

# Learning Disabilities

# 5

## National Data on Learning Disabilities

The Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, using census data from 2004 for children ages six to 21, estimated that 4.24 percent of children served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) had learning disabilities. This is about half of all students receiving special education services. A learning disability (LD) refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. It may show up as a problem in a student's ability to listen, think, speak, write, spell, or do. Children with learning disabilities have normal intelligence but have difficulty learning and using basic skills. The term "learning disabled" does not refer to students who have problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or physical disabilities; cognitive delays; emotional behavioral disorders; or because of environmental factors, cultural differences, or economic disadvantages. Learning disabilities are sometimes identified as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. It is estimated by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) that 10 to 15 percent of the population in the U.S. is dyslexic, but only about 5 percent are identified.

Learning disabilities are not diseases, so there is no medical treatment. There are ways that children can learn to work around or overcome the challenges their learning disabilities cause. Learning disabilities often run in families, although adults often are not aware they have one.

The NCLD explains about a third of all children with LD have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which makes it difficult for them to concentrate. Intervention is most effective when the disability is identified early. The NCLD indicates that the majority of students who have a learning disability have problems with reading. About two-thirds of secondary level students with learning disabilities read three or more grade levels below their actual grade in school. Almost 30 percent of students with learning disabilities drop out of high school. Other children often victimize children with learning disabilities because they struggle in school. As a result, LD can affect children socially as well as academically.

Many learning disabilities appear to be genetically based. Illnesses or injuries, especially head injuries, can cause a learning disability. Drug and alcohol use can also cause learning disabilities for young adults, and if a woman uses them during pregnancy, they can affect the baby. Low birth weight, lack of oxygen at birth, and a prolonged labor often are associated with learning disabilities. Poor nutrition and exposure to toxins also can result in learning disabilities, however, often there is no apparent cause for LD.

### 2005-06 Data on Students with Learning Disabilities

Age	Number of Students Identified
3-5	40
6-11	12,524
12-17	29,493
18-21	3,026
Total	45,083

Data taken from the IDEA Child Count 2005-06  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/cc-12-1005.html>

### For More Information:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education.  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/Policy/IDEA/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/Policy/IDEA/index.html)  
National Center for Learning Disabilities. [www.nclد.org](http://www.nclد.org)

## Wisconsin Data on Learning Disabilities

DPI data for 2005 indicates an incidence rate for specific learning disability (SLD) of 4.47 percent. These children have difficulty learning or demonstrating academic skills related to oral expression, written expression such as writing composition and spelling, basic reading skills including comprehension, or mathematical calculations and reasoning. There is usually a problem with processing information. They have normal hearing

and sight but have trouble understanding or using the information they see and hear. In the 2005-06 school year, 45,083 students were identified as having a learning disability that was severe enough to require placement in special education classes.

DPI data indicates the number of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has increased significantly in recent years. Children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or ADHD are not automatically eligible for special education and related services.

## **Types of Learning Disabilities**

The National Center for Learning Disabilities identifies the following types of learning disabilities and the areas they affect, as some of the major learning disability types:

- central auditory processing disorders—difficulty processing and remembering language-related tasks
- dyslexia—a language and reading disability
- dyscalculia—problems with arithmetic and math concepts
- dysgraphia—problems with written expression
- visual processing disorders (visual perceptual disorders)—problems with the way information is interpreted

### ***Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD)***

There are several types of central auditory processing disorders (CAPD). A CAPD affects how the brain perceives and processes what the ear hears, but children with a CAPD have normal hearing. CAPD tends to run in families. The NCLD indicates that children with CAPD have difficulty following conversations, especially directions. They can't sort out important sounds from background noise. Remembering and repeating what they have just heard is a challenge for children with auditory memory problems. They have difficulty noticing and distinguishing the individual sounds in words making reading and spelling difficult. Solving verbal math problems are also hard for them. They have trouble understanding abstract information. They seem disorganized and forgetful. Often these children concentrate better in quiet environments. Many children who have CAPD also are affected by ADHD. Auditory processing disorders can affect a teen's ability to interact socially.

### ***Dyslexia***

Males and females are equally affected by dyslexia, and it does run in families. Dyslexia involves difficulty using and processing language codes, such as the letters in the alphabet that represent speech sounds, or symbols representing numbers or quantities. Children with dyslexia are likely to have difficulty with the full range of language processing, spoken or written, and with language comprehension.

Language is the base for all academic learning. Therefore children who fail to master the basic elements of using the language system often have difficulty in almost all areas of formal education. Some educators believe that the best approach to teach reading to children who are dyslexic, is to use a strong phonics-based, multi-sensory method.

Some children with dyslexia don't show signs with their early reading and writing, but the problem becomes apparent later when they must deal with more complex language skills, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing. These children may have difficulty expressing themselves because they have trouble pulling their thoughts together and using the appropriate words when they speak. Some children with dyslexia have trouble understanding other people because they have difficulty processing verbal information, especially when abstract or non-literal language is involved. Dyslexia can affect a child's self-image. These children often become frustrated with learning and with school in general. Because of school stress, the children may give up or start acting out in school.

