



Gulu, Uganda / Zwolle, The Netherlands

E-mail: [info@backupuganda.org](mailto:info@backupuganda.org)

Web: [www.backupuganda.org](http://www.backupuganda.org)

Tel: UG +256 7 72630078

NL +31 38 4604615

---

## Every Child Can Learn Podcast

### Episode 16: Carol on her child with dyslexia

**Intro:** You are listening to the Every Child Can Learn podcast. The podcast is offered to you by Backup Uganda and Brainstud. You can listen to our podcasts online on our website, [www.backupuganda.com](http://www.backupuganda.com). And if you are in Gulu, you can pick up the audios offline from Mega FM, Radio Rupiny, Divine Video and Music Library. Head teachers from the district's schools can pick this podcast from the District Education Office. And head teachers from city schools can pick theirs from the City Education Office. You can as well pick up the podcast episodes from the following schools Highland Primary School, Gulu Prison Primary School, Gulu Town Primary School, Mary Immaculate Primary School, St. Joseph Primary School, or Christ the King Demonstration Primary School. Do you like our podcast? Feel free to share it with your family, friends, or neighbors. The more people learn about learning difficulties, the better we can help our children.

**Glades:** Welcome to our 16th episode of Every Child Can Learn. My name is Lanyero Glades, I work at Backup Uganda as the lead trainer. Today, again, we are very happy and delighted to meet a parent who is going to tell us her names, where she's from, and maybe what else she thinks listeners need to know about her. Thank you.

**Parent:** Good afternoon. My name is Caroline Amony Okeny. And I come from Gulu, I live in Gulu. I love children. I love playing with them and spending time with them.

**Glades:** Thank you very much for that introduction. I remember, we had a discussion about your child, whom you said is dyslexic. Can you tell us what that means and how did you find out that your child has dyslexia? I know parents will want to know what is dyslexia, so help us understand that. Thank you.

**Parent:** Dyslexia is a situation where a child is normal. Yes, very normal, but only struggles with reading and remembering things. That's the best definition I can give you. Because with my child, I had to tell him the same things over and over again. So the more I did it, that's

how he learnt. Then I found out that my child was dyslexic, as he was growing after I had him. The first time was, he took long to start speaking, and then he was doing things slowly compared to other children. Then when I took him to school, he couldn't read and write yet. When you ask him to participate in orals and other things, he did them perfectly. He knew the questions, he knew the answers but if he was told to read or write, he struggled so much. That's when I knew my son needed help.

**Glades:** Okay, thank you so much. I believe the parents out there will really understand and start relating to their children, because this is a common thing that our parents are struggling with. And a lot of them do not understand that is this disability, or this is just something that someone has done to my child. Thank you so much for sharing that Carol. What do you feel is the most challenging part of having a child struggling with dyslexia? Thank you.

**Parent:** Everything has the positive and the negative side. Yes, for any parent, when the child is doing everything, slowly, it is painful. It is a very painful experience. There are days when I cried, and there are days when I prayed. I even fasted for my son. It wasn't easy. But I thank God, that when I realized that my son was struggling, I decided to pick between money and him. And me and my son have bonded so much. We are friends, he can tell me almost anything, and because of him, I have learned how to take care of the rest of the children. I think that is the best part, bonding with my children because of dyslexia. I have learned how to bond with my children. And I have learnt even when I'm out in the public, I notice when there is someone who is struggling when I hear parents talking about their children, not reading, I usually chip in, and I advise them. Sometimes I go and I meet the kids and I tell them how to help the children. And that is the best part of it.

**Glades:** Thank you so much. I've been touched by what you have shared, and I believe the parents out there will also be touched by the message that you've shared. I love the element of bonding with your child. That is something that we usually tell parents, we even tell teachers out there. The one thing that will help you to help your child who is struggling, is to be willing to accept. Now this is something that my visitor here did, by first bonding with the child and you realize that there is a lot that has happened in the process of bonding with your child, she

accepted the child, and she keeps sharing her testimonies to other parents who are struggling in the same area. Thank you so very much for sharing that and what do you think is the best way for a parent to help his or her child struggling with dyslexia? Maybe can you think of an example of how you have been helping your child?

