

Learning Disabilities Checklist

Most people have problems with learning and behavior from time to time. During the school years, parents and educators should be on the alert for consistent (and persistent) patterns of difficulty that children and adolescents may experience over time as they may signal an underlying learning disability (LD). While variations in the course of development are to be expected, unevenness or lags in the mastery of skills and behaviors, even with children as young as 4 or 5, should not be ignored. And because LD can co-occur with other disorders, it's important to keep careful and complete records of observations and impressions so they can be shared among parent, educators and related service providers when making important decisions about needed services and supports.

Keep in mind that LD is a term that describes a heterogeneous ('mixed bag') group of disorders that impact listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, math, and social skills. And remember: learning disabilities do not go away! A learning disability is not something that can be outgrown or that is 'cured' by medication, therapy, or expert tutoring. So, early recognition of warning signs, well-targeted screening and assessment, effective intervention, and ongoing monitoring of progress are critical to helping individuals with LD to succeed in school, in the workplace, and in life.

The following Learning Disabilities Checklist is designed as a helpful guide and not as a tool to pinpoint specific learning disabilities. The more characteristics you check, the more likely that the individual described is at risk for (or shows signs of) learning disabilities. When filling out this form, think about the person's behavior over at least the past six months. And when you're done, don't wait to seek assistance from school personnel or other professionals.

DOMAINS AND BEHAVIORS <i>Shaded area indicates a characteristic is more likely to apply at that stage of life. Check all that apply</i>	Pre-school/ Kinder- garten	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	High School & Adult
Gross and Fine Motor Skills				
Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over				
Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-hand coordination (i.e., piano lessons, basketball, baseball)				
Has trouble with buttons, hooks, snaps, zippers and trouble learning to tie shoes				
Creates art work that is immature for age				
Demonstrates poor ability to color or write 'within the lines'				
Grasps pencil awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting				
Experiences difficulty using small objects or items that demand precision (i.e., Legos, puzzle pieces, tweezers, scissors)				
Dislikes and avoids writing and drawing tasks				
Language				
Demonstrates early delays in learning to speak				
Has difficulty modulating voice (i.e., too soft, too loud)				
Has trouble naming people or objects				
Has difficulty staying on topic				
Inserts invented words into conversation				
Has difficulty re-telling what has just been said				
Uses vague, imprecise language and has a limited vocabulary				
Demonstrates slow and halting speech, using lots of fillers (i.e., uh, um, and, you know, so)				
Uses poor grammar or misuses words in conversation				
Mispronounces words frequently				
Confuses words with others that sound similar				

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Language (con't)				
Inserts malapropisms ('slips of the tongue') into conversation (i.e., a rolling stone gathers no moths; he was a man of great statue)				
Has difficulty rhyming				
Has limited interest in books or stories				
Has difficulty understanding instructions or directions				
Has trouble understanding idioms, proverbs, colloquialisms, humor, and/or puns (note: take into account regional and cultural factors)				
Has difficulty with pragmatic skills (i.e., understands the relationship between speaker and listener, stays on topic, gauges the listeners degree of knowledge, makes inferences based on a speaker's verbal and non-verbal cues)				
Reading				
Confuses similar-looking letters and numbers				
Has difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words				
Frequently loses place while reading				
Confuses similar-looking words (i.e., beard/bread)				
Reverses letter order in words (i.e., saw/was)				
Demonstrates poor memory for printed words				
Has weak comprehension of ideas and themes				
Has significant trouble learning to read				
Has trouble naming letters				
Has problems associating letter and sounds, understanding the difference between sounds in words or blending sounds into words				
Guesses at unfamiliar words rather than using word analysis skills				
Reads slowly				
Substitutes or leaves out words while reading				

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Reading (con't)				
Has poor retention of new vocabulary				
Dislikes and avoids reading or reads reluctantly				
Written Language				
Dislikes and avoids writing and copying				
Demonstrates delays in learning to copy and write				
Writing is messy and incomplete, with many cross outs and erasures				
Has difficulty remembering shapes of letter and numerals				
Frequently reverses letters, numbers and symbols				
Uses uneven spacing between letters and words, and has trouble staying 'on the line'				
Copies inaccurately (i.e., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers)				
Spells poorly and inconsistently (i.e., the same word appears differently other places in the same document)				
Has difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work				
Has difficulty preparing outlines and organizing written assignments				
Fails to develop ideas in writing so written work is incomplete and too brief				
Expresses written ideas in a disorganized way				
Math				
Has difficulty with simple counting and one-to-one correspondence between number symbols and items/objects				
Difficulty mastering number knowledge (i.e. recognition of quantities without counting)				
Has difficulty with learning and memorizing basic addition and subtraction facts				

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Math (con't)				
Has difficulty learning strategic counting principles (i.e. by 2, 5, 10, 100)				
Poorly aligns numbers resulting in computation errors				
Has difficulty estimating quantity (i.e., quantity, value)				
Has difficulty with comparisons (i.e., less than, greater than)				
Has trouble telling time				
Has trouble conceptualizing the passage of time				
Has difficulty counting rapidly or making calculations				
Has trouble learning multiplication tables, formulas and rules				
Has trouble interpreting graphs and charts				
Social/Emotional				
Does not pick up on other people's mood/feelings (i.e., may say the wrong thing at the wrong time)				
May not detect or respond appropriately to teasing				
Has difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group				
Has trouble knowing how to share/express feelings				
Has trouble 'getting to the point' (i.e., gets bogged down in details in conversation)				
Has difficulty with self-control when frustrated				
Has difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment and unexpected challenges				
Has trouble setting realistic social goals				
Has trouble evaluating personal social strengths and challenges				
Is doubtful of own abilities and is prone to attribute successes to luck or outside influences rather than hard work				

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Attention				
Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities				
Has difficulty sustaining attention in work tasks or play activities				
Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace				
Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities				
Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort such as homework and organizing work tasks				
Loses things consistently that are necessary for tasks/activities (i.e., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)				
Is easily distracted by outside influences				
Is forgetful in daily/routine activities				
Other				
Confuses left and right				
Has a poor sense of direction; slow to learn the way around a new place; easily lost or confused in unfamiliar surroundings				
Finds it hard to judge speed and distance (i.e., hard to play certain games, drive a car)				
Trouble reading charts and maps				
Is disorganized and poor at planning				
Often loses things				
Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles				
Has difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time				
Performs inconsistently on tasks from one day to the next				
Has difficulty generalizing (applying) skills from one situation to another				