

Social and Emotional Development of Students with LDs Podcast Clip - Transcript:

Lawrence – How would you categorize that link between students with an LD, because obviously certain social developments, we all have that as we grow through? What highlights the differences and challenges a student living with an LD is going to have to cope with?

Dr. Wiener – Well first is academic failure. So, that's obviously a challenge and they're going to experience more of it than many other kids, so then how is that affecting them? So, then you're kind of looking at the family – how does the family regard that? How do the teachers support them when they're having academic issues? How is that going to affect them? So, all of that is important. In terms of the peer context, in most schools academic failure or academic difficulty isn't so key to peer relations but what happens to you when you have these challenges might be. So if teachers are constantly criticizing you, that seems to affect your peer relations. If you're put in a lot of, and I have a lot of research evidence about that, if you're put in a special education class for a large proportion of the day, that seems to affect your peer relations. So it's those types of things that do.

Lawrence – so does that then become a cycle, if the child's self-esteem is struggling because of academic failure then does that just cycle downwards? Is that part of the issue here that negative leads to more negative and that becomes the reinforcing experience?

Dr. Wiener – I don't know if we have research that supports that, but you know I've been working with those kids with I can't tell you, I don't even want to say how long.

(Laughter)

Dr. Wiener – And, it's certainly something we observed. You can actually see it happening in certain classrooms where you have a really critical teacher who is constantly harping on a particular child. So at the beginning of the year, they're doing play socially and then they cycle down. And in fact, I do have evidence that in fact the peer relations deteriorate throughout a school year quite often. The teacher's the key there. And I think that's really important because

if the teacher is finding, looking at where is this child's strengths? How can we build them up? That also affects them with their peers. On the other hand, if the child is having academic difficulties, the teacher is being negative toward them, it can cycle down and get worse and worse. And then you can see sometimes when there's a different teacher who thinks about these things differently, and is really looking at how do we foster strengths? How do we foster relationships that can turn around again?