

Learning Differences Signs and Symptoms

1. **Normal or above normal intelligence.** As parents you know your child is intelligent but for some reason is not learning what other children are learning at each age or is not learning in the same way others seem to learn.

2. **Normal hearing and vision.** Their eyes and ears, when tested, are normal, but you don't think they are hearing or seeing correctly. The way their brain interprets the messages it receives may not be accurate.

3. **Mixed dominance and directional confusion.** Does your child switch hands for writing or catching balls? Does your child sometimes or always mix up right and left? Most children by the age of 7 or 8 never make a mistake in naming left and right.

4. **Poor concept of time.** Does your child tend to live only in the here and now? Does your child seem unconcerned and unaware of the progress of time? Is your child having extreme difficulty learning to use a clock? Is he chronically late?

5. **Unchangeable pace.** Does your child have one pace and tend to stick to it no matter what the situation? If your child is one that moves slowly, does he always move slowly, no matter how you try to speed him up? If your child is in high gear, is he always in high gear, no matter how much you try to make him sit still?

6. **Difficulty learning sequences.** Does your child have difficulty learning the alphabet in order or the days of the week or months of the year? Does your child have difficulty remembering schedules and instructions in order? Does he constantly ask, "What comes next?" or "What do I do now?"

7. **Unusual powers of observation.** Does your child tend to see his world through a wide-angle lens? Nothing escapes his attention. Because of this your child may seem to have a very short attention span or be easily distracted. Does he seem unable to "tune-out" the unimportant? Is your child unusually adept at "reading" people. . . knowing their moods, their real feelings, and the meaning behind their words?

8. **Unusual creativity.** Does your child approach a problem in a different way or express his ideas differently than usual? Is your child talented in understanding and creating objects that are three-dimensional? Is your child unusually talented mechanically? Does your child have an unusually good flare with words and story-telling?

9. **Misfits and loners.** Does your child tend to play by himself? Often considered "dumb" by their peers, they have "failed" so often socially that they usually fear making friends. Is your child the "class clown?"

10. **Poor organization.** Does your child have **no** natural inclination toward organization? Does he forget his school books? Does he keep a messy room? Does he seem to have no idea how to organize his belongings or his papers? Is he constantly being told he needs to learn to use his time wisely?

11. Failure in the basic skills. Does your child have a very unusual way to hold his pencil and refuse to change to a more normal grip? Does it seem to be impossible for your child to learn the basic math facts? Has your child failed to learn to read by the end of standard one? Does it seem impossible for your child to copy accurately from the board or his book? Does your child prefer to print even after he should have learned to write cursive? Is his paper messy with corrections and seemingly careless errors like uncrossed t's and undotted l's? Does your child tend to only use his first name on his papers? Does your child persist in writing some letters backwards or upside down after the age of 8? Does your child have good comprehension and retention for stories read to him, but seem to be unable to remember or understand stories he reads to himself? Is your child very poor in spelling? Does your child refuse to answer questions in complete sentences, even when he can give the answer orally?

12. Poor hand-eye co-ordination. Does your child have difficulty catching a ball? Does he have difficulty making two lines meet when drawing a picture? Does he have difficulty using scissors?

13. Maturation lag. Does your child act immature for his age? Does your child tend to cling to you and refuse to try new things? Does he prefer to "parallel play" instead of "group play" after the age of 5?

14. Emotional instability. Does your child tend to have more temper tantrums, anger, fear, or frustration than seems appropriate for his age? Does a lot of activity or change in plans cause your child great distress?

These are only a sampling of the kinds of questions that can be useful in identifying a child who may have specific learning differences. If you answered "yes" to an **overwhelming majority** of these questions, you should seek professional help in finding what specific areas of learning differences your child may have.

Your child has special gifts that God has given for his enjoyment and the world's benefit. The high priority we set on academic excellence causes our more creative children to feel they are failures. With proper help, they can learn to adapt intellectually without forfeiting their more creative talents. It is believed that Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein had learning differences and yet their creative genius has enriched the world.

Your child is **not** inferior. You have not failed as a parent. It is not your fault that your child is having problems learning. Proper help given early enough can save untold heartache and trouble for you and your child. Don't delay!