

Learning Disorders

What is a learning disorder?



A learning disorder is a neurological disorder that affects the way an individual receives and processes information. Learning disorders can impact specific areas, such as reading or math, and can also interfere with higher level processing skills such as

organization and abstract reasoning. It is important to note that children with one or more learning disorders usually have average or above average intelligence but may not be achieving grades at their potential. While learning disorders cannot be cured, academic interventions and support can help individuals overcome challenges and be successful.

What are different types of learning disorders?

Auditory Processing Disorder

- Individuals with this disorder have difficulties processing and making meaning out of sounds. This can impact their ability to understand verbal directions or conversations.

Dyslexia (Reading)

- Dyslexia involves a range of difficulties associated with the processing of language, particularly reading, although it can impact any task that involves language.

Dyscalculia (Math)

- Dyscalculia involves difficulties processing or understanding number-related concepts or the functions required to perform math problems.

Dysgraphia (Writing)

- Dysgraphia involves difficulties with written expression, such as spelling or organizing letters on a page. It can also manifest as messy handwriting.

What signs should I look for?

Early detection and intervention is crucial to ensure that children are able to progress academically. Difficulties may vary depending on the type of learning disorder. Kids may often demonstrate behavioral difficulties in the classroom or home environment when presented with academic tasks (e.g., refusal, avoidance). Parents may also notice lower grades in subjects correlating with their child's learning disorder.

Learning Disorders

How are learning disorders diagnosed?

If you are concerned that your child may have a learning disorder, you can request an evaluation from your child's school. Public schools generally have a school psychologist assigned to them who is trained to evaluate and diagnose learning disorders as well as formulate recommendations for academic interventions. Under federal law, students with identified learning disorders may qualify for special education services that track their progress and achievement of certain benchmarks.

If you are unable to obtain an evaluation through your school, referrals for a private psychoeducational evaluation can be made by school personnel, physicians, mental health professionals, or from a child's parents directly.

Psychoeducational evaluations are typically conducted over multiple testing sessions and include the completion of behavior checklists and interviews completed by parents, teachers, and other health care providers. Results are compiled into a detailed written report, which includes recommendations for school and home-based interventions.



How else can I help my child?

Children and adolescents with learning disorders are more likely than their peers to have other related neurobehavioral, emotional, or mental health conditions, such as ADHD and anxiety disorders. A comprehensive evaluation can help to determine if your child may benefit from a referral to a psychiatrist or other mental health professional to treat such conditions.

Who do I contact to find out more?

If interested in referrals for psychoeducational evaluations or other mental health services please contact us as listed below.

Mind Health Institute, Newport Beach

450 Newport Center Drive, Suite 380 • Newport Beach, CA 92660
949-891-0307 • www.mhi-nb.com

Mind Health Institute, Laguna Beach

361 Forest Avenue, Suite 205 • Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-391-4669 • www.mhi-lb.com

