

Learning Related Disabilities

Many children have problems with learning and behavior from time to time, and variations in development are normal. However, a consistent unevenness in the mastery of skills and behaviors may indicate an underlying learning disability. If you suspect that your child has a learning disability you may wish to request, through your child's school, that he/she be evaluated for special education eligibility.



Information provided by the International Dyslexia Association (www.iterdys.org) and the National Center for Learning Disabilities (www.nclld.org). Additional resources can be found at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/specific_id.htm.



Illinois State Board of Education

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Language-Related Learning Disabilities for School Aged Children



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Reading Disabilities

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.



School Aged Children have trouble with:

- Mastering the rules of spelling
- Remembering facts and numbers
- Handwriting or with gripping a pencil
- Learning and understanding new skills; instead, relying heavily on memorization
- Reading and spelling, such as reversing letters (d,b) or moving letters around (left, felt)
- Following a sequence of directions
- Word problems in math

Math Disabilities

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability in which a person has unusual difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts. Two areas of weakness can contribute to this: 1. visual-spatial difficulties, which result in a person having trouble processing what the eye sees, and/or 2. language processing difficulties, which result in a person having trouble processing and making sense of what the ear hears.



School Aged Children have trouble with:

- Learning math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Developing math problem-solving skills
- Long term memory for math functions
- Math vocabulary
- Measuring things
- Games that require strategy

Writing Disabilities

Writing requires a complex set of motor and information processing skills. Two disorders that can affect the ability to write are **Dyspraxia**, which affects motor skills development, and/or **Dysgraphia**, which affects visual-spatial and language processing ability.

School Aged Children with **Dyspraxia** have trouble with:

- Activities that require fine motor skills, like holding a pencil, buttoning, cutting with scissors
- Poor coordination, which may result in problems with sports activities
- Slow or difficult-to-understand speech
- Social interactions due to speech difficulties



Signs of **Dysgraphia** in school aged children:

- Illegible handwriting
- Mixture of cursive and print writing
- Saying words out loud while writing
- Concentrating so hard on writing the comprehension of what's written is missed
- Trouble thinking of words to write
- Omitting or not finishing words in sentences