

## DIAGNOSING LD

# Learning Disabilities Overview: Reading, Writing & Math Disorders

Learning disabilities come in many disguises, last a lifetime, and can't be "cured." The key to management is early detection and intervention. Parents, read this to know what you're looking for — and how to best deal with it.

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## What Are Learning Disabilities?



The term learning disabilities (LD) (also called learning differences) is used to describe a group of disorders that affect how someone learns. You may have difficulty in reading, writing, mathematics, listening, and/or speaking.

There is usually a large difference between what is expected based on your intelligence and your actual performance.

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## A Learning Disability Is Not...



A learning disability is not: an intellectual disability (you must have an IQ over 85 to be diagnosed with a learning disability), hearing loss, vision problems, a behavior or emotional disturbance, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ([ADHD](#) or [ADD](#)), or autism.

These conditions must be ruled out before a learning disability can be diagnosed.

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## Learning Disabilities Are Lifelong Conditions



Since many people learn to compensate for their learning differences as they mature, it can seem as if the learning disorder has disappeared. It is for this reason that it was once thought that LDs only impacted children. We now know that learning disabilities continue throughout a person's life, even if they learn to compensate for the difficulty.

*[Free Symptom Checker: Signs of Dyslexia in Adults]*

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## Main Types of Learning Disabilities



The term learning disability encompasses many different learning differences. The three main types of learning disabilities are: reading disabilities, written language disabilities, and math disabilities. Each type of LD can include several different disorders. There is not one “learning disability.” There are other, less common learning disorders that impact memory, social skills, and executive functioning.

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## Reading Disabilities





Reading disabilities are often referred to as [dyslexia](#). Between 2% and 8% of school-aged children have a reading disability. Some of the common signs of a reading disability include: difficulty associating or recognizing sounds that go with letters and separating the sounds within words, difficulty sounding out words, trouble rhyming, problems understanding and using words and grammar, and poor spelling.