### ***Visual Processing Disorders***

There are various types of visual processing disorders, and a child can have more than one type. The NCLD indicates children may have problems with visual discrimination and observing differences, discriminating figures from their background, as well as visual memory and sequencing activities. Children with some types of visual processing disorder may have difficulty coordinating their body movements with information their eyes are providing. They may not be able to recognize an object when they just see part of it, or understand how objects in space are positioned in relation to themselves, such as when reading a map. They may have trouble estimating distance with they are playing a ball game or driving a car. They may not understand the concept of personal space for other people.

# Disorders Frequently Co-Existing with Learning Disabilities

## *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and attention deficit disorder (ADD) are two of the most common disorders that appear in childhood. They are not classified as learning disabilities. Estimates on the incidence rate vary, but NCLD indicates 25-70 percent of children with ADHD also have a learning disability, and 15-35 percent of children with LD have ADHD. The most common areas affected are reading and written expression. The distinction between ADD and ADHD is that students with ADD are not hyperactive. The National Institutes of Mental Health's (NIMH) web site indicates ADHD affects an estimated 3 to 5 percent of children between the ages of nine and 17. ADHD tends to run in families and appears to have a genetic base, however, non-genetic factors thought to cause ADHD include premature birth, maternal use of alcohol or tobacco during pregnancy, exposure to high levels of lead, and prenatal neurological damage.

According to the U.S. Department of Education report, *Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home*, the prefrontal cortex of the brains of people with ADHD and the cluster of nerve cells called the basal ganglia are smaller than in the brains of people who do not have ADHD. These two areas regulate attention.

The report explains that ADHD is not a disorder of attention, but rather a failure of the brain circuitry that monitors inhibition and self-control. This self-regulation is important to maintaining attention and deferring immediate rewards for later gains. Youth with ADHD may have difficulty inhibiting impulsive motor responses to input. Students with ADHD are likely to be fidgety and have trouble staying seated or playing quietly. They often are impulsive and have trouble taking turns. They don't pay attention to instructional details and misplace things needed to complete projects.

It was long assumed that boys were more likely than girls to be affected, but recent research indicates boys and girls are affected in about the same numbers. Boys are more likely to be identified while in school because they tend to exhibit more disruptive behavior than do girls.

According to the National Center for LD, students with ADHD have a high instance of behavior problems or oppositional defiant disorders. A high percentage of students with ADHD have depression, anxiety or mood disorders, and 65 percent of children with emotional disturbances also have ADHD. Symptoms of ADHD include a high level of physical activity, difficulty sitting still, impulsiveness, inability to pay attention or focus, and the inability to complete tasks. These children can pay attention when they are engaged in an activity. The problem frequently is the allocation of attention and the ability to sustain the attention needed to complete paperwork. These students have difficulty in general with organization. Students with ADHD who are untreated have a higher than normal incidence of injury. More information on the relationship between ADHD and behavior problems is included in this publication in the chapter on Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities.

For many years it was thought that the disorder could be seen as early as age three and that gradually children "outgrew" ADHD by adolescence. It is known now that ADHD is not limited to childhood and many children with ADHD do not outgrow it. As adults they will continue to have ADHD characteristics and may struggle with the same issues all their lives.

Many children with ADHD have tics—involuntary, sudden, purposeless, repetitive, movements or vocalizations. Information from NCLD explains these tics may include eye-blinking, mouth-opening, sniffing or throat clearing. Adolescents with ADHD often tend to be withdrawn and not very communicative. They may withdraw to avoid drawing attention to themselves, or to avoid other students who tease them on a regular basis. They may lack self-confidence and not ask for assistance for fear of appearing stupid, or out of fear that strangers will guess that they have a disability. Teens with ADHD may act impulsively without thinking of the consequences of their actions and may be very moody. Incidence rates of drug abuse and antisocial behavior are high for teens with ADHD.

### For More Information:

National Center for Learning Disabilities. [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)  
National Institutes of Mental Health. *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*. Bethesda, Md., 2001.

[www.NIMH.nih.gov/publicat/helpchild.cfm](http://www.NIMH.nih.gov/publicat/helpchild.cfm)

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. *Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home*. O, Washington DC, 2003. [www.nclld.org/content/view/1022](http://www.nclld.org/content/view/1022)

## *Sensory Integration (SI) Disorder or Dyspraxia*

Sensory integration (SI) disorder, also called dyspraxia, is a lifelong disorder that affects a person's motor development. It is estimated that SI affects at least 2 percent of the general population, and about 70 percent are

male. SI often co-exists with learning disabilities and ADHD. People with dyspraxia have difficulty planning and completing intended fine motor tasks. SI can affect different areas of functioning, varying from simple motor tasks such as waving goodbye, to more complex tasks such as brushing teeth. Babies with dyspraxia may avoid crawling and rolling over, and may resist tasks involving motor skills. They may move their whole head instead of just their eyes when gazing. Their speech often is delayed and is difficult to understand. They have difficulty using eating utensils or holding a cup while drinking. Later these children experience difficulties in areas such as buttoning clothing, tying shoe laces, walking, hopping, skipping, throwing, catching a ball, riding a bike, and writing. Their sense of right-or left-handedness is slow to develop. They have a poor sense of direction, and often bump into things. There may be weaknesses in comprehension, information processing, and listening.

SI can make it difficult for children to develop social skills; as a result they may have trouble getting along with peers. Speech difficulties can interfere with casual conversation, resulting in social awkwardness and an unwillingness to risk engaging in conversation. Although they are intelligent, these children may seem immature, and some may develop phobias and obsessive behavior. Their coordination difficulties can be particularly problematic in physical education classes and other sports activities. Writing difficulties such as poor letter formation, pencil grip, and slow writing, can make school work frustrating.

