

Tipsheet: Learning Disabilities in Children

Some signs of learning disabilities in children include:

Preschool

- Late talking, compared to other children
- Pronunciation problems
- Slow vocabulary growth, often unable to find the right word
- Difficulty rhyming words
- Trouble learning numbers, the alphabet, days of the week
- Extremely restless and easily distracted
- Trouble interacting with peers
- Poor ability to follow directions or routines

Grades K-4

- Slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds
- Confuses basic words (run, eat, want)
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors including:
 - Letter reversals (b / d)
 - Inversions (m / w)
 - Transpositions (felt / left)
 - Substitutions (house / home)
 - Transposes number sequences and confuses arithmetic signs: (,) (-) (x) (/) (=)
- Slow to recall facts
- Slow to learn new skills; relies heavily on memorization
- Impulsiveness, lack of planning
- Unstable pencil grip
- Trouble learning about time
- Poor coordination, unaware of physical surroundings, prone to accidents

Learning Disability Screening

You have the right to have your child tested at school at no charge to you. This usually means your child will meet with several experts from the school like a child psychologist and a learning disabilities teacher. Your child will most likely take a series of tests to see if they have one or more disabilities.

If your child does have a learning disability, the school team would then meet with you and present a plan for your consideration. This plan is usually called an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is a written document that summarizes your child's educational performance, plans short-term educational goals and outlines annual goals. The plan also provides methods of measuring progress.

You are a big part of the IEP plan, so don't be afraid to speak up. You have the power to accept the plan, reject it or ask for it to be modified. You have a right to get help from others to help you with the plan. Some of those people may include:

- A lawyer
- A non-profit organization
- A doctor or other professional
- Other family members

Once your child's plan is decided on, many different scenarios might happen. For example:

- Your child may be placed in a special class for some or all of the day.
- Your child may be pulled out of class for just one purpose.
- Someone may come in the regular class to work with your child.
- The school may provide your child with special books, equipment or teaching methods.



Tipsheet: Learning Disabilities in Children

Learning Disability Resources

- [Minneapolis special education agencies](#)
- [St. Paul special education agencies](#)
- Find all United Way partner agencies that focus on disabilities. [More](#).

Source: United Way 2-1-1™ / The Twin Cities Beehive: www.beehivetwincities.org
