Learning Disabilities in Children

The symptoms of learning disabilities are a diverse set of characteristics which affect development and achievement. All children can exhibit some of these symptoms at some point in their development. However, a person with a learning disability has a cluster of these symptoms which do not disappear as s/he grows older.

**SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD)**

Specific Learning Disabilities affect the understanding or use of language, written or spoken.

50% of all disabled children have a SLD.

Children with specific learning disabilities may have difficulty:

- listening
- thinking
- speaking
- reading
- writing
- calculating

**5 MOST COMMON LEARNING DISABILITIES**

- **Dyslexia**: disorder that impedes the student’s ability to read and comprehend a text
- **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**: chronic condition marked by persistent inattention, hyperactivity, and sometimes impulsivity
- **Dyscalculia**: severe difficulty in making arithmetical calculations, as a result of brain disorder
- **Dysgraphia**: deficiency in the ability to write, primarily handwriting, but also coherence
- **Processing Deficit**: problems with the processes of recognizing and interpreting information taken in through the senses.

15-20% of the national population has some symptoms of dyslexia.
Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability which results in difficulties with specific language skills including reading, writing, and pronouncing words. It is classified as a specific learning disorder (SLD) under the Individuals with Disabilities Act. It can affect:

- speech and language delays
- reading comprehension and word recognition
- spelling and vocabulary development
- social and emotional development

Dyslexia and intelligence are NOT related.

Research shows when teachers are trained in early dyslexia identification and intervention 90% of children with dyslexia can be educated in a regular classroom.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Screen for potential language deficiencies prior to age six (e.g. remembering letters of the alphabet or rhyming).
- Provide training for ALL new teachers through the schools of education, relating to identifying dyslexia/reading problems and knowing how to teach students reading skills.
- Embrace the Cox Campus’ “Read Right from the Start” program that provides instruction to existing teachers on how to teach reading.
- Work with the new Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy to ensure training for teachers on identification of dyslexia and how to teach dyslexic students.

Sources: [https://tinyurl.com/GALearningDisordersReferences](https://tinyurl.com/GALearningDisordersReferences)