All teens must deal with their rapidly changing bodies. However many young people with dyspraxia also have the added stress of dealing with coordination problems, speech, and academic difficulties.

Struggling with these issues can lead to low self-esteem, depression, mental health problems, and emotional or behavioral difficulties.

Some teens with SI have problems with:

- \* driving
- \* completing household chores
- \* cooking
- \* personal grooming and self-help activities
- \* manual dexterity needed for writing and typing
- \* speech control—volume, pitch, and articulation
- \* perception inconsistencies—over- or under-sensitivity to light, touch, space, taste, smell.

#### For More Information:

LD Online. [www.LDOnline.org](http://www.LDOnline.org)

Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin.  
[www.ldawisconsin.com](http://www.ldawisconsin.com)

National Center for Learning Disabilities. *Fact Sheets: The ABC's of Learning Disabilities*. New York.

[www.nclld.org/content/view/full/447/391/](http://www.nclld.org/content/view/full/447/391/)

Sensory Integration International. *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*. Torrance, Calif.

[www.sensoryint.com/faq.html](http://www.sensoryint.com/faq.html)

## Barriers to Service

Because youth with learning disabilities struggle with reading, an assumption is made by their parents and the youth themselves that public libraries have nothing of interest for them. The youth may negatively associate everything to do with reading because of the struggles they have in school. Libraries have to work to overcome the reluctance of youth with learning disabilities have about coming to the library. Libraries must make an effort to introduce this group of children and teens to the wide variety of materials at the library that are of interest to them.

## Strategies for Success

### *Collaboration*

School districts and parents are the most important partners with which public libraries can work to address the needs of students with learning disabilities. Elements of collaboration are involved in all the strategies for success. Title 1 and special education teachers can offer suggestions on making the public library more accessible to youth with learning disabilities and can encourage their students to go to the library. They may be willing to arrange a class visit. They also may be willing to send home library promotional materials. Public libraries can make a special effort to enlist the help of special education teachers to help promote and encourage students to join the summer library program.

### *Staff Training*

Staff should know to offer to walk students to the shelf area, rather than giving a call number or verbal directions, because many students with learning disabilities will avoid asking for help out of fear of appearing ignorant. Staff should offer assistance if a student seems to be taking overly long to find material they need. Depending on the situation, the librarian may need to follow through by assisting the student with finding information in books, using the index, etc. Keep in mind students with learning disabilities try very hard to avoid letting other people know they have a reading problem.

## ***Diversified Collections and Services***

Libraries should have current information on learning disabilities and attention deficit for the parents and professionals who work with youth who have these disabilities and related disorders. Libraries should routinely include required reading materials for middle and high school students in large print and recorded books formats and videos based on books, which help students who struggle with reading at their grade level. Be sure the teachers know the library has these materials.

Because disorganization is a problem for many students with learning disabilities, they often arrive at the library without their textbooks. Some libraries keep copies of the textbooks used by all schools in their service area for use by students who forgot to bring their textbooks. If the library circulates toys, include toys or games that promote auditory and visual discrimination practice.

Ask classroom teachers to share with the public library their required reading lists, so that appropriate formats can be purchased, such as recorded formats and videos.

Materials that can be especially useful to youth with learning disabilities are large print collections, high interest/low vocabulary books, recorded books sets that include the book, and tactile materials. The U.S. Department of Education report, *Teaching Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Instructional Strategies and Practices*, recommends phonics board games and computer games, abridged versions of required reading, and computer games that include practice in reading sight words.

## ***Adapting Story Times for Children with Learning Disabilities or Who Have Attention Deficit Disorders***

A preschool child with ADHD is likely to be in constant motion, have difficulty sitting and paying attention in a group, understanding personal boundaries with other children and adults, and may not be able to follow a simple set of directions. In a story time setting, these children might be crawling around on the floor, bouncing on their bottoms, walking around the room, or touching other children. They may wander off because they don't understand the story. Because they are impulsive, they may grab things away from other children, talk when they shouldn't, and may have difficulty taking turns. These behaviors interfere with their ability to make friends. These children are often in a hurry so they may appear clumsy, fall, bump into things, knock things off tables, spill things, rip pages in a book, and they may become overly exuberant with physical activities. They may interrupt the story with questions or begin talking about something else with other children. Rethinking how programs and services are delivered and making some adjustments can help.

Try to hold story times in a place that will not have a lot of verbal or visual or noise distractions and is away from the normal noises of the library's general areas. A separate room with a door that can be closed is ideal, rather than an open area in the children's department. When it is necessary to ask a child to adjust his behavior, start by calling him by name, then make eye contact before giving instructions.

These suggestions also may help:

- Start and end story times the same way each time.
- Keep rules to a minimum, explain the rules each time, repeat them as necessary, and consistently enforce them.

### **Several Libraries Host Reading Sessions in Which Children Read to Dogs**

Children who struggle with reading often avoid reading whenever possible. Only practice helps poor readers get better but it is hard to motivate children to read when it is difficult for them. Several Wisconsin libraries have found a unique way to help children get excited about reading. The libraries partner with dog owners who have trained, certified companion dogs. Some dog handlers bring their dogs into schools and libraries to listen to children read. The Bayview branch of the Milwaukee Public Library's "Read to Rover" program, for example, works with the schools to recruit students in first through fifth grades who are struggling with reading. Students come to the public library to read to a dog on Saturday mornings for a four-week session.

