

LD Basics

A Parent's Guide by SchwabLearning.org



Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics: **A Parent's Guide by Schwablearning.org**

If you and your child are just starting out on the LD Journey, our E-ssential Guide to LD Basics will put you on the fast track to information! This guide covers the fundamental facts about learning disabilities and includes articles and expert interviews written especially for SchwabLearning.org, along with suggested resources. You might share this guide with family members and your child's teacher to increase their awareness and understanding of LD.

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A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

LD Fast Facts

To understand the impact learning disabilities have on children and young adults in the United States, it's helpful to look at some key statistics. This fact sheet provides a current snapshot of those figures.

- **Nearly 2.9 million students** are currently receiving special education services for learning disabilities in the U.S. (Source: *24th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2002*)
- **50% of students** receiving special education services through the public schools are identified as having learning disabilities. (Source: *24th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2002*)
- The **majority of all individuals with learning disabilities** have difficulties in the area of reading. (Source: *President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002*)
- **Two-thirds of secondary students with learning disabilities are reading three or more grade levels behind.** Twenty percent are reading five or more grade levels behind. (Source: *The Achievements of Youth with Disabilities During Secondary School, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2, 2003*)
- **44% of parents** who noticed their child exhibiting signs of difficulty with learning waited a year or more before acknowledging their child might have a serious problem. (Source: *Roper Starch Poll: Measuring Progress in Public and Parental Understanding of Learning Disabilities, 2000*)
- **More than 27% of children** with learning disabilities drop out of high school, compared to 11% of the general student population. (Source: *24th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2002*)
- Two-thirds of high school graduates with learning disabilities were rated "not qualified" to **enter a four-year college**, compared to 37% of non-disabled graduates. (Source: *Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education: A Profile of Preparation, Participation, and Outcomes, NCES, 1999*)
- **Only 13% of students with learning disabilities** (compared to 53% of students in general population) have attended a 4-year post-secondary school program within two years of leaving high school. (Source: *National Longitudinal Transition Study, 1994*)
- There is no causal link between **learning disabilities and substance abuse**, however the risk factors for adolescent substance abuse are very similar to the behavioral effects of LD, such as reduced self-esteem and academic difficulty. (Source: *National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse, 1999*)

LD Fast Facts

- **46% of all students with disabilities** enrolled at post-secondary education institutions reported having learning disabilities (LD). In public 2-year institutions, 38% of all students with disabilities have LD. At public 4-year institutions, 51% of students with disabilities have LD. (Source: *National Center for Education Statistics, 1999*)
- Since 1992, the percentage of students with learning disabilities who spend more than **80% of their instructional time in general education** has more than doubled, from 21% to 45%. (Source: *24th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2002*)



A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Learning Disabilities — An Overview

You wonder why different professionals come to different conclusions about whether or not your child has a learning disability (LD). Why did the private assessment results say that your child has LD, but the public school disagreed?

What Is a Learning Disability?

A learning disability affects the way a child of average to above average intelligence receives, processes, or expresses information, and lasts throughout life. It impacts the ability to learn the basic skills of reading, writing, or math.

The Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities (CCLD), a coalition of national organizations within the learning disabilities community, defines LD as “a neurobiological disorder in which a person’s brain works or is structured differently.”

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders — Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), used by psychologists and medical doctors, doesn’t list “learning disability,” but describes disorders in reading, mathematics, and written expression. Academic achievement, as measured by standardized tests, must be substantially below expectations for the child’s chronological age, intelligence, and age-appropriate education.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that provides for special education, defines “specific learning disability” as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. Skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and/or mathematics may be negatively affected.

What a Learning Disability Is Not

- Attention disorders, such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and learning disabilities often occur at the same time, but they’re not the same.
- Learning disabilities are not the same as mental retardation, autism, hearing or visual impairment, physical disabilities, emotional disorders, or the normal process of learning a second language.
- Learning disabilities aren’t caused by lack of educational opportunities, such as frequent changes of schools, poor school attendance, or lack of instruction in basic skills.

