Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Learning disability is a general term that is used for specific kinds of learning problems that may cause a person to have trouble learning and using certain skills. The skills that are most often impacted are: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Reasoning, and doing Math.

Characteristics

A learning disability may vary from person to person. One person may not have the same kinds of problems with learning as another. Someone may have trouble with Reading and Writing, while another may have problems understanding Math. Others may have problems with both areas, as well as with understanding what people are saying. They may have average or above average intellectual functioning skills, but their brains process information differently. Some of the signs of a learning disability may include: trouble learning the alphabet, rhyming words, or connecting letters to their sounds; make mistakes when reading aloud, repeat and pause often; may not understand what he or she reads; may have real trouble with spelling; may struggle to express ideas in writing; may confuse Math symbols and misread numbers; may have trouble following directions.

A child with an SLD impairment is one: who does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards, in one or more of the following areas: Oral expression; Written expression; Listening comprehension; Basic reading skill; Reading comprehension; Reading fluency skills; Mathematics calculation; or Mathematics problem-solving and whose lack of adequate achievement is due to that child was not provided appropriate instruction in reading and/or math in the general education settings delivered by qualified personnel; and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement is provided.

Tips for Parents

- Learn about SLD. The more you know the more you can help yourself and your child.
- Find out ways your child learns best. Does he/she learn by hands-on practice, looking, or listening? Help your child to learn through his/her areas of strength.
- Keep instructions simple, break down tasks into smaller steps, and reward your child’s efforts with praise.
- Make homework a priority. Find ways to help your child be a success at homework.
- Pay attention to your child's mental health (and your own). Be open to counseling, which can help your child deal with frustration, feel better about himself/herself, and learn more about social skills.

Resources

Special Education Legal Framework  https://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-Summary.aspx

Texas Project First  http://www.texasprojectfirst.org
Center for Parent Information and Resources  http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/ld

LD Online  http://www.ldonline.org/parents

Understood for Learning and Attention Issues  https://www.understood.org/en