Several dogs are trained to interact in a friendly and enthusiastic way with children. They enjoy being petted and hugged. They are trained to remain in a "down" position for sustained periods of time. This makes it convenient for children to sit next to them on a chair, or cuddle up with them on the floor as they read. The dog makes a great, non-judgmental audience. They never correct the reader and are not bored at the child's pace. The parents and dog owner usually stay near by, but far enough away to avoid interfering with the reading session.

Programs work in various ways. The sessions last from 15 to 30 minutes. In some libraries a dog owner comes at a set time each week or month and stays in the youth department. Any child coming to the library can visit with the dog or read to him. In other libraries a group of volunteers rotates, and several dogs are at the library at the same time. The schools often help notifying families that the service is available. Each child picks out the dog to whom they want to read when they arrive. Some libraries that specifically target children with learning disabilities and work formally with the schools, have the children sign up for a specific time to read to the dogs. Typically the child can select any reading material they like. The dogs don't have a preference. Parents have indicated their once reluctant readers can't wait to get to the library on the days they are scheduled to read to a dog friend.

- Ask all the children to repeat the rules out loud after they hear them.
- Be patient with children who forget the behavior for story time. Give frequent reminders.
- Praise the children who are following the rules, and when a child adjusts his behavior to the rest of the children, praise him lavishly.
- Greet each child with a smile and warm welcome every time she comes. Find one thing to praise her for each time she leaves.

### **Seating Arrangements**

- To help children learn the basic “sitting skills,” define the space the child should stay in with a colored circle or a carpet square. Some children do well if they sit on a “wedge” or in a bean bag chair. Others are able to remain in place if they are allowed to lie on their stomachs.
- Try bringing an easily distracted child up close to keep him focused on the book or activity. Gently reach out and touch him as a reminder, if he starts to stand up or to touch other children. Praise him frequently for sitting well.
- If being close to the front of the room causes the child to turn around continually to see what he is missing behind him, try seating him so his back is touching a wall. Often this will help “ground” the child and give him a sense of security that helps him stay in place. He knows he is not missing anything going on behind him and is thus better able to concentrate on the story and other activities.
- Allow children to hold a “fidget toy” to keep their hands busy. This can be something that can be twisted into endless shapes or a “squish” type toy to squeeze.

### **Keeping the Attention of Preschoolers with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Problems**

- Repeat songs and finger plays.
- Point out details of visual information, such as parts of a picture that are important to the story.
- Repeat interesting words and words that sound the same, stressing the enunciation of the parts that are different.
- Put out toys or tools that enhance auditory discrimination such as a “Toobaloo.”
- Have out activities such as “sewing cards,” large beads for stringing.
- Use Big Books so the written words are in large print.
- Use stories that involve rhyme and alliteration.

### **Managing Transitions**

- Transitions are hard for preschool children with learning disabilities, so give verbal prompts when an activity is going to change or end and tell children what to do next.
- Explain what is going to happen before starting a new activity.

## ***Adjusting Library Services and Programs for Older Children Who Have Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficits***

Making some adjustments to library programs and activities can help older youth with learning disabilities and attention deficit problems. At programs, have craft projects or activities organized into steps. Give instructions before handing out materials or supplies. Explain the process to everyone. Read written directions out loud. Demonstrate each step. Ask everyone to repeat the key steps and later ask individual children who have problems following a process if they understand. Have students who have trouble sitting still help pass out supplies. If activity stations are involved, number the stations and have a set of the instructions at each one. Have specific places for supplies and materials.

Stay close to youth known to have short attention spans to monitor and redirect them before problems escalate. Physical proximity helps youth stay focused on what is being said. Give children discreet cues if they need help staying on task and keeping their behavior under control. Use name tags for older kids at programs to help youth who have difficulty remembering names.

### **Assisting Youth Who Are ADHD or Who Have Learning Disabilities Adjust Their Behavior**

Older children with LD or ADHD may become boisterous, talk loudly, or chase and rough house while they are at the library. During programs, they may interrupt a speaker or ask excessive questions. They may be so intent on asking a question that they don’t listen and thus ask a question the speaker has already answered. These children are likely to forget to return books by their due dates, frequently lose library materials, and leave their own belongings at the library.

When an adolescent’s behavior is not acceptable, stay calm and avoid sarcasm or criticism. In most situations, insist on eye contact while discussing rules or inappropriate behavior. State the rules or behavior expectations, and consequences for not following them. Minimize choices. Say “I need you to do X, or you will have to leave.”

When dealing with teens, be sensitive and respectful of their self-concept. Ask teens known to have learning disabilities or attention problems to help with tasks that are likely to be easy, or for which their success is likely, such as setting up for an event or cleaning up afterward. Some teens may prefer to remain in the background. Allow teens to watch rather than participate in all activities or discussions. Quietly and privately encourage any efforts a teen makes to become part of the group.

If a behavioral correction is necessary, try to keep a sense of humor. Explain the problem behavior and why it is not allowed. Put instructions on how to behave in the form of a request. Avoid arguing because it often leads to a power struggle. Tell the teen the behavior that is expected, ask for compliance, and then walk away. As much as possible, ignore any comments the teen makes in response. Give teens a few minutes to comply before returning to follow up with them. This technique works most of the time, and the teens usually settle down or leave. Be familiar with the library's procedure for having confrontational patrons removed from the library.

