but she bombed this worksheet quiz, and it was all measurements. And we're in the process of getting a copy of it, because I want to see it, because she probably understood the concept, but she makes a lot of errors when it comes to the calculation. So yeah, those are some other areas, at least for students. And then if you think about adults, you know, reading and understanding spreadsheets at their work, or graphs, very complicated. Driving, calculating distances, calculating time and distances, like you hear of adults, where they have these jobs, they have to drive from place to place and they have meetings and it's just a nightmare. And then you think about money, like all these aspects of money, understanding amounts and decimals and the calculations of it. In our country, like our 10 cent dime is smaller in size than the five cent nickel. Just even that is confusing. And we don't understand why can't you remember that's a nickel, and it's like well, it's very confusing.

Lauren 19:40

That was great because you know, a lot of people just assume oh, it's just math calculation. But you know, it really impacts anywhere that there's numbers which is probably more places than we realize in our day to day.

Laura Jackson 19:51

Yeah, and in my parent workshop, the first week is just understanding and the homework is that week to just notice how many places that number show up in your life, or calculating or amounts. And it's just so fun hearing all the stories, they come back not even realizing the different places in their life where these things happen. And then trying to see it from the point of view of their dyscalculic, you know, spouse or child or whatever. Yeah, it's, it's very enlightening,

Lauren 20:29

Yeah, that's huge. So how did you decide on which learning approach worked best for your daughter, whether it was at home instruction or any sort of online tutoring?

Laura Jackson 20:40

Yeah. Oh, it was a real trial and error. We got an IEP. And I remember just breathing a sigh of relief, because getting her tested was very difficult because she was doing so well in her other classes. And so the school was hesitant to test her. So it was a real push to get her evaluated. And I was so tired by the time we finished, and it was about like a year long process between the two evaluations. And I thought, well, now we're all good to go. But the hard thing is the teachers had no idea how to teach a kid with dyscalculia. And the special ed teacher was really lovely and warm and willing to learn. But she had so many kids. And it was such a steep learning curve. So I was I was feeding her like Ronit Bird books that I would find, hey, do you think we could use this? And she was looking for curriculum online, I was too. We didn't find anything specifically for it. So for two years, that was our way of being and that it even included a separate school district where she received more time in special ed than the first one. But still, nobody knew how to teach for her. So by the time she was in sixth grade, I thought we can't keep guessing like this is just, it's not working. And by that point, I had been, you know, reading and learning and I found some methods of teaching coming out of the UK. And I met up with well, let's see, I started with Ronit Bird's online ebooks. They were hands on, she understood the unique nuances of dyscalculia. And so in our state, we have the option of part time enrollment at school. So what we did is we did math at home in the morning with this curriculum, and then I dropped her off at middle school for the rest of the day. And we have done that for the last three years. Pandemic year, there was one pandemic year where she was home, or we homeschooled, so she took a lot of online classes, basically online learning, and then math at home. So I got some help from Emerson House, which is a school in the UK. And there's also one in Virginia. And they really focus on students with dyscalculia, dyslexia, and dyspraxia. I got some help from them. And the methods were, I want to say there's a method to the madness, there's actual ways to think about learning for dyscalculics when you understand what is the unique challenges? And what are those gaps that they have that most students don't have? So I think about her learning structure, and there's like pieces of bricks missing and mortar missing, and we have to go back and start at the foundational level and fill in those gaps. And so that's what we've been doing. We did all through middle school for her. And it was pretty exciting, because a few, you know, within a month of doing it, and I will back up and say I'm not a math person, I am not a teacher. I'm just a desperate mom, looking for help for my kids. So I really just approached math class, like, let's learn this together. I wasn't like teaching her. We just were like, let's see how your mind works. And let's find a way to understand math in a way that your mind works. And so we follow through Ronit Bird's ebooks, and then we used Jane Emerson and Patricia Babbie's book, *The Dyscalculia Solution*, and just worked through those. And it was so exciting because she started saying to me, Oh, I'm ready for math class today, or I'm excited to do math class today, I love doing this math with you, mom. And she was also having these breakthroughs where these mathematical concepts that never meant anything to her were suddenly making sense.

