

LEARNING DISABILITIES AN OVERVIEW

A learning disability is a neurological disorder. It affects how a child with Learning Disability (or LD as it is commonly called), receives and processes information. Children with learning disabilities may have difficulty in one or more areas of language (involving reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling) in organizing information and / or using numbers.

The term “learning disabilities”, sometimes referred to as specific learning disabilities, is an umbrella term that covers a range of neurologically based disorders in learning with various degrees of severity.

Children with LD are not able to learn efficiently due to difficulty in one or more of the learning processes. These difficulties occur when there is a breakdown in one or more of the specific learning processes: a) input (Listening, perceiving), b) integration (thinking, organising), c) memory (recalling) d) output (verbal and written expression), and e) motor (writing and activities of daily living).

A specific learning disorder can affect a child’s ability to acquire and apply reading, writing, and math skills. A learning disorder is distinct from intellectual development disorder; children with learning disorders usually have at least average intelligence and are yet not able to acquire academic skills expected for their age. A child may have impairment in decoding words, understanding the meaning of what is read, spelling, expressing themselves in writing, doing calculations, and mastering mathematical reasoning. Specific learning disorder is a relatively new classification that groups together reading-related (dyslexia), writing related (dysgraphia) and math-related (dyscalculia) disorders under a single umbrella. When a child is diagnosed with specific learning disorder, the particular areas of impairment must also be designated in the diagnostic statement.

Learning Disability ensures the following parameters:

- Learning disabilities are not intellectual deficiencies, emotional disturbances or sensory impairments.
- Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning
- Learning disabilities range in severity and may affect any or several areas of life
- Learning disabilities are life long
- Learning disabilities are neurobiological and/or genetic in origin

(<http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in/writereaddata/ld.pdf>)

A Hidden Disability

For children with Learning Disability, there often appears to be a gap between the individual’s potential and actual achievement. The condition has no visible disability, thus learning disabilities are referred to as “hidden disabilities”: the child “looks” like all other children his/ her age but may be unable to demonstrate the skill level expected from someone of a similar age.

Many times an undiagnosed child with LD is considered lazy, naughty, unresponsive and unmotivated. These children become easy targets. Teachers and parents may be rebuking them for not taking enough interest, this adds to the internal struggles of the child and can sometimes lead to lowered self-image, low motivation and a lack of interest in academic work. And unfortunately it can, create a huge negative impact on a child's life.

Early Signs

Learning disabilities are usually diagnosed when the child is not able perform at an age appropriate level in the class. Many a times it goes undiagnosed till the child reaches second or third grade. Signs of a learning disorder could be apparent when a child begins preschool and encounters difficulties in following directions, short attention span, poor memory, clumsiness in everyday work or could also be with one or more of the core areas of learning—reading, writing and math.



learning disability is a neurological disorder. It affects how a child with Learning Disability, receives and processes information. Children with learning disabilities may have difficulty in one or more areas of language (involving reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling) in organizing information and / or using numbers.

Learning Disability is commonly referred to as LD

LEARNING DISABILITIES

AN OVERVIEW

The earlier a difficulty is detected, the better are the chances of the child succeeding in class. An awareness of early indicators thus will help parents, teachers and all those involved with the child to provide the appropriate support he/she needs.

Following is a checklist of some early indicators for learning disorders. We should remember that many children who don't have learning disabilities may still experience some of these difficulties at different times. The discriminator would be when there is a consistent inability to master certain skills, over a period of time.

(Please note that the generally common signs included here are for informational purposes only; the information is not intended to screen for learning disabilities in general or for a specific type of learning disability)