*[\[Free Guide: Signs of Dyslexia at Every Age\]](#)*

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## Writing Disabilities

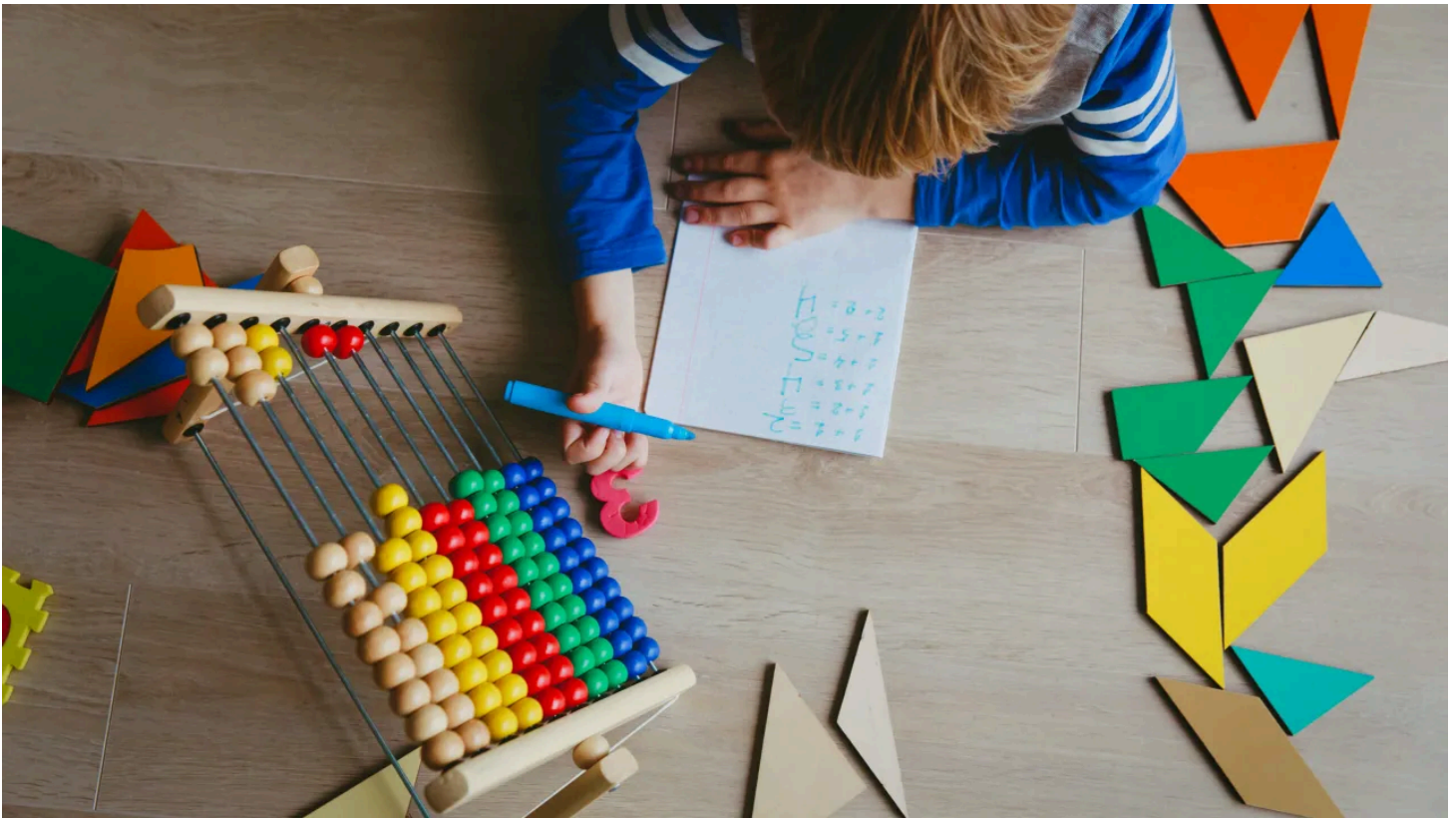


Writing disabilities, called **dysgraphia**, affect a person's ability to express their thoughts in writing. Some of the common signs include: awkward or tight grip on a pencil, illegible handwriting, speaking the words out loud while writing, omitting words in sentences, difficulty with grammar and syntax structure, avoidance of writing tasks, problems articulating thoughts and ideas into written words, and difficulty organizing and planning thoughts when writing.

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## Mathematics Disabilities



**Dyscalculia** is a broad term for many different types of disorders that involve problems with math. Some signs include: slow to develop counting and math problem-solving skills, difficulty recalling number sequences, computing problems, problems with time concepts, poor sense of direction, and difficulty completing mental math. A child with math LDs might be able to complete math problems one day, but seem lost and confused when facing the same problems the next day.

*[Symptom Test: Signs of Dyscalculia in Children]*

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## Identifying Learning Disabilities



If parents or teachers notice a child is struggling in school, in one area or in several areas, and their performance doesn't match their intellectual level, an assessment is completed. There is no single test for learning disabilities. Instead, a [series of assessments](#) are done, which often include achievement tests, cognitive assessments (IQ tests), and tests related to reading, mathematics, and written expression abilities.

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## Treatment for Learning Disabilities





There is no medication or medical treatment to help improve a learning disability but interventions are available. Many children with comorbid ADHD and LDs see improvement in both when following a treatment plan that includes ADHD medication. In addition, educational strategies can be incorporated into your child's classroom through an [IEP or 504 Plan](#).

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## Academic Interventions





Because each child with a **learning disability** is different and might struggle in specific areas, there are no “standard” academic interventions. Instead, the school district, along with the parents, should complete an Individualized Education Program (**IEP**) geared toward the child’s specific areas of difficulties. However, all students with LDs should benefit from organized and sequenced instruction, visual and verbal cues, help with planning and organization, differentiated instruction, and multi-sensory teaching techniques.

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LD Success



LDs are a lifelong condition, but that doesn't mean a child with a learning disability can't succeed. People with LDs can be found in every type of occupation. Famous people with LDs include: Cher, Agatha Christie, Tom Cruise, Richard Branson, Keira Knightly, Steven Spielberg, and Whoopi Goldberg. Many other people from history are thought to have had a learning disability, such as Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Thomas Jefferson, George Patton, and George Washington.

*[Get This Free Resource: [Overcoming Common Learning Challenges](#)]*