Laura Jackson 25:14

I remember one day, we were building numbers. So one main thing with dyscalculics is not having a sense of number, not having a grasp on what makes a number a number. And how, as Professor Butterworth would say, they don't understand numbers as sets. So teaching to...and it seems so basic, if you're not dyscalculic you're like, 'well, of course,' but when you're dyscalculic it's confusing. It doesn't make sense. So, we were building the numbers with these different tools, cuisenaire rods and dot

patterns. And she got stuck. She built one through 10. And then she was like, how am I going to build, you know, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15? And I just was quiet. And she sat there for a minute. And she's like, oh, there is a 10 in each of these numbers, plus an additional number. And she was 12. And she is just realizing this fact that we all kind of take for granted, but she had to experience it hands-on to see what that meant. Because one of the things with dyscalculics is they don't understand the idea of numbers as sets, and then other sets inside those sets. So that numbers are made of other numbers basically. So we had a really great, I would say, experience learning together. And we would get help from different places, but it's really, you have to be okay with them forgetting and redoing it and being like that's okay. Hands-on. Not requiring much memorization if at all, and learning through games and experiences and not drills, quizzing worksheets. So that's what we have found to be most successful, and it's really coming out of a small group out of the UK. The people I follow are Brian Butterworth and the late Dorian Yeo, Jane Emerson, Patricia Babbie, Steve Chinn, Ronit Bird, they actually all like know each other. So funny. But those are the people I follow and that I have found materials that really understand the dyscalculic mind and how to help them gain that sense of number.

Lauren 27:40

It's really great to have. So how can parents advocate for their child with dyscalculia? I mean, you just advocated every step of the way. It was yes, we need an evaluation this year to this is what dyscalculia is, you know, it was almost a combination of educating and advocating at the same time. Lots and lots of work. How do you recommend that parents can even start that process? It seems really intimidating!

Laura Jackson 28:10

Yeah, I think it is. I feel like I mean, being in just this field of learning disabilities and differences, like, so many parents do find themselves in that role, even though they don't want that role. I didn't want that role. I'm not a controversial type of person, I don't like to rock the boat. And now I've had to become very comfortable with rocking all kinds of boats and, you know, irritating people, for my child. And so it is hard. It's not fun. I think finding community and others who are doing the same. So that's some of what I am doing now is trying to build community. But I remember, you know, when I first started out, I remember looking around and just being like, well doesn't anyone know anything? And I don't even know how to navigate the school system, you know. And so, a friend said, Oh, I think you should call this person and I texted this mom out of nowhere, who had a daughter with dyslexia, and she had navigated the school system. So I was just really awkward text. Hi, my name is Laura. And I need help. And she was great because she helped me figure out how to navigate the school system. And she didn't know about dyscalculia. But she knew how to get evaluated and how to get that process going. And several years ago we couldn't afford tutoring and there was some tutoring offered out of the Emerson House. And so we just had to kind of think creatively, I talked with them. Rob Jennings was there, and he's with the Dyscalculia Network. And we kind of worked out, okay. Well, could you tutor me so that I can teach my daughter? So we did that and just kind of trying to think outside the box of ways of how could I get that help, because I needed help. And then, to help navigate the school system, I would say I'm not necessarily the best. I mean, I tried for two years, and the school couldn't get what we needed. And I jumped ship, because I'm just like, I don't have time for that. But we're back in the school system now. And, you know, continuing just that advocacy, and also teaching our daughter to advocate for herself. So especially as she's older, like really helping her have a voice is really important. And takes the pressure off me to as a mom, but I think it will help her because that's what's needed going

forward. So I guess to answer your question, see if you can find community. And I mean, that's what you guys are doing to with LDA. You're providing education, resources. Hey, there's people out here who call on my workshop I have, I say, Hey, call your LDA advocate in your state, because they're going to know some resources that you haven't heard about. And I've done that in our state. And our representative, you know, had some names of places you could get evaluated that I didn't know about. So yeah, find your community. Because you're not alone. And it really helps you feel I guess encouraged or bolster like, you can do this.

