

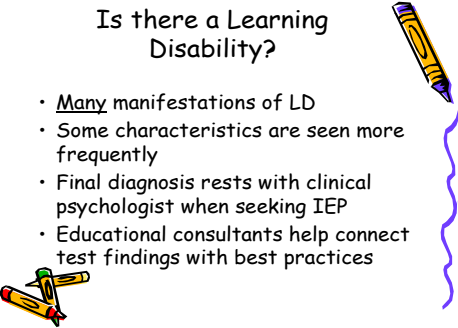
Recognizing Learning Disabilities. Speaker: Judi Munday
June 8, 2006 Session #1 Home Educator's Association of Virginia



Recognizing Learning Disabilities
When Do I Seek Help?
What's Involved?

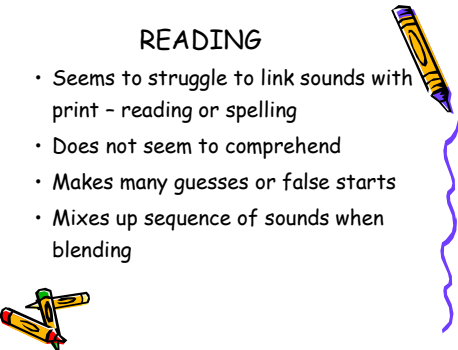
Is there a Learning Disability?

- Many manifestations of LD
- Some characteristics are seen more frequently
- Final diagnosis rests with clinical psychologist when seeking IEP
- Educational consultants help connect test findings with best practices



READING

- Seems to struggle to link sounds with print - reading or spelling
- Does not seem to comprehend
- Makes many guesses or false starts
- Mixes up sequence of sounds when blending



LANGUAGE

- Is easily frustrated or gets really angry over "nothing"
- Does not remember today what he knew yesterday or last week
- Won't take part in group activities if he has to speak
- Does not do what I say -forgets?? (seems "disobedient"??)



MORE LANGUAGE

- Pulls back from interacting with peers
- Strongly dislikes or resists writing
- Can't put ideas into words or can't "find" the right word easily
- Has trouble summarizing, finding the big ideas
- Does not do well on abstract thinking



MATH

- Does math work with crooked columns and problems all over the paper
- "Cannot" memorize number facts
- Gets stuck on money, measurement
- Does poorly on word problems
- Has trouble telling time on clocks
- Has trouble with multi-step processes



FINE-MOTOR

- Does work that is *unusually* sloppy
- Has very poor handwriting
- Can't learn cursive (> 9 years)
- Can't cut straight lines, trace
- Hand tires easily
- Pencil grip is very stressed - incorrect and/or white knuckled!
- Seems more uncoordinated than peers (clumsy?)



INATTENTION

- Child unable to work with noise
- Child gets lost trying to share
- Needs frequent repetition - of directions or questions!
- Is very disorganized - loses things
- Is impulsive - many false starts/fixes
- Does not learn from consequences
- Blurts out without thinking of others



SENSORY INTEGRATION

- Intolerant of specific tastes, fabrics, smells
- Resists or craves touch-physical contact
- Seems aggressive
- Intolerant of specific "sensory" inputs - temperature, texture
- Seems overloaded too easily



Now What?

Know your child's strengths!!

- What are child's grade levels for math - reading - writing?
- Is there is a *significant* difference between any of them?
- Record observations or problems with time-date-intensity what happened in the situation?



Don't Wait to Get Help!

- The research is in - *early* help is the key to closing the gap!
- Submit fears or concerns to someone you trust!
- YOU know your child best!!!
- Listen to your heart



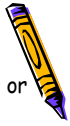
What do I do next?

- Seek expert help to know the truth
- **Testing, observations, consultations**
- LD is NOT a *label* - it is a diagnosis
- **A diagnosis allows treatment to begin!**
- Begin making recommended changes in how and what you teach.



Evaluation Process

- WHO? Psychologist, psychiatrist, or educational consultants
- You will be asked to:
 - to provide history
 - show work samples - good and poor
 - state why you want your child tested



What will be tested?

- Examiners use a variety of tests
- No "set" applies to all clients. May test:
 - IQ -WISC-IV
 - Achievement in academics
 - Ability to stay focused -ADD/ADHD
 - Hand-eye coordination
 - Behaviors
 - Expressive/Receptive language skills
 - Articulation
 - Processing Speed



Examiner may need to know...

- Was child < 5 lbs. at birth?
- Was child ever oxygen deprived?
- Has child ever have serious head injury?
- If any immediate relatives have ADD/ADHD or learning disability?
- Medical history



After the testing...

the examiner should:

- explain test results *in a way you understand* - **if they do not...ask!**
- provide specific suggestions that help you know how to help your child
- give referrals to other specialists if data indicate that
- **never** hand you a report and rush you through it!



After Testing, the parent should know...

- if child has a learning disability and what that is
- some definite ideas of how to interact with the child
- the recommendations for teaching to promote success
- if more in-depth evaluations for specific concerns are needed



What's the next step?

• **Depending on test results...**

- Child may need specialized testing
- Implement gradual changes in
 - Textbooks
 - Teaching approach
 - Testing



Accommodations/ Modifications

- Seek help on ways to adjust:
 - Setting
 - Material used
 - Way to test
 - Timing or pacing
 - Difficulty level
 - Quantity of work expected
 - Mode of output/input



What comes next?

- Seek a consultant
- Consider a Student Education Plan
- Learn how VA law permits *alternatives* to group EOY standardized testing:
 - Performance evaluations on SOL's
 - Portfolio evaluations
 - One-on-one testing/evaluations



Finally...

- ENJOY your child
- Rejoice in his or her strengths
- ALWAYS teach at the level he or she can LEARN --- not the reading level!
- Exercise good stewardship of your child's gifts.
- REMEMBER: School is more than pencil and paper!