

About Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are problems in processing words or information, causing otherwise bright and capable children to have difficulty learning. They frequently involve language — reading, writing, speaking and/or listening.

More than half of all children identified with a learning disability are diagnosed with a reading disability (or dyslexia). They have trouble learning how spoken language translates into written text. Since every subject requires reading and writing — including math! — a reading disability has an impact on all school-based learning.

Some children have good verbal (language) skills and rote memory ability, but weaknesses in visual and spatial perception, motor skills and, most significantly, social skills — affecting their ability to grasp the main idea, see the "whole picture" or understand cause-and-effect relationships. These children may have a nonverbal learning disability (NLD). Successful interventions can be developed by using the child's strengths in rote memory, attention to detail, and auditory retention—as well as their innate sense of fairness and integrity—to deal with their weaknesses in organization, mathematical reasoning, social skills and lack of flexibility.

Many children with LD struggle with organization, attention and memory.

But there is an upside to the tremendous difficulties in school experienced by many children with LD. These children are often creative and resourceful, and can frequently be characterized as gifted and as alternative thinkers. They may be very smart, and have strengths and talents that differ from the skills emphasized in school. Many students with LD excel in the performing or visual arts, in math or science, engineering or architecture, or in athletics.