

Does My Child Have a Learning Disability?

Definition: A learning disability (LD) is not a single disorder, but includes disabilities in any of seven areas related to reading, language and mathematics. Learning disabilities frequently occur with social skill deficits or emotional or behavioral disorders. A learning disability is diagnosed based on a discrepancy between academic achievement and IQ level (capacity to learn). Learning disabilities affect 15% of school children. Difficulty with basic reading and language skills are the most common.

What to look for:

- Slow vocabulary growth, late talker
- Trouble learning numbers, alphabet, and days of the week.
- Restless and easily distracted
- Trouble interacting with peers
- Poor ability to follow daily routines or directions
- Confuses basic words
- Letter reversal (b/d)
- Spelling errors
- Slow to learn new skills
- Fine motor skills are slow to develop
- Poor coordination, prone to accidents

Common Learning Disabilities:

- **Dyslexia**—a language disability, trouble understanding words, sentences, or paragraphs
- **Dyscalculia**—a mathematical disability, difficult time with problem solving and basic concepts
- **Dysgraphia**—a writing disability, difficult time forming letters or writing in a defined space
- **Auditory and visual processing**—difficulties understanding language despite normal vision and hearing

What can parents do if they suspect a learning disability?

- Observe your child's study, testing, and homework habits
- Talk to your child's teacher about academic performance
- Gather information about your child's academic progress (report cards, work samples)
- Have your child tested
- Work with your child at home

Resources available to parents

- Local School District—express your concerns and ask to have your child tested
- The Council for Exceptional Children www.ericec.org

Source:

Learning Disabilities. (n.d). Retrieved on July 8, 2003 from Learning Disabilities Online at <http://www.ldonline.org>