

Behavior Problems in Children: Is this a Learning Disability?

Presented by Advocates for Justice
and Education, Inc.

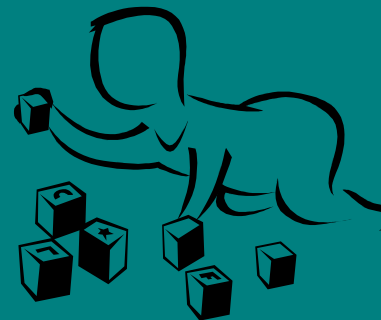
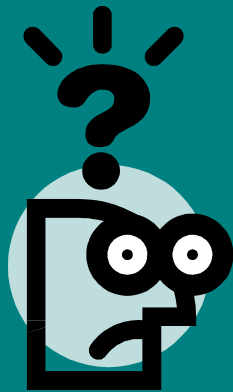


There is logic behind the behaviors of children. The challenge is to understand its context.



Understanding the Causes of Problem Behavior

Problem Behaviors Have Multiple Causes



Problem Behaviors are Context Related

They arise in response to environmental events

Classroom Environment

Noise

Disruptions

Temperature



Child Specific Conditions

Medication Effects Peer Issue Allergies Anxiety Fatigue

New Person Teacher Interaction



Instruction

Work too hard/easy Transitions

Length of Assignments No Choices



Problem Behaviors Serve a Function

What a child does is not necessarily related to the function of the behavior.

To get something:

- Attention
- Approval
- Reward
- Power



To escape or avoid something:

- attending school
- peers or adults
- doing work
- To have control



What is a Learning Disability?



“He has the ability, if he just tried harder, he could do it. He chooses not to do the work.”

“If she would just pay attention, she would get it.”

“After I give the instructions, he sits there and stares at his paper. He is not motivated.”

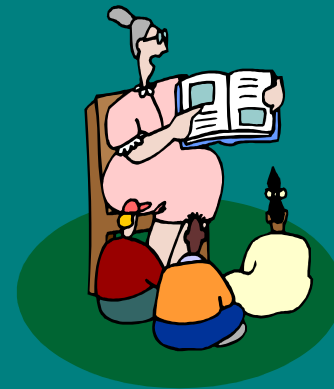


A child with a learning disability cannot try harder, pay closer attention, or improve motivation on their own; they need help to learn how to do those things.

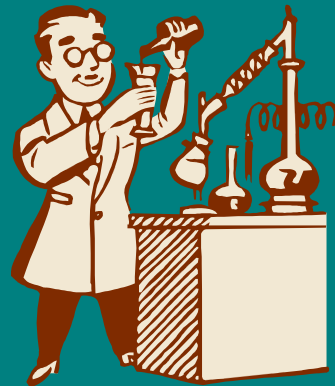


Learning Disability

- A learning disability, or learning disorder, is not a problem with intelligence. Learning disorders are caused by a difference in the brain that affects how information is received, processed, or communicated.



Symptoms and Types of Learning Disabilities and Disorders



Math Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

- A child with a math–based learning disorder may struggle with memorization and organization of numbers, operation signs, and number “facts” (like $5+5=10$ or $5\times 5=25$).
- Children with math learning disorders might also have trouble with counting principles (such as counting by 2s or counting by 5s) or have difficulty telling time.

Language Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

- Language and communication learning disabilities involve the ability to understand or produce spoken language.
- Language is also considered an output activity because it requires organizing thoughts in the brain and calling upon the right words to verbally explain something or communicate with someone else.
- Signs of a language-based learning disorder involve problems with verbal language skills, such as the ability to retell a story and the fluency of speech, as well as the ability to understand the meaning of words, parts of speech, directions, etc.

Reading Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

- **Basic reading problems** occur when there is difficulty understanding the relationship between sounds, letters and words.
- **Reading comprehension problems** occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs.
- Signs of reading difficulty include problems with:



- letter and word recognition
- understanding words and ideas
- reading speed and fluency
- general vocabulary skills

Writing Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

- Basic writing disorder refers to physical difficulty forming words and letters.
- Expressive writing disability indicates a struggle to organize thoughts on paper.
- Symptoms of a written language learning disability revolve around the act of writing. They include problems with:
 - neatness and consistency of writing
 - accurately copying letters and words
 - spelling consistency
 - writing organization and coherence

The Importance of the Eyes and Ears



Auditory Processing Skills

- Also referred to as “receptive language”
- The ability to hear things correctly greatly impacts the ability to read, write and spell. An inability to distinguish subtle differences in sound, or hearing sounds at the wrong speed make it difficult to sound out words and understand the basic concepts of reading and writing



Visual Processing

- Problems in visual perception include:
 - missing subtle differences in shapes,
 - reversing letters or numbers,
 - skipping words, skipping lines,
 - misperceiving depth or distance,
 - or having problems with eye–hand coordination.

