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. However, with interventions these symptoms can be mitigated.

### SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD)

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

**Nearly 35%**

of Georgia students receiving special education have a SLD.²

Some of the most frequently displayed symptoms of a learning disability include:³

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

### MOST COMMON LEARNING DISABILITIES THAT AFFECT LEARNING⁴

- **Dyslexia**: affects reading, spelling, comprehension, writing, and recall⁵
- **Dyscalculia**: poor comprehension of math symbols and numbers⁶
- **Dysgraphia**: difficulty with writing, spacing, spelling, and composition⁷
- **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**: an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development⁸
- **Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit**: a person may miss subtle differences in shapes or letters. They may also experience difficulty holding writing instruments or poor hand-eye coordination⁹
- **Auditory Processing Disorder**: a person does not recognize subtle differences in sounds in words and difficulty blocking out background sound or determining a sounds origin¹⁰

The most common disability areas served by the Georgia Department of Education’s Special Education Services and Supports are Specific Learning Disability, other health impairments, Speech Language Impairment, Significantly Developmentally Delayed, and Autism.¹¹

79,730 children across Georgia’s 200+ school districts have been diagnosed with a SLD.¹²

Learning disabilities and intelligence are NOT related.¹³

Early screening and intervention positively impacts a child’s development and success in the classroom.¹⁴

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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

**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.

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Sources available here: [www.tinyurl.com/LearningDisabilitiesinGA](http://www.tinyurl.com/LearningDisabilitiesinGA)
Sources for Learning Disabilities in Georgia


4. Ibid.


10. Ibid.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.