Indicators below 5 years of age

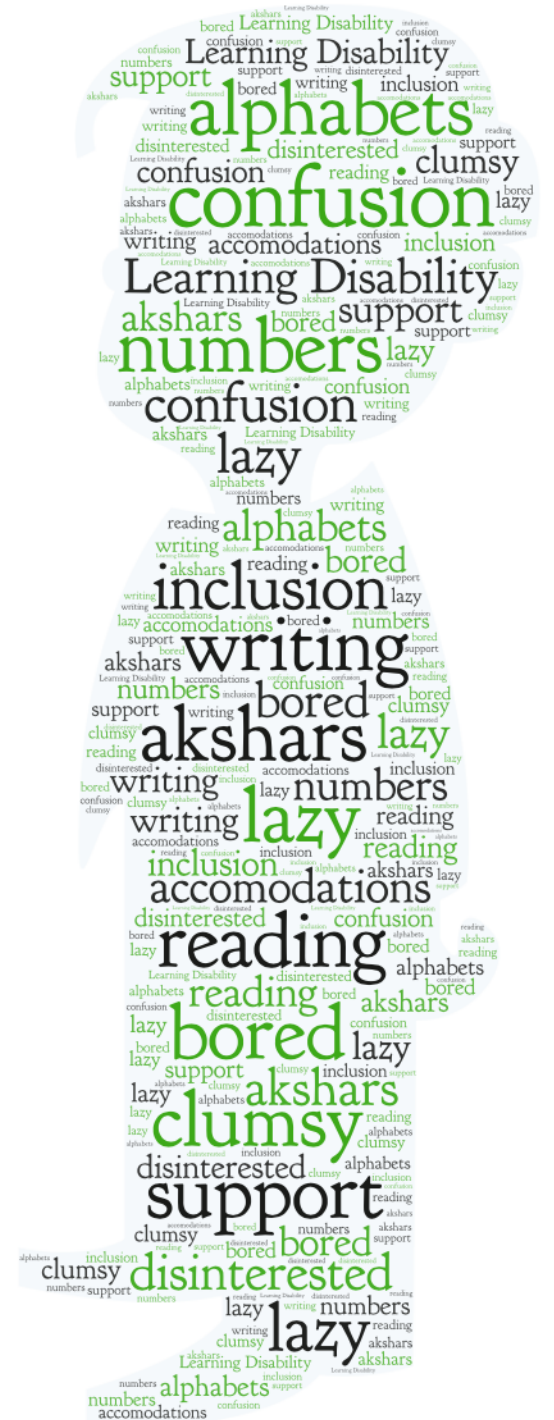
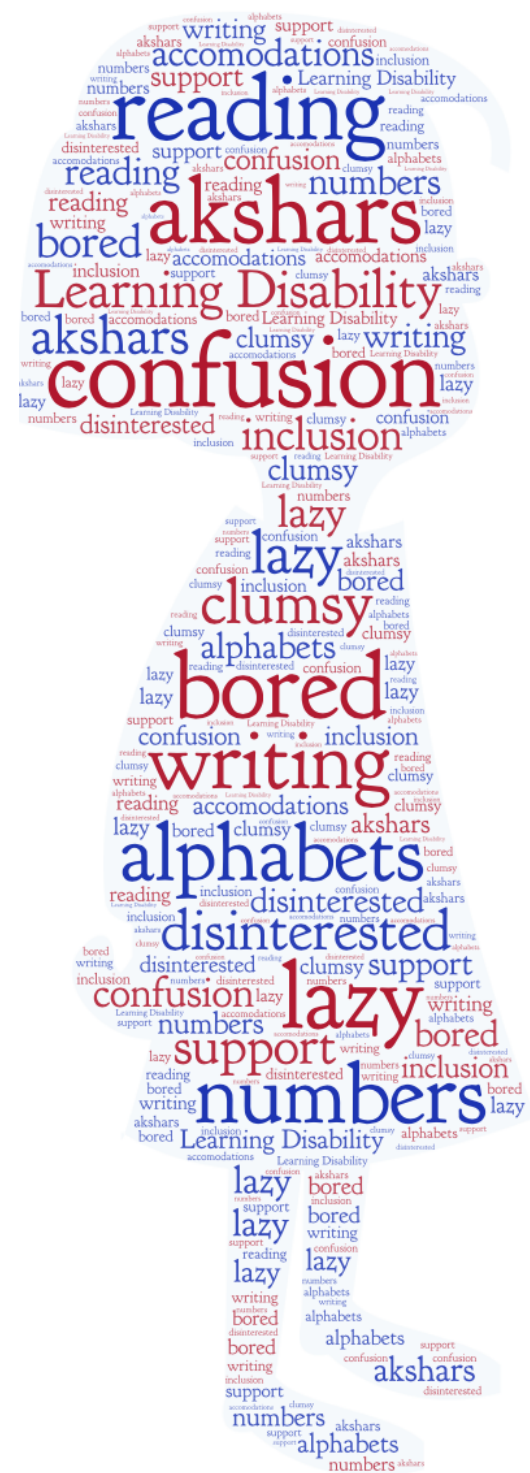
- Difficulty in holding attention on a task.
- Problems pronouncing words
- Trouble finding the right word
- Difficulty rhyming
- Trouble learning colours, shapes, days of the week, followed by letters, numbers,
- Difficulty following directions or learning routines
- Difficulty handling crayons, pencils, and scissors, or colouring within the lines

Indicators for 5 – 9 years of age

- Difficulty making associations between letters and sounds
- Unable to blend sounds to make words
- Confuses basic words when reading
- Consistently misspells words and makes frequent reading errors
- Trouble learning basic math concepts
- Difficulty telling time and remembering sequences

Indicators for Ages 10-13 years

- Difficulty with reading comprehension or math skills
- Dislikes reading and writing; avoids reading aloud
- Spells the same word differently in a single document
- Poor handwriting
- Trouble with open-ended test questions and word problems
- Poor organizational skills (bedroom, homework, desk is messy and disorganized)
- Trouble following classroom discussions and expressing thoughts aloud



Types of Learning Disabilities

Learning Disability is an umbrella term and comprises of many different types of difficulties. Four major types are named here with a brief description. These are discussed separately under independent heads.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is also known as the reading disorder. This affects reading and language-based processing skills. It affects reading fluency, decoding, reading comprehension, recall, writing, spelling, and sometimes speech and can exist along with other related disorders. Dyslexia is also referred to as a Language-Based Learning Disability.

Dysgraphia

This specific learning disability affects a person's writing ability and fine motor skills. Concerns may include illegible handwriting, inconsistent spacing, poor spatial planning on paper, poor spelling, and difficulty composing writing as well as thinking and writing at the same time.

Dyscalculia

This specific learning disability affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts. Individuals with this type of difficulty may also have poor comprehension of math symbols, may struggle with memorizing and organizing numbers, have difficulty understanding problems of time and money.

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia is also known as developmental co-ordination disorder. It affects sensory integration and physical coordination. It hampers performance in activities that require coordination and movement..

References

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/learning/conditioninfo/signs>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/ldxa/53/1>

http://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Learning_Disabilities

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/19/12/harvard-edcast-bringing-hidden-language-disorder-light>

<https://ldaamerica.org/advocacy/lda-position-papers/what-are-learning-disabilities/>