Facts about Learning Disabilities:

- Difficulty with basic reading and language skills are the most common learning disabilities.
- Learning disabilities may be inherited.
- Learning disabilities affect girls as frequently as they do boys.
- Kids don’t outgrow or get cured of LD.
- With support and intervention, kids with LD can be successful in learning and life.

Learning Disabilities — An Overview

What Should You Look For?

Most kids have some problems in school at one time or another. Some struggle with a specific subject while others have trouble relating to a certain style of teaching. Sometimes learning disabilities are blamed on lack of motivation, immaturity, or behavior problems. But if your child has significant ongoing problems with the “3 R’s” — basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic — then he may have a learning disability.

Because each child has a unique set of strengths and challenges, you’ll want to talk with the teacher, other school staff, family members, and your child to get their input. As you think about the following factors, ask yourself if your child has shown these characteristics to a greater degree than normal for her age, over a period of time, and in different environments, e.g., school, home, child care settings, community.

“If you suspect that your child may have LD, consult with her teacher and other school staff to decide next steps.”

Preschool

- Speaks later than most kids
- Is unable to find the right word when carrying on a conversation
- Can’t rapidly name words in a specific category
- Has difficulty rhyming
- Has trouble learning alphabet, days of the week, colors, shapes, numbers
- Is extremely restless and easily distracted
- Can’t follow directions or routines

Grades K-4

- Is slow to learn the connections between letters and sounds
- Can’t blend sounds to make words
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors
- Has problems remembering sequences and telling time
- Is slow to learn new skills
- Has difficulty planning

Grades 5-8

- Is slow to learn prefixes, suffixes, root words, and other reading strategies
- Avoids reading aloud
- Has difficulty with word problems in math

Learning Disabilities — An Overview

- Spells the same word differently in a single piece of writing
- Avoids reading and writing tasks
- Has difficulty remembering or understanding what she has read
- Works slowly
- Has difficulty understanding and/or generalizing concepts
- Misreads directions and information

“With the right support and interventions, your child can succeed in school and become a successful adult.”

Assessment for LD

If you suspect that your child may have LD, consult with her teacher and other school staff to decide next steps. A prereferral support team may be one option.

Remember that the public school is obligated to assess your child to see if she has a disability and needs special education services to benefit from her general education program. This is true whether she attends a public or private school. The public school is not legally required to provide a diagnosis, give you more information for her tutor, or qualify her for extra time on college entrance exams.

Under law, LD must be identified by a group of professionals from different fields, a multidisciplinary team, who has assessed your child. While public schools must consider reports you obtained privately, they have the right to assess your child before making any decisions.

Following assessment, the public school team will meet with you to discuss the results and decide if your child is eligible for special education services at the public school. Whether or not she's eligible, evaluation results can be used to plan her educational program, help her understand her learning disabilities, and find ways to be successful.

What Can You Do?

With the right support and interventions, your child can succeed in school and become a successful adult. You can help her in the following ways:

- Speak with her openly and acknowledge her learning difficulties.
- Remind her that she is intelligent but has a different way of learning.
- Identify her strengths and talents and encourage her to develop them.
- Coach her on strategies that will help her through her learning challenges.
- Support her efforts to succeed.
- Be available to help her with homework.
- Be a role model — read a book or newspaper or write a letter while she studies.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- Work collaboratively with school staff.

Learning Disabilities — An Overview

- Understand the educational system.
- Listen to your child when she wants to talk.
- Teach her to understand her own needs and advocate for them.
- Appreciate her for her uniqueness, special qualities, and contributions.

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About the Author

Jan Baumel, M.S., Licensed Educational Psychologist, spent 35 years in education as a teacher, school psychologist, and special education administrator before joining Schwab Learning. Today she is a consultant to local school districts and university field supervisor for student teachers.



A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Is It a Learning Disability or Something Else?

Why did the public school say that your child doesn't qualify for any services when she spends hours on her homework? Why doesn't she get better grades? Could she have a learning disability? What can you do for her?