Lauren 31:50

Absolutely. That's really true. So in your experience, what are some of the strengths of individuals with dyscalculia? We talked about a lot of the weaknesses, but have you noticed any strengths that have come out of this?

Laura Jackson 32:03

I love that question. Because I really feel like that is one of the keys to supporting students with any kind of learning difference is to see the areas that, in my class, I call it like, places where they shine, like seeing those places where they are excited, they're interested, they're really good at. And when you think about growing, or developing as a person, like focusing on those things are so much more important than looking at the places of struggle and trying to fix those. So I love that question. And when my daughter was 10 I remember her standing on the front porch, and we were really right in the middle of I think she had just received her diagnosis in the private eval. So we had already finished school eval. And I remember she said to me, I know what happened, mom. She's like this little body, 10 years old. And she said, my creative artistic side is so big in my brain, and it has just taken up all the room, and there's just not space for the math. You know, she's like, it pushed the math out. And I love that, because that was kind of, I mean, maybe that happens in the brain. I don't know. But I think other areas are developing. And we need to pay attention to those. I think, for my own daughter, and so many of the parents I talk with, they're really surprised. They're so focused on the struggles, and most of them have multiple learning differences. And when you ask them, What does your kid really love? What are they really good at? Oh, some really cool stuff comes out, you know? So I think of my own daughter. She's highly artistic, very creative. She thinks outside the box for new possibilities. So her problem solving skills, critical thinking are through the roof. And I think she's had to really use those because she's in a math class. It's completely confusing. And she has to think, creatively, how am I going to figure this out? She's very empathetic. So kids with other learning differences or struggles, she's like, the first one to be like, Oh, I wonder what's going on for them, you know. And then I also see a lot of resilience of things have not always come easy. And so there's, she'll say, she'll stick with something and almost too long. She was doing an assessment with Dr. Schreuder at this Dyscalculia Services this summer. And she took four times as long as the assessment was and then we realized, when she saw the problem, instead of just looking at it and quickly being like, oh, that's beyond my level, I should move on, which was, that was the instructions from Dr. Shreuder. She looked at that, and she was like, I'm gonna figure this out. And she was gonna figure that out. So there's a real, you know, can be a real resilience there, which is awesome. In this case, we didn't want her to be so resilient. But just in general, yeah, there's always those things to look for in your kid. And I think noticing those I talked about in my workshop, those, when you can notice those, those actually lower their anxiety about who

they are and how they're doing. And then they can actually handle things like the difficult math better when they're lifted up in these other areas. So I love that question.

Lauren 35:51

That's great to think about. So what advice do you have for other parents who have a child with dyscalculia? You've given us a lot with education and advocacy. But do you have any other general advice?

Laura Jackson 36:03

Yeah, I think do what you can to just understand. It can feel really overwhelming. Like, when you don't understand how someone can't see numbers the same way. It's like, it's very hard to imagine if you have a friend who's colorblind, it's really hard to imagine that they don't see the colors that you see. And when they put together their outfits, and it's a little bit seems off to you, it's hard to imagine what that is like for them that the colors don't look the same. So I think about the same way of be curious with your kid when they're showing a difficulty. It's more helpful, I've found, to get curious, like, Hmm, what? Why is that a tricky thing? And you will probably figure out why instead of, I think I'm a very quick to fix kind of parent, and I have to slow myself down so much. But instead of seeing a problem and then saying, Oh, well, this is how you solve it. This is how you fix it. Just forget the solving and just be curious, like, what is their experience with this? And how do they view the world differently? An example from a few years ago, it seemed like my daughter was never tracking when something was happening. So like an upcoming event. And she was always asking about it. And I thought I'm just going to do a family calendar on the wall. That makes a lot of sense. Calendars make sense to me, I love a good spreadsheet. That girl never looked at it. Meanwhile, my other daughter loved the calendar on the wall, she loves knowing what's happening. But my dyscalculic daughter told me she's like, I never looked at that thing. Because I can't understand what it's saying. It doesn't make sense to me how the week is like laid out in this grid like, and instead of pushing her on that we ended up having a conversation of wow, okay, so those planners they give you at school and everyone encourages you to use and this will solve all your problems. That's actually not a great fit for you, is it? She's like, No, I don't get it. It doesn't make sense. So then we had this conversation, what would make sense if we need to plan ahead and you want to have an idea of a week? How would you think about that, you know, she ended up trying her own schedule planner in her mind and how she thinks about it. If a teacher says to her, this is due on 11/25 she has no idea what that is, so she asked her teacher 'could you tell me this is due next week?' She can imagine that and she has her own planner that draws out what a week looks like to her. So I think just being curious with your kid and then trying to be understanding of...you don't have to do what I did, where I bought like every book on dyscalculia and read for six years, but there's a couple books you could read just to have a basic sense of it. And just feel like you understand a little bit more and that will help your kid immensely. It will also help you in your frustrations with them because it can be very frustrating. So yeah, slowing down being curious and and trying to understand the deeper stuff going on.

