

Learning Disabilities

Learning Disability (LD) is a term currently used to describe a group of conditions that interfere with learning and consequently functioning throughout life. Under the LD umbrella are disorders related to listening, speaking, reading, reasoning, and mathematical calculation. Individuals with LD have intelligence in the near average, average, or above average range. The impact of the disability may range from mild to severe.

Learning disabled individuals have to work harder to succeed. They are not “lazy”.

Whenever a child is diagnosed with LD, parents often ask for a prognosis. This is hard to predict because it depends on many factors, such as:

1. The nature and severity of the disability
2. Whether ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and/or CD (Conduct Disorder) is also present
3. The intellectual potential of the child
4. The quantity and quality of the intervention
5. When the intervention is begun (earlier is better)
6. The quantity and quality of the parental relationship
7. The temperament of the child
8. The maturity and social skills of the child
9. The stability of the home
10. The persistence of the child

Having a learning disability does not mean that a child can't be successful. Many famous people such as Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Woodrow Wilson, Cher, Tom Cruise and Charles Schwab had a learning disability. All of these individuals found ways to maximize their strengths rather than concentrate on their weaknesses.

Some Facts about Learning Disabilities

- More boys than girls are identified as learning disabled; the ratio is about 3:1. Recent studies suggest that as many girls as boys may have the condition but do not get identified.
- Students with learning disabilities are usually identified by the time they reach late third or early fourth grade.
- More students are identified because of deficits in reading and the language arts than in mathematics.
- IQs of identified LD students are typically in the 90 to 95 range.
- Students with LD tend to have deficits in short term memory.
- Phonological awareness deficits and poor phonics development is common among the LD population.
- Students with LD tend to be “inactive learners”.

For more information, contact any of the following organizations:

Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD)

P.O. Box 40303

Overland Park, Kansas 66204

www.cldinternational.org

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)

4156 Library Road

Reston, Virginia 22091

www.ldanatl.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

99 Park Avenue

New York, New York 10016

www.nclld.org

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

Chester Building, Suite 382

8600 La Salle Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21286-2044

www.interdys.org

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CH.A.D.D.)

8181 Professional Place

Suite 201

Landover, Maryland 20785

www.chadd.org

Bibliography:

Harwell, Joan M. Complete Learning Disabilities Handbook. Jossey-Bass, 2001