

Driving and Non-Verbal Learning Disability (NVLD)

ADED – The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists

Individuals with NVLD have a significantly higher verbal IQ as compared to their performance IQ. NVLD causes problems with visual-spatial and organizational skills as well as the ability to problem solve. Individuals with NVLD should consider a driving evaluation before learning to drive.

Warning signs:

- Information processing – Individuals with NVLD have difficulty understanding and interpreting visual information.
 - They may have difficulty knowing how to react to a roadway hazard or changes in the traffic environment.
 - They may have difficulty with navigation.
 - They may have difficulty understanding visual symbols on the roadway.
- Social skills – Individuals with NVLD may have difficulty anticipating or interpreting the actions of another driver.
 - This may cause delayed reactions.
 - This may create difficulty making quick decisions.
- Motor skills and management of space – Individuals with NVLD may have difficulty with motor coordination.
 - This may lead to difficulty maneuvering the vehicle for parking, backing or through turns, hills and curves.
 - This may cause significant difficulty in making lane changes.
- Executive function skills – Individuals with NVLD may have difficulty solving problems that occur on the roadway.
 - They may have difficulty considering all the factors when managing a roadway emergency in order to get help and be safe.
 - They may have difficulty transferring what they have learned in one situation to another.
 - They may have difficulty anticipating the consequences of their actions.

A driver rehabilitation evaluation will examine these skills as they relate to driving. The goal is to be an independent, safe driver. Many of these challenges can be addressed through driver rehabilitation intervention if the individual has the skills necessary to begin learning to drive.

This assessment should include:

- A review of medical history and medication
- Vision
- Perception
- Assessment of life skills
- Activities that assess visual and cognitive processing skills for driving
- Behind-the-wheel or simulated driving activities

References:

Foss, J. (1981). Nonverbal learning disability: How to recognize it and minimize its effects. ERIC EC Digest E619. Retrieved January 7, 2009, from www.tourettesyndrome.net/foss.htm

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Vermont Parent Information Center. (2008). Nonverbal learning disabilities. Williston, VT: Author. Foss, J. (1981). Nonverbal learning disability: How to recognize it and minimize its effects. ERIC EC Digest E619. Retrieved January 7, 2009, from www.tourettesyndrome.net/foss.htm

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