



Is It a Learning Disability?

Children with learning disabilities have a neurological disorder that causes them to learn in a different way than other people. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia are common examples. If your child is having problems at school, or outside the classroom, a learning disability may be the cause. Consider these possible signs:

- child fails to speak by age 3
- child has difficulty with motor skills (buttoning, tying, climbing) by age 5
- child dislikes school or is having difficulty learning

Symptoms of ADHD

- inability to stay focused
- hyperactivity
- impulsiveness
- inability to wait for a turn
- blurts out questions and comments
- lacks social skills
- poor short-term memory
- mood disorders
- other learning disabilities

Symptoms of dyslexia

- inability to recognize letters and words on a printed page
- reading ability much below the expected level for the age of the child
- spells the same words several different ways
- reverses entire words or part of a word

What to do

Seek help from a qualified professional as early as possible. Children whose problems are recognized early can overcome or learn to compensate for their disabilities.

Contact your child's school. Public schools are required by federal law to evaluate children who may have a learning disability. The school also is required to provide special education for your child.

Learn more about your child's learning problem. Build on his strengths and adjust to his weaknesses. Help minimize stress and develop your child's self-esteem by thinking ahead when it comes to his limitations. Pay attention to your child's talents, skills and interests, and encourage her to develop them.

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