Struggles Are Real

Everyone struggles with learning at one time or another. Just because your child isn't eligible for special education services or a 504 Plan doesn't mean her problems aren't real. If she was assessed by the public school and didn't qualify for any special services, the good news is that her test scores show she's learning. Be sure to compliment her about the strengths and achievements her testing showed. Encourage her to stay motivated because that's the key to success.

She may feel overwhelmed by the amount of work expected of her or panicked about how to do her homework. Could anxiety be a factor? Emotions have a strong effect on whether a child is able to learn. Teach her ways to relax when she begins to feel anxious — count to 10, take a deep breath, practice yoga, take a break, get a drink of water — depending on whether she's at school or at home.

If she attends a school with many high achievers, she may struggle with curriculum even though her test scores indicate average skills. This kind of competition can be frustrating and lead to feelings of inadequacy. You'll have to decide if she's in the right school for her or if a change needs to be made to protect her self-esteem.

A child may feel she's the only one in the class who doesn't understand, has to work hard, or spends hours on homework. Check with the teacher or other parents to see if this is realistic. Examine your own expectations for her performance and decide whether she's putting unrealistic demands on herself. Let her know how proud you are of her hard work, and help her find ways to ease up on self-expectations. Remind her that no one is perfect.

Certain grade level transitions create a jump in expectations for kids. For example, the transition to middle school can place a strain on all kids, but if a child already has problems organizing, then this transition becomes exceptionally stressful. Since academic stress points can be anticipated, you can prepare your child with necessary support and structure ahead of time.

Sometimes problems are specific to a subject area. A conference between you, your child, and the teacher can help to identify where the breakdown occurs. Does she have the necessary basic skills, understand the vocabulary, need to review the subject matter with you or a study group, need to get additional explanation from the teacher, or work with a tutor? Once you get this information, you can plan ways to help her learn.

“Just because your child isn't eligible for special education services or a 504 Plan doesn't mean her learning problems aren't real.”

Is It a Learning Disability or Something Else?

Provide Support

It's important to let her know that you believe in her and recognize her efforts. She needs to see you're "in her corner" — there to listen, provide support and guidance, and seek help for her.

Remember that these struggles are only a part of the special and unique person she is. As her parent, you'll want to find ways to reinforce instruction, keep her motivated, lessen the pressure, and celebrate her talents.

- Help her set realistic expectations for herself.
- Let her know that it's OK to ask for help when she doesn't get a new concept or understand directions.
- Meet with her teacher(s) and make a plan of how you can work together to help her.
- Help her to organize her materials and develop a plan for effective studying.
- Find ways to help her with her homework.
- If necessary, provide academic support programs outside of school hours, such as tutoring or peer study groups.
- If necessary to help her deal with anxiety and unrealistic expectations, get some counseling.
- Identify her strengths and interests, and encourage her to continue to build them.

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A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Priscilla Vail Explains How Parents Can Detect Learning Problems

SchwabLearning.org asks:

We know the earlier a child gets help with a learning difficulty, the better the results. What are some of the classic warning signs, or possible predictors of problems in school, parents should be aware of? Do the "labels" often assigned to children with school problems help or hurt?

Priscilla Vail, M.A.T. Answers:

In the olden days, railroad crossings had signs saying Stop! Look! Listen! Those words are still valuable today. We need to Stop and give ourselves time and space to understand what's going on around us. We need to Look for danger or caution flags to avoid colliding with onrushing trains. We also need to Listen. As children grow and venture beyond the safety of home, it is as if they are approaching a railroad crossing, and an intersection with school, community and the world. To understand warning signals, you, as a parent, need to Stop! Look! Listen!

“To understand warning signals, you, as a parent, need to Stop! Look! Listen!”

Many academic difficulties are language based, so the first place to look for red flags is in the language system. Here are six areas:

- **The age at which a child starts to speak can indicate that child's comfort with language.** Children who understand and use words easily have figured out that the sounds people make in conversation represent different things and people in the world: "Ma-Ma," "cookie," or "baby." First, children begin to understand the language they hear, then they mimic language in return. Most adults take this for granted, but we must Stop! and appreciate what a complex task the child is performing.

