

Four Common Learning Disabilities in Children



School is hard work for all learners, but it can be especially hard for children with learning differences. When a student with learning differences is asked to perform academic tasks like reading, math, and writing, or even just listening to lessons and recalling information presented in the lesson they are working overtime. According to Dr. Alicia Braccia, a licensed school psychologist with over 30 years of experience, a learning disability is a disorder that interferes with the ability to process and retain information at the same rate as their peers. There are many learning disabilities and neurochemical disorders that can interfere with learning.

1. Dyslexia/Specific Learning Disability in reading is the most common LD that is seen in the classroom. Approximately 5 to 15 percent of Americans (14.5 to 43.5 million children and adults) have Dyslexia. This Specific Learning Disability makes it difficult to learn how to read, write and spell, no matter how hard the person tries or how intelligent they are. The key factor in identifying Dyslexia is the subtype that the individual has. The term Dyslexia or Specific Learning Disability in Reading is a very broad term, so in order to identify the most appropriate targeted intervention, it is critical to identify if the issue is related to phonological processing (Phonological Dyslexia), orthographic processing (Surface Dyslexia), language processing (Semantic Dyslexia), or several processing deficits (Mixed Dyslexia).

2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder affects more than 6.4 million children, and although ADHD is not considered a Specific Learning Disability, it can cause issues with learning and producing work in school. Students with ADHD have difficulty paying attention and staying on task in traditional classroom settings. They tend to perform better in smaller learning environments that provide more interaction and movement. Children with ADHD are often very creative, out of the box thinkers, so activities that are novel and engaging are more appealing.

3. Dyscalculia/Specific Learning Disability in math affects approximately 6 to 6.5 percent of children and adults. There is much less information on Dyscalculia, but like Dyslexia there are several subtypes. Dyscalculia can cause issues with learning basic numeracy concepts and spatial processing weaknesses, which can interfere with math problem solving (Semantic Dyscalculia). They may struggle with learning calculation procedures like regrouping and switching operations within a multi-step math problem (Procedural Dyscalculia), or they may struggle to learn and recall basic math facts quickly and accurately (Verbal Dyscalculia). Children with Dyslexia often also have Verbal Dyscalculia, because numbers and letters are both symbols, which can be difficult to store and retrieve.

4. Dysgraphia/Specific Learning Disability in writing interferes with the ability to write and impacts 5 – 20 percent of the population. Dysgraphia can be caused by fine motor weaknesses that interfere with letter formation and handwriting. They may fatigue easily and written expression is limited. This type of Dysgraphia tends to be treated by an Occupational Therapist. It can also be associated with Dyslexia, so it interferes with spelling, mechanics and basic grammatical structure of writing. This subtype of Dysgraphia requires a research based educational intervention similar to Dyslexia. Expressive language delays can also be a foundation issue that impacts writing.

Additional Resources: www.ldamerica.org (Learning Disabilities America), www.ADD.org (Attention Deficit Disorder Association), www.CHAD.org (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder), www.dyslexia.org (International Dyslexia Association), www.ldonline.org (Learning Disabilities resources), www.nclld.org (National Center for Learning Disabilities), www.ncapd.org (National Coalition on Auditory Processing Disorders (state-by-state referral network)), www.njclld.org (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities), www.readingrockets.org (for struggling readers), www.smartkidswithld.org (parental support network)

Joyful Music Therapy
When words fail
music speaks.

ORLANDO'S FIRST PRIVATE MUSIC THERAPY CENTER
Established 2011

Board-Certified Music Therapist
Individual and group sessions
Drums Alive cardio drumming
Adapted instrument lessons
Musical theatre and summer programs
Music therapy for schools and community
Family Empowerment scholarship providers

Call 407-489-1783 or email us for more information at
info@joyfulmusictherapy.com • www.JoyfulMusicTherapy.com