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. A person with a learning disability has a variety of these symptoms, which do not disappear as they grow older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disabilities affect the understanding or use of language, written or spoken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nearly 35%**

of all children receiving special education have a SLD.

Some of the most frequently displayed symptoms of a learning disability include:

- short attention span
- poor memory
- inability to discriminate between letters, numerals or sounds
- difficulty with hand-eye coordination
- sensory difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST COMMON LEARNING DISABILITIES THAT AFFECT LEARNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia: disorder that affects reading, spelling, comprehension, writing, and recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):</strong> disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyscalculia: poor comprehension of math symbols and numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysgraphia: difficulty with writing, spacing, spelling, and composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit:</strong> a person may miss subtle differences in shapes or letters. They may also experience difficulty holding writing instruments or poor hand-eye coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auditory Processing Disorder:</strong> a person does not recognize subtle differences in sounds in words and difficulty blocking out background sound or determining a sounds origin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79,277

children across Georgia’s 200+ school districts have been diagnosed with a SLD.

www.georgiavoices.org
**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 SLD under the Individuals with Disabilities Act. It can affect:

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

**Dyslexia and intelligence are NOT related.**

Early screening and intervention positively impacts a child’s development and success in the 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 that the dyslexia piloted legislation from 2019 is well implemented and well evaluated.
- Expand early screening by building the expertise of educators and healthcare professionals to detect the early signs of a learning disability.
- Empower students and families to prepare students for a transition to postsecondary education or employment, address socio-emotional learning, increase access and build capacity for learning institutions, and invest in research.
- Cultivate and create informed educators to create supportive classrooms, partner to eliminate discipline disparities, expand research on youth involvement in the justice system.

---

Sources: [https://tinyurl.com/LearningDisorders2020](https://tinyurl.com/LearningDisorders2020)