If it is necessary to ask a teen to leave, do it without anger, and try to include an invitation to return at a different time. Say something on the order of "Hey, you are just too full of energy today to be sitting in the library. I've given you your three warnings. Being in here is just not working for you, and it's not working for the other people using the library. Why don't you go out and shoot some hoops or run around for awhile. Maybe tomorrow you'll feel more like being in here. Right now I need for you to get your things together, and then leave for today. I'll let you pull your stuff together, and then I'll come back and check on you in a few minutes."

## ***Accessible Buildings, Equipment, and Outreach***

In general children with ADHD and some types of learning disabilities are inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive. These characteristics make it difficult for these children to stay on task and participate in group activities. Individual or small group study rooms with doors will help filter noise and help these students concentrate more easily on their assignments or to work with a tutor or in a small group.

Assuring summer reading programs are designed to be inclusive and inviting for youth who have learning disabilities is very important. Research has shown that children who do not read during the summer lose their skills. Children with learning disabilities are already struggling and can least afford to fall further behind. The public library can make a special effort to collaborate with learning disabilities teachers to encourage their students to participate in the program. Adjusting rules for these children can be especially effective. Often these children may not be able to read books at their grade level and can't read well enough to complete enough books to reach a set goal. Some libraries allow children to set their own goals, which is very helpful for children who struggle with reading. Some libraries count time instead of titles, because children with learning disabilities or who have ADHD may struggle with getting through an entire book, and it may actually take them much more time than good readers. Some libraries allow participants to count magazines, graphic novels, comic books, and computer reading toward their reading goals. Another option that some libraries offer is to allow activities to count for some of the reading. For example, volunteering during the summer, participating in dramatizations, or attending a library sponsored program counts toward the reading goal. All of these adjustments can help a child who struggles with reading succeed in reaching summer library program goals.

## **Useful Adaptive Technologies**

The May/June 2006 edition of Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative's (WATI) newsletter, *The Monitor*, includes suggestions for "high and low tech" items that can help students with learning disabilities. Not all technologies that are helpful to students with learning disabilities are high tech. Low tech supplies such as adaptive grips for pens and pencils, dictionaries, thesauruses, cardboard "reading strips" that allow readers to follow a line of text, and colored acetate overlay sheets in blue, rose, yellow, and green can help some students read more easily. Handheld scanning devices such as a reading pen that voices a segment of scanned text out

### **Shell Lake Public Library Teams Up with the Title 1 and Special Education Teachers During the Summer Library Program**

The Shell Lake Library asked the Title 1 and Special Education teachers to help promote the summer library program to their students before the end of the school year. The teachers were very interested in helping promote summer reading. They were especially interested in helping the children find books that they could read. Many students became frustrated with reading because they often took books home that were too hard for them. The library hosted programs once a week but, because so many children were in the library at one time, it was difficult for the public librarian to give personal attention to the children who had learning disabilities.

Teachers proposed a schedule where each of them would come to one library program during the summer as a volunteer and help children find books at their reading levels. The library appreciated the help. The children were delighted to see their teachers at the public library and happily took home books they knew they could read. And the teachers reinforced the children's efforts at reading during the summer.

loud also can be useful, as well as talking spell checkers.

Purchasing computer software that highlights and reads text aloud is often very helpful for students who have learning disabilities and has application for many other patrons with special needs. Contact learning disabilities teachers or directors of special education for assistance in selecting software designed to help students who are struggling with reading. Purchase educational computer games that offer practice in auditory and visual discrimination.

The WATI article also suggested the following types of equipment and software that may be particularly helpful to students with who have learning disabilities:

- programs that provide symbol supported reading including *Picture It*, *Clicker*, and *Writing with Symbols*
- *Simon S.I.O.* software can help students practice phonics skills
- Students with learning disabilities often use text-to-speech software such as ReadPlease, Etext Reader, and Write: Outloud
- programs that scan and read text include WYNN, Kurzweil, and Read and Write Gold Premier

Other adaptive computer equipment that can be very helpful for youth with learning disabilities included oversized and/or colored keyboards, 19-inch or larger monitors, and alternate input devices that are easier to use than a mouse such as a joystick or switches. Computer memory games are especially appropriate for these children and teens, as are computer games that can be adjusted to play at a slower speed when needed.

## Marketing

When library programs or services are especially appropriate for students with learning disabilities or who have attention deficit problems, one of the best ways to inform the students and their families is to work through the learning disabilities teachers in the school district. It may be possible for the teacher to arrange to bring students to the library to try out new equipment. These teachers may be able to help inform families about public library services.

### Milwaukee Public Library LSTA Project Served Students with Learning Disabilities

In 2000 the Milwaukee Public Library used LSTA funds to purchase two software products used in the city's schools to help students who had learning disabilities, *Write Out Loud* (Don Johnson) and *WYNN Reader* (Freedom Scientific's Learning Systems Group). *Write Out Loud* is a composition, reviewing, and editing tool. One feature of the software is that it "guesses" words that were mis-spelled much more readily than traditional word processing programs. WYNN Reader allows students access to books formatted in DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) or NIMAS. Textbooks can be spoken aloud, and can be visually customized for each student's needs. WYNN also provides the study tools students are accustomed to using, such as highlighting, bookmarks, and dictionaries.