**Parent:** I have very many examples. But I'm going to mention one big one, which I think could help any parent. The first thing I did to help my child was, I realised that he was struggling with reading and writing, and yet his IQ was very normal. He was very intelligent. He was very bright, and he talked. I mean, he knew things that I didn't know, he knows things that I personally couldn't know. So I went to school, I learnt phonics, I watched videos on the internet, I did a lot. I remember he could count one up to 10, by the time he was one and a half, but he couldn't write one up to 10, even at seven years. I mean at seven years, so I decided, I got a chart, I wrote numbers one up to 10. I wrote A up to Z, and every day in the morning would do it, and lunch time would do it, in the evening would do it, and continuously. And after that, I removed the charts and I taught him how to do it backwards, middle wise. And then when it was perfect, I went back to school, and I said my son now knows A up to Z and 1 up to 10. What can I do next? And the Director was like, I will take you to school. And that was it. That was the turning point of my son, and of myself, because I also learned how to read even better.

**Glades:** Thank you so much again, and this brings me back to the point of having a good relationship with the school. This is something that a lot of parents do not love doing, and we have been telling parents to create that relationship with the school where your child goes to. Now this is something good that she did. By also going to take her class, she talked of phonics, and phonics is the one thing that does help children with dyslexia, knowing how to read the alphabets, the letter names, and also knowing the letter sounds. Now this has helped her with the child and I believe parents out there, you will learn something from this. Thank you so much Carol, for sharing that. What are other things that people or parents should not say to someone who has dyslexia or to any other person with a disability? What are those words that they shouldn't be mentioning?

**Parent:** Thank you very much. The words you shouldn't tell your child is, you're stupid, you cannot do it. You're a failure. I am tired of you. What is wrong with you? Those are the words which you shouldn't tell them. It really breaks them down.

**Glades:** Thank you so much. And this is not far away from what we have been singing. I am very happy that the visitor we have invited is hinting on the things that we have been telling parents. And please parents who are listening, teachers who are listening, this also goes to the teachers. A parent is telling the child from home saying stupid is not good, and the teacher is saying stupid from school. It doesn't help. So the parents and the teachers who are listening to this program, let's take it serious that some of these words demotivate the kids, they will never learn when you tell them you cannot do it. I have always told parents and the teachers that they are even learners that you see them performing very poorly, but please can you encourage them with their poor performance, they will improve and trust me, the improvement may not be so fast, and that is the annoying part that teachers face. But please, let's be very patient with these children and help them. Thank you so much for sharing that Carol. What is the most important thing you think parents or people should know about dyslexia?

**Parent:** The most important thing I want people to know about dyslexia is a child with dyslexia is not someone who is what, who is mentally disabled. A person with dyslexia only struggles with reading and writing. Their IQ is normal. Actually, in some instances, they are brighter than the normal children. My family, I have a family of dyslexic people. I personally was dyslexic, but we have our strength and when we go for something we do it perfectly. Even the most successful people are dyslexic. When a person is an actor, they are perfect. When they do art it is perfect. When they're a sales person like me, they are perfect. Actually, I can sell almost anything, I can even sell air and people will buy it. Because I'm dyslexic, I know how to do it. I'll convince someone and the person will buy it. So dyslexia is not an inability, it's just a struggle, we struggle with reading and writing. But as we do it every day, we get better, and more better, and as soon as we learn something, we never forget it.

