

LEARNING DISABILITIES

A child with LD has problems with reading, spelling, and writing.

These are language problems. Early speech and language problems can lead to later reading and writing problems. A child with LD may also have problems with math or social skills. LD has nothing to do with how smart your child is. Most people with LD have normal to above-average intelligence.

You may hear people say they have Dyslexia. People with Dyslexia have issues with reading. Many children with reading problems have other language problems too. This makes LD a better term to use. Other terms you may hear are language-based learning disabilities or specific learning disorder.

Learning disabilities are a brain disorder. Most children have LD from birth. They may have family members with LD.

LD causes due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors that alter brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more cognitive processes related to learning. These processing problems can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing and/or math. They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time planning, abstract reasoning, long or short term memory and attention.

It is important to realize that learning disabilities can affect an individual's life beyond academics and can impact relationships with family, friends and in the workplace.

Since difficulties with reading, writing and/or math are recognizable problems during the school years, the signs and symptoms of learning disabilities are most often diagnosed during that time.

However, some individuals do not receive an evaluation until they are in post-secondary education or adults in the workforce.

Other individuals with learning disabilities may never receive an evaluation and go through life, never knowing why they have difficulties with academics and why they may be having problems in their jobs or in relationships with family and friends.

Worldwide all the Learning disabilities are surprisingly common. This means that kids with one or more learning disabilities, and their parents who are by their side trying to figure things out, aren't alone.

Learning disabilities are considered to be high incidence disabilities.

Over 4 million kids have at least one learning disability.

One in five children (20 %) have learning and attention issues. Kids with learning disabilities are 31% more likely to be bullied than their classmates without a learning disability. About 45% of parents indicated in a survey that their child had been bullied. Boys make up about two-thirds of students identified with a learning disability even though research shows that boys and girls have equal rates of learning disorders.

A child with LD may have problems:

- Talking about his ideas. It may seem like the words he needs are on the tip of the tongue but won't come out
- Learning new words that she hears in class or sees in books
- Understanding questions and following directions
- Remembering numbers in order, like in a phone number
- Remembering the details of a story plot or what the teacher says
- Understanding what he reads
- Learning words of songs and rhymes

- Reading from left to right. This can make it hard to read and write
- Learning the alphabet and numbers
- Matching sounds to letters. This makes it hard to learn to read
- Writing. She may mix up the order of letters in words while writing
- Spelling
- Doing math. He may mix up the order of numbers
- Memorizing times tables
- Telling time

Your child will have testing done at school to see why he/she has trouble learning. An SLP can test how well your child listens, speaks, reads, and writes. The SLP may test different skills with younger and older children.

The SLP will also test your child's speech, language skills, and thinking skills. Thinking skills include planning, organizing, and paying attention to details.

Types of Learning Disabilities

Dyscalculia

A specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts.

Dysgraphia

A specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills.

Dyslexia

A specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

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Non-verbal learning disabilities

Has trouble interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions or body language and may have poor coordination.

Oral / Written Language Disorder and Specific Reading Comprehension Deficit

Learning disabilities that affect an individual's understanding of what they read or of spoken language. The ability to express one's self with oral language may also be impacted.

The SLP will work with your child's teacher to help your child in class. This may include changing lessons to help your child understand them. The SLP can help your child find ways to organize and focus on her work.

Your child should get help with LD as early as possible. Talk to your child's teacher if you have concerns. See an SLP if you think your child has speech and language problems.