In addition to the software, other materials were purchased that were especially helpful to students with learning disabilities. These materials included books on tape, tactile books, "Twin Vision" picture books with braille overlays, puppets, rocket e-books, screen enlarging software, scratch and sniff books, large print, puzzles with raised pieces and knobbed handles, closed captioned videos, audio described video, magnifiers, intelli-keys keyboards, and talking calculators. The staff training for the project was done by the learning disabilities teachers with the Milwaukee Public Schools and was extended to all public libraries in the county.

# Getting Started with Little Money and Time: Serving Youth with Learning Disabilities

## *Collaboration*

- Invite the parent support groups for parents of children who have learning disabilities to occasionally hold their meetings at the library.
- Ask a local professional to discuss general information about attention deficit and/or learning disabilities with staff and to offer suggestions on adjustments at the library that might help these students.
- Put newsletters (usually free) from local groups that work with youth who have learning disabilities with community information fliers.

## *Planning*

- Contact your local school district to find out how many students in the district are identified as having a learning disability and talk with their teachers about their needs. Go to the DPI web site at: [www2.dpi.state.wi.us/leareports/](http://www2.dpi.state.wi.us/leareports/)

## *Staff Training*

- Discuss procedures to handle annoying or problematic behaviors at library sponsored activities and in general when youth are using the library independently. Review the library's policies regarding problem patrons to be sure the procedures are clearly written, have board approval, and are not overly restrictive.
- Assure all staff know the basics of using assistive equipment and devices, such as computer screen readers.

## *Diversified Collections and Services*

- Weed the collection of outdated materials on LD and ADHD and purchase new materials.
- Routinely purchase large print materials and recorded book sets for middle and high school students, especially books that are frequently required reading.
- Check with the school district to see if special software is used by most LD students and purchase it.
- Review story time practices to determine if modifications could be made to accommodate the needs of young children who have attention deficit problems.
- Review program and activity formats for older children with LD or ADHD, especially summer library program processes, and modify them for youth who can't read at grade level or who do best within a structured situation.

## *Accessible Buildings, Equipment and Services*

- Check with the local school district to see what types of software programs the district is using to help students with learning disabilities and consider purchasing copies for the library.
- Invest in some low-tech items such as strips of cardboard to use as reading guides and colored overlay sheets or strips children can use.

## *Marketing*

- Make contact with local support groups for parents of children with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit problems. Get on their mailing lists.
- Send information to these support groups and to the local school district when the library has programs or makes purchases that may be of special interest to families in which a child has LD or ADHD.
- Set up links on the library's web page to web sites of agencies that provide information or services for children with learning disabilities.

## Observe These Awareness Events:

### September

International Literacy Day sponsored by the International Reading Association

[www.reading.org/association/meetings/literacy\\_day.html](http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/literacy_day.html)

National Library Card Sign Up Month sponsored by the American Library Association

[www.ala.org/ala/events/librarypromotion/librarypromotions.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/events/librarypromotion/librarypromotions.htm)

### October

Teen Read Week sponsored by the American Library Association

[www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/trw/teenreadweek.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/trw/teenreadweek.htm)

National Book Month sponsored by the National Book Foundation

[www.nationalbook.org/nbm.html](http://www.nationalbook.org/nbm.html)

# Resources

## Discussion Lists

**Parent ADDlist** [listserv@n7kbt.rain.com](mailto:listserv@n7kbt.rain.com)

This is a discussion list for parents of children who are ADD.

**LD-List** [majordomo@curry.edu](mailto:majordomo@curry.edu)

This is a general discussion of DL issues by parents, educators and people with learning disabilities.

## Periodicals

**Attention Magazine** [http://209.126.179.236/webpage.cfm?cat\\_id=7&subcat\\_id=38](http://209.126.179.236/webpage.cfm?cat_id=7&subcat_id=38)

*Attention Magazine* is a bi-monthly publication from CHADD for families affected by ADD and ADHD.

## National Resources

**Academy of Orton-Gillingham** [www.ortonacademy.org](http://www.ortonacademy.org)

This organization provides information on the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory techniques for teaching students with learning disabilities.

**A.D.D. Warehouse** [www.addwarehouse.com](http://www.addwarehouse.com)

This web site contains information on the understanding and treatment of ADHD and related problems.

**American Library Association** [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

Association of Cooperative and Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies

Roads to Learning [www.ala.org/roads/](http://www.ala.org/roads/)

Association of Library Services to Children [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/)

Every Child Ready to Read [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/ECRRHomePage.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/ECRRHomePage.htm)

Great Web Sites for Kids

[www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cfapps/gws/displaysection.cfm&sec=30](http://www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cfapps/gws/displaysection.cfm&sec=30)

Prime Time Family Reading Time [www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/primetime/primetimefamily.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/primetime/primetimefamily.htm)

This is ALA's site on the Prime Time reading and discussion series for families.

Summer Reading and Learning for Children [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/summerreading/summerreading.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/summerreading/summerreading.htm)

Young Adult Services Section [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)

Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

[www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/quickpicks/quickpicksreluctant.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/quickpicks/quickpicksreluctant.htm)

Selected Audio Books for Young Adults [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/selectedaudio/selectedaudiobooks.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/selectedaudio/selectedaudiobooks.htm)

Selected Videos and DVDs for Young Adults

[www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/selecteddvds/selecteddvdsvideos.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/selecteddvds/selecteddvdsvideos.htm)

**Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)** [www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)

*ALERT Newsletter*, published by AHEAD, is an online, bi-monthly publication.

**Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy** [www.barbarabushfoundation.com](http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com)

This foundation supports family literacy projects to break the cycle of illiteracy.

**Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)** [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

CHADD is a national organization representing individuals with ADHD, for education, advocacy and support.

*Attention Magazine* [www.chadd.org/webpage.cfm?cat\\_id=7&subcat\\_id=38](http://www.chadd.org/webpage.cfm?cat_id=7&subcat_id=38)

Published bi-monthly, *Attention Magazine* includes articles on public policy, coping strategies, diagnosis, and treatment of ADHD.

**National Resource Center (NRC) on ADHD: A Program of CHADD** [www.help4adhd.org/](http://www.help4adhd.org/)

NRC is an information center about ADHD funded the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Council for Exceptional Children** [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

The council is dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

**Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD)** [www.cldinternational.org](http://www.cldinternational.org)

CLD promotes effective teaching and research to enhance the development of individuals with learning disabilities and publishes *Learning Disability Quarterly* and *LD Forum Newsletter*, a bimonthly newsletter.

**Disability Resources Monthly (DRM) Guide to Disability Resources on the Internet** [www.disabilityresources.org](http://www.disabilityresources.org)

This is a guide to web resources on learning disabilities.

**Dyscalculia.org** [www.dyscalculia.org](http://www.dyscalculia.org)

This organization dyslexia and dyscalculia support and information compiled for Shiawassee County, Michigan.

**Easter Seals** [www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer](http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer)

Easter Seals assists children and adults who have disabilities and their families, and has numerous online resources.

**Hello Friend** <http://hellofriend.org>

This foundation was created in memory of Bill Cosby's son, Ennis, who had a learning disability.

**Institute for Multi-Sensory Education** [www.orton-gillingham.com](http://www.orton-gillingham.com)

This web site provides information on Orton-Gillingham method of using a phonics-based reading approach with students who have dyslexia.

**International Dyslexia Association** <http://interdys.org>

This is the new name for the Orton Dyslexic Society.

**Kid Power** [www.kid-power.org/sid.html](http://www.kid-power.org/sid.html)

This is a support and information site for children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities.

**Kids' Health** [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

Kids' Health is a source of health information specifically related to children and teens.

Central Auditory Processing Disorder [www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/ears/central\\_auditory.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/ears/central_auditory.html)

**LD Teens** [www.ldteens.org/](http://www.ldteens.org/)

LD Teens is a site maintained by teens who are dyslexic to help other teens.

**LD Online** [www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

This web site provides information and numerous links on LD and ADD. A monthly newsletter is available.

**Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)** [www.ldanatl.org](http://www.ldanatl.org)

LDA advances the education and general welfare of children and adults who have learning disabilities.

**Lekotek National Center** [www.lekotek.org](http://www.lekotek.org)

Lekotek National Center is a national resource on toys and play for children with special needs.

Able Play Toy Guide [www.ableplay.org/search.asp](http://www.ableplay.org/search.asp).

Toys R Us Toy Guide for Differently Abled Kids [www.lekotek.org/services/toyind/toysrus.html](http://www.lekotek.org/services/toyind/toysrus.html)

**Life Success** [www.ldsuccess.org](http://www.ldsuccess.org)

The Frostig Center in Pasadena, California, promotes the understanding and nurturing of key factors, called "success attributes," that can aid in a child's development and ability to overcome LD.

**National Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)** [www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

ADDA focuses on the needs of adults and young adults with ADD/ADHD, and their and families.

**National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities** [www.aacld.org](http://www.aacld.org)

This web site promotes an understanding of the specific issues facing African American children who have LD.

**National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

NASP provides background information on ADHD and LD. The association publishes the following: *ADHD Children and Social Skills Training*, *ADHD Look-Alikes Guidelines for Parents*, *Attention Disorders: Interventions for Adolescents*, and *Attention Problems: Strategies for Parents*.

**National Center for Family Literacy** [www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org)

This is an organization supporting family literacy service with training, research, and advocacy.

**National Center for Learning Disabilities** [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

This web site offers information, resources, referral services, education, public awareness, and advocacy for people with LD.

LD Fact Sheets [www.nclld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=447](http://www.nclld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=447)

Dyscalculia [www.nclld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=463](http://www.nclld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=463)

**National Dissemination Center for Child and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)** <http://nichcy.org>

This is an information and referral center on disabilities and disability-related issues affecting youth and their families.

**National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)** [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

This is a clearinghouse on disabilities and related issues involving children birth to age 22.

**National Institute for Learning Disabilities** [www.nild.net](http://www.nild.net)

The institute trains therapists to work with students who have learning disabilities.

**National Institute for Literacy, Literacy and LD Special Collection (NIFL)** [www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/collections.html](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/collections.html)

NIFL publishes fact sheets on learning disabilities and extensive information on literacy.

