



# About Learning Disabilities

En Español 

Learning disabilities affect how a person learns to read, write, speak, and do math. They are caused by differences in the brain, most often in how it functions but also sometimes in its structure. These differences affect the way the brain processes information.<sup>1</sup>

Learning disabilities are often discovered once a child is in school and has learning difficulties that do not improve over time. A person can have more than one learning disability.<sup>2</sup> Learning disabilities can last a person's entire life, but he or she can still be successful with the right educational supports.<sup>1</sup>

A learning disability is not an indication of a person's intelligence. Learning disabilities are different from learning problems due to intellectual and developmental disabilities (/health/topics/idds), or emotional, vision, hearing, or motor skills problems.<sup>1</sup>

Different groups may define "learning disability" differently, often depending on the focus of the organization. You can read more at the U.S. Department of Education (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/parents-families/), which provides statutes, regulations, and policies on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the Learning Disabilities Association of America (https://ldaamerica.org/support/new-to-ld/) ; and https://www.understood.org (https://www.understood.org) , which is maintained by the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

## Types of Learning Disabilities






Some of the most common learning disabilities are the following:

- **Dyslexia.** People with dyslexia have problems with reading words accurately and with ease (sometimes called "fluency") and may have a hard time spelling, understanding sentences, and recognizing words they already know.<sup>3</sup>
- **Dysgraphia.** People with dysgraphia have problems with their handwriting. They may have trouble forming letters, writing within a defined space, and writing down their thoughts.<sup>4</sup>
- **Dyscalculia.** People with this math learning disability may have difficulty understanding arithmetic concepts and doing addition, multiplication, and measuring.<sup>5</sup>
- **Apraxia of speech.** This disorder involves problems with speaking. People with this disorder have trouble saying what they want to say. It is sometimes called verbal apraxia.<sup>6</sup>

- **Central auditory processing disorder.** People with this condition have trouble understanding and remembering language-related tasks. They have difficulty explaining things, understanding jokes, and following directions. They confuse words and are easily distracted.<sup>7</sup>
- **Nonverbal learning disorders.** People with these conditions have strong verbal skills but difficulty understanding facial expression and body language. They are clumsy and have trouble generalizing and following multistep directions.<sup>8</sup>

Because there are many different types of learning disabilities, and some people may have more than one, it is hard to estimate how many people might have learning disabilities.

## Citations

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2. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (n.d.). *Learning disabilities information page.* Retrieved March 6, 2017, from <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Learning-Disabilities-Information-Page> (<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Learning-Disabilities-Information-Page>)
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