Some children catch on to words early. For others, language is a hard game or a difficult system. These children are sending a warning signal. If spoken language is difficult or unappealing, usually written language (reading and writing, letters and numbers) will be too.

- **Receptive language is what the child takes in, first through listening and later through listening and reading.** You as a parent need to notice whether your child's receptive language channel works effectively. Does your child enjoy listening to stories? Can your child tell you what happened in the story? Can your child remember the high points (or the details) of yesterday's story? Does your child absorb those pieces of family news they're not meant to hear: Uncle Ernie's on a binge, or why does Aunt Sophie wear those eyelashes at her age?

Children who absorb such information comfortably are demonstrating good receptive language skills. Children who are uninterested in stories, do not follow and remember a story line, or don't pick up news from conversation are flying a danger flag. They will miss news, explanations, questions, and concepts now. Later on, the process of reading may either not make sense to them or may be too difficult. At all ages, we need to Stop! Look! and Listen! to a child's receptive language.



Priscilla Vail Explains How Parents Can Detect Learning Problems

- **Expressive language is the vehicle for giving out ideas, questions, emotions, or facts.** In normal development, children practice expressively what they have taken in receptively. Parents need to Listen!

Does your child use pronouns, plurals, and verb tenses correctly? Most children are reasonably accurate by first grade. The elementary school child who says, "Here are the thingies I branged for Tom and I" is telling us a lot.

Can your child retrieve needed words smoothly? The child who strains when trying to use such words as "marker," "basketball," or "peanut butter" is, in effect, saying, "Listen! I have trouble finding the words I need."

Does your child keep sounds in correct sequence or do individual sounds or syllables slide around? Is it an "elephant" or an "ephelant"? A "hamburger" or a "hanga-burger"? A "birthday party" or a "birthparty day"? Children who tangle their sound sequences in spontaneous speech are warning us they will probably have trouble stringing sounds together when trying to read words, or breaking sounds apart when trying to spell.

Litter and clutter are warning signals. Most children can say what they mean so that others can understand them. Children who have trouble getting to the point, who litter and clutter their speech with distracting, unnecessary information, are telling us their thought processes don't go straight to the target. This difficulty will hamper their reading, classroom discussion and, above all, their writing all the way through school ... and life. They need help.

- **Some children have trouble with the mechanics of reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic.** It takes them a long time to learn their letter sounds and to recognize sight words. They may have trouble with pencil grip and handwriting. In the manner of many beginners, they may reverse their letters or numerals. Unfortunately, some children today never receive direct instruction in these early level mechanical skills. But research shows all children need this information. Those who still struggle after instruction that works for their peers need multi-sensory instruction which brings together eyes, ears, fingers, and muscles.
- **Some children have trouble organizing themselves in time and space.** They aren't sure where things belong, what to do first, and what comes last. These concepts underlie smooth function in the adult world as well as in childhood. "Nexterday" is a long time coming.

Lots of kids have trouble with the vocabulary of time and space — later, until, whenever, in a while, on time, at two o'clock. Teach these words to your child as if they were terms in a foreign language. For some children they are. Build the structure of time and space into your family life as soon as possible. Since apples don't fall far from trees, you might give yourself some help, too.

- **Some children misunderstand social cues.** They don't know how to ask to join a game or to negotiate sharing or taking turns. Children who are isolated, or who isolate themselves by their behavior, don't do well on group projects or in team sports, are seldom elected to class office, and usually sit home alone when others are at birthday parties. The sadness, anger,

“Labels are dangerous when they replace a person’s humanity and individuality, but they are invaluable when they provide the precise terminology to decide who needs what, when, where, why, and how.”

Priscilla Vail explains how Parents can Detect Learning Problems

or frustration born of being “out” may interfere with concentration, memory, and general availability for school work, not to mention fun.