Common Types of Learning Disabilities

Dyslexia	Difficulty processing language	Problems reading, writing, spelling, speaking
Dyscalculia	Difficulty with math	Problems doing math problems, understanding time, using money
Dysgraphia	Difficulty with writing	Problems with handwriting, spelling, organizing ideas
Dyspraxia (Sensory Integration Disorder)	Difficulty with fine motor skills	Problems with hand–eye coordination, balance, manual dexterity
Auditory Processing Disorder	Difficulty hearing differences between sounds	Problems with reading, comprehension, language
Visual Processing Disorder	Difficulty interpreting visual information	Problems with reading, math, maps, charts, symbols, pictures

Warning Signs

- Poor grades
- Somatic complaints
- School absences
- Inconsistent Performance

Frequently Used Complaints

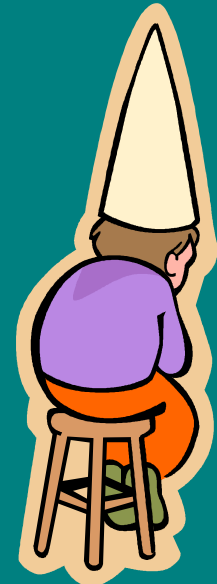
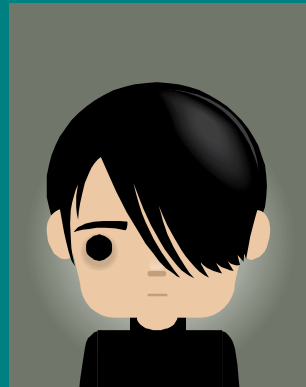
- Laying blame on the teacher: "The teacher is unfair and picks on me, so I'm not going to do any of her assignments," or "It's the teacher's fault that I didn't do well on the test because she didn't remind me it was today, and I guessed at most of the items."
- Making excuses for bad behavior to hide their insecurities about struggling to learn: "The hallway was too crowded, and when I got to the cafeteria there was no dessert left, so I trashed my tray and got sent to the office instead of going to my next class which, by the way, is the one where I don't learn anything anyway."
- Exhibiting an "I give up" attitude: "School is just boring, the work is dumb, the assignments are too hard (or too easy), and the teacher never checks homework anyway, except when she knows I don't have it done."
- Pulling away, or refusing to communicate to avoid confrontation: "What happened in school today?" "I don't want to talk about it."

Behavioral Characteristics

TWO YEAR OLD 24-36 months	THREE YEAR OLD 36-42 months	THREE YEAR OLD 42-48 months	FOUR YEAR OLD 48-60 months	FIVE YEAR OLD 60-72 months
The No Word Reigns Supreme!	The YES Word Appears, but Don't be Fooled!	The YES Word Appears, but Don't be Fooled!	Totally Out of Bounds!	This is Why Kindergarten was invented!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -perpetual motion -distractible -rigid -poor adaptability -asserts autonomy -unpredictable -tantrum prone -engages in solitary and parallel play -does not share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -secure -engages in parallel and associative play -shares spontaneously and with encouragement -more flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -insecurity -difficulty coordinating body movements -nail biting and thumb sucking -masturbation -demanding of attention -jealous -whines, nags, and complains -emerging dramatic play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -loud -silly -strong sex identity -fact vs. fiction -pushes limits to the maximum -inappropriate language -emphasis on active play -emotional roller coaster -has preferred friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -increased attention span -plays cooperatively -independent in most self help skills -good motor coordination -wants to please adults -secure -easy

Learning Disabilities and Social/Emotional Concerns

- Academic challenges may lead to:
 - low self-esteem
 - withdrawal
 - behavior problem



- A national study has shown that 32% of all youth with SLD and 57% with ED are arrested at least once



- Children with ED are more than three times as likely to be arrested before leaving school in comparison to other students
- The vast majority of juveniles in the juvenile justice system are children with Emotional Disturbance (ED) and children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

What Can You Do to Help?

- Communicate with the Parent
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Monitor Progress
- Universal Design for Learning



- Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA):
“children must be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability”

- BEGIN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS!

- Referral to appropriate state or local agency (OSSE, DCPS)

A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)

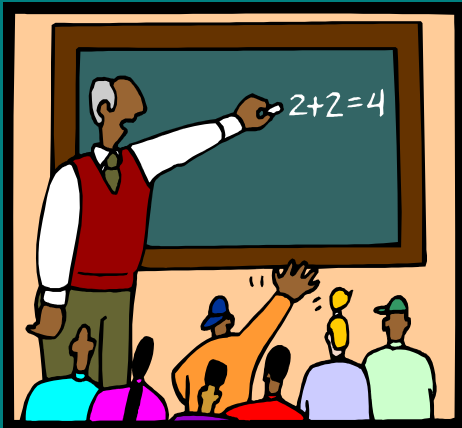
Equity and Opportunity for All Students

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

Schools must support all students, including the provision of appropriate instruction and access to a challenging curriculum along with additional supports and attention when needed

Adapted Slide from ECAC Conference May 2010

“In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity
- it is a prerequisite”



*President Barack Obama,
02/24/09*

RESOURCES

- PACER Center: www.pacer.org
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: www.nclld.org (contains a checklist for LD)



For More Information

www.aje-dc.org

Call or Visit AJE!

Two Locations:

1. (The Big Chair) 2041 MLK Ave SE
2. 4201 Georgia Ave NW

(202) 678-8060 (SE)

(202) 265-1432 (NW)