**National Institute for Mental Health** [www.NIMH.nih.gov](http://www.NIMH.nih.gov)

NIMH is part of the National Institutes of Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**National Resource Center on AD/HD**, a program of CHADD [www.help4adhd.org/en/about/wwk](http://www.help4adhd.org/en/about/wwk)

What We Know—Info Sheets on AD/HD:

- # 1 The Disorder Named AD/HD
- # 2 Parenting a Child with AD/HD
- # 5A AD/HD and Coexisting Conditions: Tics and Tourette Syndrome
- # 5B AD/HD and Coexisting Conditions: Disruptive Behavior Disorders
- # 5C AD/HD and Coexisting Conditions: Depression

**One A.D.D. Place** [www.oneaddplace.com](http://www.oneaddplace.com)

This web site provides links to resources, upcoming events, products, and professional services related to ADD and LD.

**Regional Resource and Federal Centers (RRFC) Network** [www.rRFCnetwork.org](http://www.rRFCnetwork.org)

RRFC focuses on adaptive equipment and tools for children with disabilities.

**Schwab Learning** [www.schwablearning.org](http://www.schwablearning.org)

This web site features a parent's guide to helping children with learning disabilities and includes a weekly newsletter on LD.

**SEN Teacher** [www.senteacher.org](http://www.senteacher.org)

This web site targets parents and teachers of children with severe, profound, or complex learning difficulties.

**Sensory Integration International** [www.sensoryint.com/faq.html](http://www.sensoryint.com/faq.html)

This organization's goal is to improve the quality of life of people with sensory integration disorders.

FAQ [www.sensoryint.com/faq.html](http://www.sensoryint.com/faq.html)

**U.S. Department of Education** [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Office of Library Programs publishes Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice

[www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit)

These are summaries from a symposium on family literacy in January 1996.

## Wisconsin Resources

### Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin [www.ldawisconsin.com](http://www.ldawisconsin.com)

The association provides support for adults and children with learning disabilities.

### University of Wisconsin–Madison

School of Education includes:

The center conducts basic and applied research in schools around the country.

Family Village [www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/index.html](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/index.html)

Family Village provides information and communication opportunities on the Internet for persons with CD and LD.

Waisman Center [www.waisman.wisc.edu/index.html](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/index.html)

Wisconsin Center for Educational Research [www.wcer.wisc.edu](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu)

### Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) [www.wati.org](http://www.wati.org)

WATI is a statewide project to make assistive technology and services more available to children with disabilities.

### Wisconsin Branch of the International Dyslexia Association [www.wis-dys.org](http://www.wis-dys.org)

The association disseminates information on dyslexia and the Orton-Gillingham method of instruction.

### Wisconsin CHADD Chapter Affiliates:

Appleton Area CHADD [www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd476.html](http://www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd476.html)

Greater Coulee Region CHADD, LaCrosse 608-781-4150

Mid-Wisconsin Satellite of CHADD, Wisconsin Rapids [www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd157.html](http://www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd157.html)

Northeast Wisconsin CHADD, Green Bay [www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd690.html](http://www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd690.html)

Northeast Wisconsin—Spanish Branch, Green Bay [www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd151.html](http://www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd151.html)

Southeast Wisconsin CHADD, Milwaukee [www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd150.html](http://www.chaddonline.org/chapters/chadd150.html)

Walworth County Satellite, Lake Geneva (262) 348-4000, ext. 4000

### Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction [www.dpi.wi.gov](http://www.dpi.wi.gov)

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) <http://dpi.wi.gov/cesa.html>

Special Education [www.dpi.wi.gov/spedhtml](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/spedhtml)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/adhd.html](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/adhd.html)

IDEA Child Count <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/cc-12-1-05.html>

IDEA provides a child count for state special education by category

Programs for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities [www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/ld.html](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/ld.html)

Post Secondary Education and Training for Students with Disabilities <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/trans.pdf>

Top Ten Brain Research Findings in Reading [www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/ppt/ldbrain.ppt](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/ppt/ldbrain.ppt)

Special Education Reports [www2.dpi.state.wi.us/leareports/](http://www2.dpi.state.wi.us/leareports/)

The reports district counts of children in special education categories.

### Wisconsin Family Ties [www.wifamilyties.org](http://www.wifamilyties.org)

Wisconsin Family Ties supports families with children and teens who have emotional, behavior, and mental disorders.

### Wisconsin First Step [www.mch-hotlines.org](http://www.mch-hotlines.org)

Wisconsin First Step is an information and referral hotline for youth with special needs.

Regional Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Centers:

- Northern Region [www.co.marathon.wi.us/cyshcn.asp](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/cyshcn.asp)
- Northeastern Region <http://northeasterncshcn.org>
- Southern Region [www.waisman.wisc.edu/ciu/cshcn/index.html](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/ciu/cshcn/index.html)
- Southeastern Region [www.specialneedsfamilycenter.org](http://www.specialneedsfamilycenter.org)
- Western Region [www.co.chippewa.wi.us/ccdph/CSHCN/](http://www.co.chippewa.wi.us/ccdph/CSHCN/)

### Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) [www.wati.org](http://www.wati.org)

Independent Living Centers offer an array of services including lending assistive technology devices including those that might be used by students with learning disabilities.

### Wisconsin's Parent Educator Connection [www.wi-pec.net/links.htm](http://www.wi-pec.net/links.htm)

This web site provides links for parents to sites on a variety of disabilities, including learning disabilities.

### YMCA Timbertop Camp [www.wisconline.com/attractions/camps/ymcatimbertop.html](http://www.wisconline.com/attractions/camps/ymcatimbertop.html)

This camp located in Stevens Point offers camping programs for youth ages nine to 13 who have LD.