Lauren 39:49

That's great advice. Would you be able to tell us about Discovering Dyscalculia, your website, and all your resources that you have available?

Laura Jackson 39:59

Yeah, a few years ago, like I said, I quit my job, and we moved out of the city, but close enough for my husband commute. And I started reading Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*, and started writing from that book. And I didn't know what my next career job was going to be. I knew it needed to be something to help provide our family. But I didn't know. So I started blogging, I was writing for the book, for the *Artist's Way* book, doing my morning pages every day, it's like three pages, long hand, all your thoughts. And then I started a blog, so *Discovering Dyscalculia* started as a blog. And I was really just processing our own experience. But also I kept running into people who are curious but didn't know anything about it. And I thought, I bet I'm not the only parent. And when I was looking, I remember furiously typing in like, you know, that was when mom blogs were big, but it was dyscalculia mom blog, math disability, mom blog, and I couldn't find any. And so I thought, if I was looking for that, surely some other parent is looking for it. So I just started blogging on there about our story and different experiences. And one thing led to another, an editor from GHF Press found my blog, and I reached out and said, Would you write a book? And I thought, well, that's crazy. But I thought I should just say yes. Because it looks like a need, and someone's going to pay for me to do that. Yeah, let's do it. And so that was a really good experience of just kind of putting it all into a story, really like our experience. And so then from that came, I'd find a new resource, so then I would share it on there, or people were asking, like, What books should I read? So I'm like, Oh, I'll put together a book list. And then last year, I started teaching workshops for parents on Zoom, just parents who were like, I need help. So that's how it started, at first a blog. And then now just more, and then I started having teachers reach out to me, and then I started having dyscalculic adults saying, where's this stuff for us? You know, so it's kind of a community. I send out, it was weekly email, just educating on dyscalculia. And I've just pulled back to monthly, because I have some other things in the works. But it's a very interactive group, they always reply with their own stories. I love getting stories from people, really every week, I'll have a new story from someone somewhere in the world about their story. And so many of them say, I thought we're the only ones or I don't know anybody else. So the real goal would be just raising that awareness. You know, I mean, if it's 5% of the population or possibly up to eight, that's a lot of people that need to know that others are out there.

Lauren 43:08

Absolutely. Well, and like you said, you know, not everybody's available to do that six years of research and ordering those books is expensive. So, it's great that you've compiled all these resources that you didn't have.

Laura Jackson 43:20

Yeah, yeah, kind of, I think I wrote that in the cover of the book of this is the book that I wanted to find and that wasn't available. So I wrote what I would've wanted.

Lauren 43:35

Yeah. That's amazing. Well, Laura, thank you so much. This was a great conversation. I think people are gonna get a lot out of it. And hopefully, it'll continue to raise awareness, about dyscalculia.

Laura Jackson 43:47

Thank you for what you guys are doing. You guys have been putting out a lot of great talks and webinars. And it's just all the hardships of things and how there hasn't been much information I have started saying when someone is looking for information, I'll be like, we haven't found that YET. It's always yet, because it's growing and there is such a growing interest. And so many people are discovering that there's a reason that they've struggled with math and numbers. And so I feel really excited and hopeful about the future for this field. And so yeah, thank you guys for what you're doing as well.

Lauren 44:38

Thank you for listening to the LDA podcast. To learn more about LDA and to get valuable resources and support, visit Idaamerica.org