**Glades:** Thank you so much. I was smiling when she said she can also, you said you can also sell air, that is amazing. And I'm very happy that today we have a parent really sharing her experience and parents out there, take it from whatever you're hearing from our visitor today. And the one thing I want to add, just like she put it having a child or someone who is dyslexic doesn't mean the person is dull, doesn't mean the person is stupid. The only challenge is reading and writing, but the rest, the child is very perfect. Now I can imagine someone listening to my visitor here talking, can someone really tell that she had dyslexia? No, not at all. But you've just heard from her that she also struggled with reading and writing. But when it comes to marketing, she's 100% perfect, you will not see dyslexia in her marketing profession. So thank you so very much for sharing that. It's really very encouraging. I'm also learning a lot from that. And lastly, what can you tell teachers who have children with disabilities in their classrooms, and maybe in this particular case, teachers who have children who are struggling with reading and writing? Thank you.

**Parent:** I'm going to give an example of what I told my son's teacher. He told me that I don't have time to coach your son, because they said they basically study the whole day. They have little free time. I told him, and when you're teaching, do the rest of the children understand? He told me yes. Then I said, does my son understand? Yes. I asked him, does he write and finish the work? He said no. Then I told him, okay, when you're teaching, and you have taught, everyone else has done their work and finished. Just take a pause for a moment and go and stand next to my son and see how he's doing it. Guide him, because he needs you more than the rest of the kids. So please, whenever you're teaching the rest of the children, give him more attention. Whenever you're asking questions, ask everyone the question, but ask him more questions because he needs the questions more than the rest of the kids. And that's what I advise the parents and the teachers, if it's with the children. I sent my son to the shop many times because he wasn't learning money, and I did it continuously until he became perfect. And then I told him to wash sandals, and whenever he washed them, I washed them again until he became perfect and I have made him mop the house. I remember when he was in P3, I told the Director that my son is going to walk home. And she told me my son, your son will not make it. Then I told her, it is my son, I have decided it. So I let him walk back home. He was young, until he was perfect. I sent him to the market until he was perfect. So I let him do

the things he couldn't do, and he improved. And that's what I advise the parents and the teachers. The teachers should give the children more attention. If it's sports, they should make them participate. If it's dancing, they should dance, if it's writing, they should give him more time, they give him more notes, they can give him some notes, or they give him a book to copy from so he can write, but they shouldn't give him too much to break him also. Thank you very much.

**Glades:** Amazing. Thanks so very much again, for sharing all that. I believe the teachers out there, and parents have really understood this. And the one thing that I'm going to repeat again to tell the parents or the teachers, please let's be patient with these children. I know a lot of teachers will say, but time but time but time. Can we integrate our teaching? Can we have a lesson plan that integrates the different skills of how we can help even these learners with disabilities, even this child with dyslexia? Let's be patient just like the parent has said, remember, this parent is talking out of experience. This is a child who right now, can talk, can go to the shop and buy things, can write, can mop. And a lot of parents like preventing their children who have disabilities from doing work, ooh, this child of mine has a problem cannot clean who told you, this child cannot go to the shop. And moreover, the child is about seven plus years. Now let's not hinder our children from doing activities that any other child can do. The parent said, let the child participate in sports, let the child jump, let the child do the other activities that other learners are doing. I believe the teachers who are going to listen to this program are going to pick from it. I want to say thank you very much, once again, our guest, for accepting to share your experience. By the way, this is a parent with a child that has this condition. I'm just very amazed by the experiences she has shared and I believe it's going to help a lot of parents out there and the teachers. Thank you once again Carol for coming, and at Backup Uganda we always say every child can learn. Thank you.

**Outro:** Thank you for listening to Every Chance Can Learn. Please share your thoughts with us. Join the conversation on Facebook, or send your questions to 0772630078. Do you want to learn more about Backup Uganda and stay updated about our activities? Check our website on [www.backupuganda.org](http://www.backupuganda.org) and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



**Gulu, Uganda / Zwolle, The Netherlands**

**E-mail:** [info@backupuganda.org](mailto:info@backupuganda.org)

**Web:** [www.backupuganda.org](http://www.backupuganda.org)

**Tel: UG** +256 7 72630078

**NL** +31 38 4604615

---