Are labels helpful or harmful? Let me tell you about my boatshed and me.

At summer's end, our family puts the canoe, the paddles, lifejackets, Frisbees, and fishing gear, along with any unused canned goods, in the boatshed. One year, by mistake, we left the cans on the floor where they sloshed around in surging winter storm water. In June, the cans were there, intact, but their labels had soaked off. Although I could identify a can of soup, I had no idea whether it was shrimp bisque, chicken with stars, split pea, or jellied consomme. Was this can baked beans, artichoke hearts, or stewed tomatoes? Which was for kids, which would be delicious with a dollop of yogurt and a sprinkle of curry? Which needed to be piping hot, which chilled? For the food offered to match the appetite of the recipient, we needed to know what was what and who was ready for lunch.

The same is true for children and schooling. If Martha or Sam has trouble learning letter sounds, we need to prepare multisensory training. If Joe and Dawn have trouble with reading comprehension because they have weak receptive language, let's say so, and target some specific help. If Jamil goes through math like a buzz saw, but can't remember how to spell “friend,” let's give him scope with numbers and help with spelling. We need to Stop! Look! and Listen! Then we need to use the information we gather to make a good plan. Labels are dangerous when they replace a person's humanity and individuality, but they are invaluable when they provide the precise terminology to decide who needs what, when, where, why, and how. After all, what's to be gained by giving watery broth to a student ready for hearty stew, or clam chowder to someone allergic to fish?

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About the Author

Priscilla L. Vail, M.A.T. (1931-2003), a prominent national educator and speaker for 30 years, was an expert in learning disabilities, dyslexia, and giftedness. She authored nine books, eight of which are still in print, offering information and practical advice to parents and educators.



A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Frequently Used Educational Terms

As you address your child's learning or attention problems with teachers and other professionals, you will probably hear many terms that are new or confusing to you. Following is a guide to terms frequently used in educational settings.

Accommodations: Techniques and materials that don't change the basic curriculum but do make learning a little easier or help kids communicate what they know.

Achievement Tests: Measures of acquired knowledge in academic skills, such as reading, math, writing, and science.

Advocacy: Recognizing and communicating needs, rights, and interests on behalf of a child; making informed choices.

Assessment: Process of identifying strengths and needs to assist in educational planning; includes observation, record review, interviews, and tests.

Assistive Technology: Any item, piece of equipment, or system that helps kids with disabilities bypass, work around, or compensate for specific learning deficits.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD): A neurobehavioral disorder that causes an individual to be inattentive or hyperactive/impulsive, or to display a combination of those symptoms.

Auditory Discrimination: Ability to identify differences between words and sounds that are similar.

Auditory Processing: Ability to understand spoken language in kids with normal hearing.

Collaboration: Working in partnership on behalf of a child, e.g., parent and teacher, or special education teacher and general education teacher.

Compliance Complaint: Complaint filed with the state department of education or local school district by a person who feels that an educational law has been broken.

Discrepancy: Difference between 2 tests, such as between measures of intellectual ability and academic achievement.

Due Process: Procedural safeguards to protect the rights of the parent/guardian and the child under federal and state laws and regulations for special education; includes voluntary mediation or a due process hearing to resolve differences with the school.

Dysarthria: Disorder of fine motor muscles involved in speech; affects ability to pronounce sounds correctly.

Dyscalculia: Problems with basic math skills; trouble calculating.

Frequently Used Educational Terms

Dysgraphia: Difficulty writing legibly with age-appropriate speed.

Dyslexia: A language-based learning disability. In addition to reading problems, dyslexia can also involve difficulty with writing, spelling, listening, speaking, and math.

Dysnomia: Difficulty remembering names or recalling specific words; word-finding problems.

Dyspraxia: Difficulty performing and sequencing fine motor movements, such as buttoning.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Entitles a public school child with a disability to an educational program and related services to meet her unique educational needs at no cost to the parents; based on IEP; under public supervision and meets state standards.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Federal law that provides for special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): Written plan to meet the unique educational needs of a child with a disability who requires special education services to benefit from the general education program; applies to kids enrolled in public schools.

