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## 'The Fonz' gets behind dyslexia campaign

Happy Days star Henry Winkler spoke today of his struggle with dyslexia as a campaign aimed at youngsters with special educational needs was launched

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Press Association  
guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 6 January 2010 12:32 GMT

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Henry Winkler in his role as The Fonz in Happy Days. Photograph: Globe Photos/Rex Features

Happy Days star Henry Winkler spoke today of his struggle with dyslexia as a campaign aimed at boosting the confidence of youngsters with special educational needs (SEN) was launched.

Winkler, who played The Fonz in the hit US sitcom, joined children's secretary Ed Balls and the prime minister's wife, Sarah Brown, in Downing Street to launch the First News My Way! campaign.

The campaign focuses on improving attitudes to children with SEN as well as building self-esteem.

Winkler agreed to front the drive due to his own experience of having dyslexia. He was not diagnosed with the condition until he was 30, and has since penned his own series of children's books, about a 10-year-old boy, Hank Zipzer, who has the learning difficulty.

"Children learn differently, every child has got something good in them and there's a tremendous prejudice between intellect and the child who is really good at vocational," Winkler told GMTV today.

"A society needs every citizen, every child to be at the top of their potential. A society doesn't work on children who can recite Latin."

Winkler also spoke of his personal struggle with learning scripts for his screen role. "I had to go over it and over it so I didn't make a fool of myself," he said. "I cannot read

out loud."

Balls said: "This campaign will help raise awareness of special educational needs and give children who learn differently the confidence and self-esteem to achieve their full potential."

The campaign will run in First News, the children's weekly newspaper. It has been funded jointly by First News, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and Pritt (Henkel), together with Walker Books. It is being supported by the Teaching Awards.

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