

Learning Disabilities: Common Signs

Below is a checklist of difficulties your child or adolescent may be experiencing. Most people will, from time to time, see one or more of these warning signs in their child or adolescent. This is normal. If, however, your child or adolescent continues to struggle with these issues over a long period of time, you will want to discuss the possibility that your child or adolescent has a learning disorder with your health professional.



There are many different types of learning disorders. Some terms you may hear include the following:

- **Dyslexia.** A language and reading difficulty. Children and adolescents with dyslexia have difficulty understanding words, sentences, or paragraphs.
- **Dyscalculia.** A mathematics difficulty. Children and adolescents with dyscalculia have difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts.
- **Dysgraphia.** A writing difficulty. Children and adolescents with dysgraphia have difficulty with letter formation and writing within a defined space.
- **Auditory and visual processing disabilities.** An information-processing difficulty. Children and adolescents with auditory or visual processing disabilities have difficulty understanding language despite the fact that they have normal hearing and vision.

Recognizing an area of difficulty early and developing a plan to address it can make a world of difference for your child or adolescent. If your child or adolescent consistently experiences one or more of the following problems, consult your primary care health professional:

PRESCHOOL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaks later than most children <input type="checkbox"/> Has pronunciation problems <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary grows slowly; is often unable to find the right word <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty rhyming words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has trouble learning numbers, the alphabet, days of the week, colors, shapes <input type="checkbox"/> Is extremely restless and easily distracted <input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty following directions or routines <input type="checkbox"/> Has trouble interacting with peers |
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GRADES K–4

- Is slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds
- Confuses basic words (run, eat, want)
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors including letter reversals (b/d), inversions (m/w), transpositions (felt/left), and substitutions (house/home)
- Transposes number sequences and confuses arithmetic signs (+, -, x, /, =)
- Is slow to remember facts
- Is slow to learn new skills; relies heavily on memorization
- Is impulsive; has difficulty planning
- Pencil grip is unstable
- Has trouble learning about time
- Has poor coordination; is unaware of physical surroundings; is prone to accidents

GRADES 5–8

- Reverses letter sequences (soiled/solid, left/felt)
- Is slow to learn prefixes, suffixes, root words, and other spelling strategies
- Avoids reading aloud
- Has trouble with word problems
- Has difficulty with handwriting; has awkward pencil grip
- Avoids writing compositions
- Has slow or poor recall of facts
- Has difficulty making friends
- Has trouble understanding body language and facial expressions

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AND ADULT

- Continues to spell incorrectly; frequently spells the same word differently in a single piece of writing
- Avoids reading and writing tasks
- Has trouble summarizing
- Has trouble with open-ended questions on tests
- Has weak memory skills
- Has difficulty adjusting to new settings
- Works slowly
- Has poor grasp of abstract concepts
- Either pays too little attention to details or focuses on them too much
- Misreads information