Individual Transition Plan (ITP): The section of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) that outlines transition services and helps identify and develop goals which need to be accomplished for the student to meet his post-high school goals.

Informed Consent: Agreement in writing from parents that they have been informed and understand implications of special education evaluation and program decisions; permission is voluntary and may be withdrawn.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): Score used to indicate general cognitive ability; average range of intelligence, which includes 84 percent of the population, is 85 to 115.

Learning Disability (LD): A neurobiological disorder which affects the way a person of average to above average intelligence receives, processes, or expresses information. LD impacts one's ability to learn the basic skills of reading, writing, or math.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Educational instruction in a place that encourages maximum interaction between disabled and nondisabled kids and is appropriate to both.

Modification: Modifications are changes in the delivery, content, or instructional level of a subject or test. They result in changed or lowered expectations and create a different standard for kids with disabilities than for those without disabilities.

Multidisciplinary Team: Professionals with different training and expertise; may include, but not limited to, any combination of the following public school personnel — general education teacher, special education teacher, administrator, school psychologist, speech and language therapist, counselor — and the parent.

Primary Language: Language other than English, or other mode of communication such as sign language, that the child first learned, or the language that's spoken in the home.

Procedural Safeguards: Legal requirements that ensure parents and kids will be treated fairly and equally in the decision-making process about special education.

Frequently Used Educational Terms

Pupil Records: Personal information about the child that is kept by the school system and is available for review by legal guardians and others directly involved in her education.

Referral: Written request for assessment to see if the child is a “child with a disability” who needs special education and related services to benefit from her general education program.

Resiliency: Ability to pursue personal goals and bounce back from challenges.

Retention: The practice of having a student repeat a certain grade-level (year) in school; also called “grade retention.”

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Federal civil rights law requiring school programs and buildings to be accessible to children with disabilities; protects from discrimination.

Self-Advocacy: Child’s ability to explain specific learning needs and seek necessary assistance or accommodations.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of eligible kids whose educational needs can’t be met through modification of the regular instructional program; provides for a range of options for services, such as pull out programs and special day classes; available to kids enrolled in public schools.

Transition: Process of preparing kids to function in future environments and emphasizing movement from one educational program to another, such as from elementary school to middle school, or from school to work.

Visual Processing: Among kids with normal sight, the ability to interpret visual information.

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Jan Baumel, M.S., Licensed Educational Psychologist, spent 35 years in education as a teacher, school psychologist, and special education administrator before joining Schwab Learning. Today she is a consultant to local school districts and university field supervisor for student teachers.



A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Specialists in the Learning Disabilities Field

Being a parent isn't easy. Parenting a child with learning disabilities (LD) is even more challenging because you may be involved with a variety of professionals during your child's education. Here's a brief list of some of them and an explanation of the services they provide.

Attorney: provides legal assistance to parents about issues pertaining to federal and state special education laws and regulations.

Advocate: represents parents in legal issues related to special education but may not have legal training.

Audiologist: assesses for degree of hearing loss and advises on devices for hearing amplification.

Child psychiatrist: specializes in the assessment and treatment of behavior and emotional aspects of infants, children, and adolescents; medical doctor who can prescribe medication.

Clinical psychologist: provides non-medical diagnosis and therapeutic treatment of emotional and behavioral problems for individuals or groups.

Developmental behavioral pediatrician: focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of developmental disorders in children; medical doctor who can prescribe medication.

Educational psychologist: administers psychological and educational assessments, prepares written report that interprets test results and behavior, and consults regarding education and behavior.

Educational therapist: assesses educational needs; develops and carries out programs for school-related behavior and learning problems, especially LD.

Neurologist: specializes in diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the brain and nervous system; medical doctor who can prescribe medication.

Neuropsychologist: assesses brain functioning and its relationship to learning and behavior through psychological tests.

Occupational therapist: assesses for and provides training to improve muscular strength, motor, or sensory coordination and functioning.

