

Transcript: What are LDs? An introduction to learning disabilities

### **What is a learning disability?**

Learning disabilities, or LDs, affect the way the brain takes in, stores and recalls information.

LDs come in many forms and affect people with varying levels of severity. They can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing, organization, time management and social communication skills.

Living with a learning disability can have an ongoing impact on friendships, work and self-esteem to name a few.

However, students with learning disabilities can succeed when they have access to specific instructions and compensatory strategies to help them overcome their difficulties.

### **What do LDs look like in the classroom?**

Students with LDs may experience problems in the classroom environment with reading, writing, mathematics, executive function and social situations. A learning disability can affect students differently across different academic tasks and settings.

For example, in reading, a student with an LD may experience problems recognizing words and breaking them down into their individual sounds, reading fluently or understanding what is read. In writing, a student with an LD may experience problems with handwriting, putting thoughts on paper, organizing written work or with spelling and grammar.

In math, a student with an LD may experience problems in learning number facts, doing arithmetic and calculation, using symbols in math and in understanding visual–spatial relationships.

These students may also experience problems in executive functioning, in areas such as organizing, time-management, planning & decision making or in problem solving.

Lastly they may also experience problems with social situations in interpreting facial expressions, understanding body language, understanding tones of voice or in taking turns in conversations.

### **How will I know if one of my students has an LD?**



Transcript: What are LDs? An introduction to learning disabilities

Parents are often the first to notice that “something doesn’t seem right.” If you are aware of the common signs of learning disabilities, you will be able to recognize potential problems early.

If you suspect that one of your students has a learning disability, it is important to communicate with both the parents of the student and school board professionals so they can be referred to the appropriate medical resources.

A student with an LD may receive an Individual Education Plan or IEP based on their strengths and needs, as documented by a psychological assessment.

### **What can I do to support my student with an LD?**

Students with LDs often have difficulties that extend beyond those in class and have an impact on them throughout their lives.

Developing a special skill or talent can help students to be successful and feel appreciated for their contributions. Teachers can also recognize the student's specific areas of strength and need and create teachable moments to model and reinforce positive skills.

Proceed in small steps, demonstrate, and give multiple examples, offer practice and feedback, reinforcement, and praise. Try to minimize competition and focus instead on the student's self-esteem and cooperative learning by creating opportunities for shared learning and join activities.

Remember that every student is unique and that each and every one of them has different learning needs.

### **Conclusion**

Your role as a teacher is to ensure that the material you are teaching is accessible to each of your students using strategies that are effective and differentiated.

Get to know your students' IEPs and use the recommended interventions and accommodations.

Lastly, don't forget that you are surrounded by a team of professionals to support you and your students.

To take a more in-depth look at any of the information we have presented, please consult the resources section on our website at [ldatschool.ca](http://ldatschool.ca)



Transcript: What are LDs? An introduction to learning disabilities

