

How does my child qualify for special services?

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Rules and Regulations stipulate that the student must have an IQ that does not qualify him/her as mentally retarded and a severe discrepancy between the student's academic performance and the level at which he/she should be achieving must be documented. For more Information about testing and eligibility criteria, call the PAVE office nearest you.

Remember, no two children will display the same cluster of symptoms. Even though learning disabled children won't "outgrow" their disability, they can be helped and the earlier the problem is recognized, the more successful the treatment will be. Learn all you can about your child's disability. Join with other parents and professionals for support and information.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Learning Disabilities Assn. of WA
7819-159thPlace NE
Redmond, WA 98052
(800) 536-2343

International Dyslexia Association
The Chester Building, Suite 382
8600 LaSalle Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21286-2044
(410) 296-0232 or (800) 222-3123

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Offices are located throughout the State. Call our main office toll-free at 1-800-572-7368 (v/tty) for the office closest to you.

*Children and youth with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education.
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Parent Training and Information Program

Tips for Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities

Statewide Parent Training and Information Center
6316 So. 12th St.
Tacoma, WA 98465
(253) 565-2266 (v/tty)
1-800-5-PARENT (v/tty)
Fax: (253) 566-8052
E-mail: pave@wapave.org
Website: www.wapave.org

Third Decade of Service

What is a learning disability?

Students with learning disabilities have near or above average intelligence; but have difficulty with one or more of reading, writing, arithmetic, and written language; with remembering what is seen or heard; coordination, paying attention, and sitting still; with understanding the rules of a game and making others understand what one is trying to say; with self-control, (may want to, but is unable); with getting the main point of what is heard or read; with understanding the way they are intended, and organization.

Remember, a learning disability is not the same as being mentally retarded and it is not being lazy or stupid.

What are some of the common characteristics of a learning disabled child?

Some of the common characteristics are: sloppy writing, poor pencil position, spelling problems, letter reversals, mirror writing, pronunciation problems, reversing or omitting and/or adding letters, words or numbers, erratic word memory, poor reading ability, math problems, distractible, short attention span, forgetful, slow, unfinished homework, poor posture, inability to follow instructions, achievement quite low in some areas-but high in others, impulsive, clumsy, right-left confusion, allergies, poor logic, few or no friends, poor judge of time, difficulty in telling time, does not like competitive games, poor at copying, socially immature, preservation, low frustration level, overreacts, difficulty holding eyes on a moving target, destructive-aggressive behavior, cyclical behavior, good days-then bad days, disorganized, hyperactive, hypoactive.

Remember, if a child "exhibits only a few of these characteristics, he is not necessarily learning disabled. Most children do show some of these at different stages in their development. It is the child, who has a cluster of these symptoms, who needs further examination.

How do parents find the "Further Examination?"

There are specific tests which can be used to identify specific learning disabilities. If you think your child needs testing, contact your school district's special education administrator or your school's principal, in writing, requesting that your child be made a "focus of concern. Describe the characteristics (previously mentioned in this brochure) your child is displaying in the letter. After the school has tested your child, and you still have unanswered concerns; you can seek outside, independent testing. (See WAC 392-172). The resources listed on the back of this brochure can help identify testing agencies, etc.

Why won't a child with learning disabilities pay attention?

Some learning disabled children are distractible. Most people think this is not paying attention when, in fact, it is paying too much attention to too many things. He/she isn't able to screen things out around him/her - a pencil dropping, someone going by his/her desk, a car going by outside. Sometimes even what the teacher is wearing, a bright color or dangly earrings will distract a child.

Remember - a person with a learning disability may be sensitive to criticism, easily discouraged and over dependent, but anyone with a learning disability can be taught to compensate for it.

How can I help my child at home?

When giving directions, get his attention first. Speak slowly; make sure he understands what you mean. Give him one direction at a time. If you can, show him as well as tell him. Be calm but firm when telling him what to do. Don't give him too many directions at one time or he will "turn you off".

When the child is slow to finish things, ask him questions about the activity. This gets his mind back on what he is supposed to be doing. It's better than lecturing him.

Give the child a choice only when you really mean that he can do it either way. Help him to be independent by only giving him help when he needs it. Establish a routine. It may be hard on you and the rest of the family, but it will help your learning disabled child.

Use a system of rewards. Try to remember to tell him when he does something right (he knows when things are going wrong). Use praise or a hug as much as possible. These children endure so much more criticism, impatience, frustration and shame than other children.

Remember, most behavior problems are the result of frustration felt by the child with a learning disability. Behavior problems are the result of the learning disability, not the cause.

How can we help our child at school?

Be sure teachers have the necessary information about your child's diagnosis and a understanding of your child's learning style. Monitor your child's program to make sure it's working.

Remember, always try to let the teacher know you want to work with her. Also, let both the teacher and the principal know if your child is having problems learning. If so, some changes must be made in the school program. Find what resources are available in your school district