Pediatrician: specializes in the primary care of infants, children, and adolescents; medical doctor who can prescribe medication.

Social worker: provides counseling for individuals and families.

Specialists in the Learning Disabilities Field

Speech and language therapist: provides assessment and training to improve communication skills.

Tutor: provides instructional support in academic areas; no specific training requirements; may or may not be a credentialed teacher.

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Jan Baumel, M.S., Licensed Educational Psychologist, spent 35 years in education as a teacher, school psychologist, and special education administrator before joining Schwab Learning. Today she is a consultant to local school districts and university field supervisor for student teachers



A Guide to Learning Disabilities (LD) Basics

Resources

An Overview of Learning Disabilities

Website

American Academy of Pediatrics:

Diagnosing and Treating Learning Disabilities

http://www.medem.com/MedLB/article_detailb.cfm?article_ID=/ZZZFP21YQ7C

National Center for Learning Disabilities:

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<http://www.ld.org/LDInfoZone/index.cfm>

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities:

Learning Disabilities Fact Sheet

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs7txt.htm>

National Institute of Mental Health:

Learning Disabilities

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/learndis.htm>

Identifying Learning Disabilities

Books

About Dyslexia, Unraveling the Myth

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0935493344/schwabfoundation/>

By Priscilla L. Vail, Linda Skladal

Beyond Baby Talk: From Sounds to Sentences, A Parent's Complete Guide to Language Development

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0761526471/schwabfoundation/>

By Kenn Apel and Julie J. Masterson

Common Ground: Whole Language and Phonics Working Together

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0935493271/schwabfoundation/>

By Priscilla L. Vail

Emotion: The On/Off Switch for Learning

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1567620566/schwabfoundation/>

By Priscilla Vail

Resources

Identifying Learning Disabilities

Books

Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know and Ways to Help

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0452262429/schwabfoundation/>

By Priscilla L. Vail

What's Wrong With Me?: Learning Disabilities at Home and School

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0912752386/schwabfoundation/>

By Regina Cicci

The Will to Learn: A Guide for Motivating Young People

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0521556791/schwabfoundation/>

By Martin V. Covington

Words Fail Me: How Language Works and What Happens When It Doesn't

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1567620620/schwabfoundation/>

By Priscilla L. Vail

Website

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:

Language Development — Birth to Five Years

<http://www.asha.org/speech/development/languagedevelopment.cfm>

Kid's Health

Developing Your Child's Self-Esteem

kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self_esteem.html

Raising Resilient Kids

What is Resilience?

www.raisingresilientkids.com/resources/articles/what_is.html

Statistics about Learning Disabilities

Website

HEATH Resource Center Web site

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>

National Center for Education Statistics

<http://nces.ed.gov/>

Roper Starch Poll: Measuring Progress in Public and Parental Understanding of Learning Disabilities, 2000

<http://www.ld.org/press/roper2000.cfm>

Visit Schwab Learning's Online Resources

 SchwabLearning.org is a parent's guide to helping kids with learning difficulties.

We'll help you understand how to:

- **Identify** your child's problem by working with teachers, doctors, and other professionals.
- **Manage** your child's challenges at school and home by collaborating with teachers to obtain educational and behavioral support, and by using effective parenting strategies.
- **Connect** with other parents who know what you are going through. You'll find support and inspiration in their personal stories and on our Parent-to-Parent message boards.
- Locate **resources** including Schwab Learning publications, plus additional books and websites.

SchwabLearning.org—free and reliable information at your fingertips, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Sparktop.org™ is a one-of-a-kind website created expressly for kids ages 8-12 with learning difficulties including learning disabilities (LD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). Through games, activities, and creativity tools, kids at SparkTop.org can:

- Find information about how their brain works, and get tips on how to succeed in school and life.
- Showcase their creativity and be recognized for their strengths.
- Safely connect with other kids who know what they are going through.

SparkTop.org is free, carries no advertising, and is fully compliant with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Schwab Learning is a nonprofit program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation.