

Things you Always Wanted to Know about Learning Disability

by Suchitra Manjular

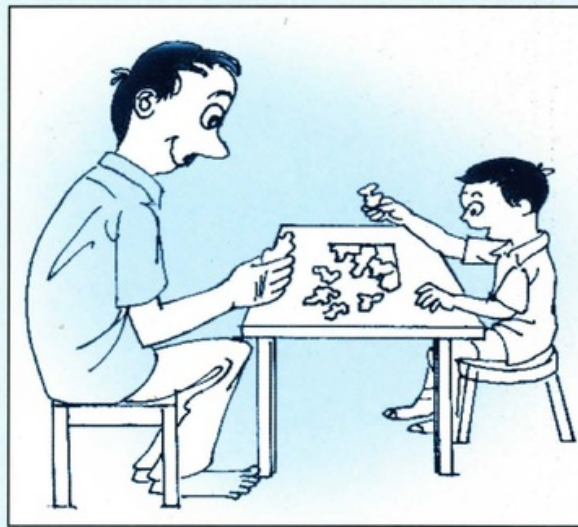
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VOLUME - I

LEARNING DISABILITY

THINGS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LEARNING DISABILITY



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P R E F A C E

Learning disability is a silent and enigmatic entity. Most of the children with learning disability have normal intelligence, are apparently normal in all dimensions of their daily living, yet have isolated problem in learning certain things. They learn certain things very well, but have difficulty in reading or writing, or spelling, or in mastering arithmetical operations and number concepts. Parents are confused. Their otherwise normal child fails in his examinations, and they are at a loss to understand this. They have a number of questions starting with that of whom to consult for their child's problem. In such a situation, the parents go to their family physician who may prescribe 'memory' tablets. Parents faithfully implement the 'treatment', only to find, after sometime, that their child continues to manifest the same set of problems as before. The parents are more frustrated. This monograph from Ms. M. G. Suchitra and Dr. R. Manjula has not come a day too soon and clears the plethora of doubts that the concerned parents have. Not only this, the monograph also has many suggestions for the parents and teachers on the management of such children, on the kind of interaction that parents and teachers must have for the benefit of the child, and on long term management. This book is also a wonderful resource material for the clinician who gets plenty of suggestions to counsel parents.

This is the first in the series of monographs on learning disability. The second volume which focuses on the management of children with learning disability will soon hit the stands. AIISH is striving to educate the masses on impairments of speech and hearing and their short-term and long-term sequel. Your suggestions are always welcome

9th August 2005
Mysore

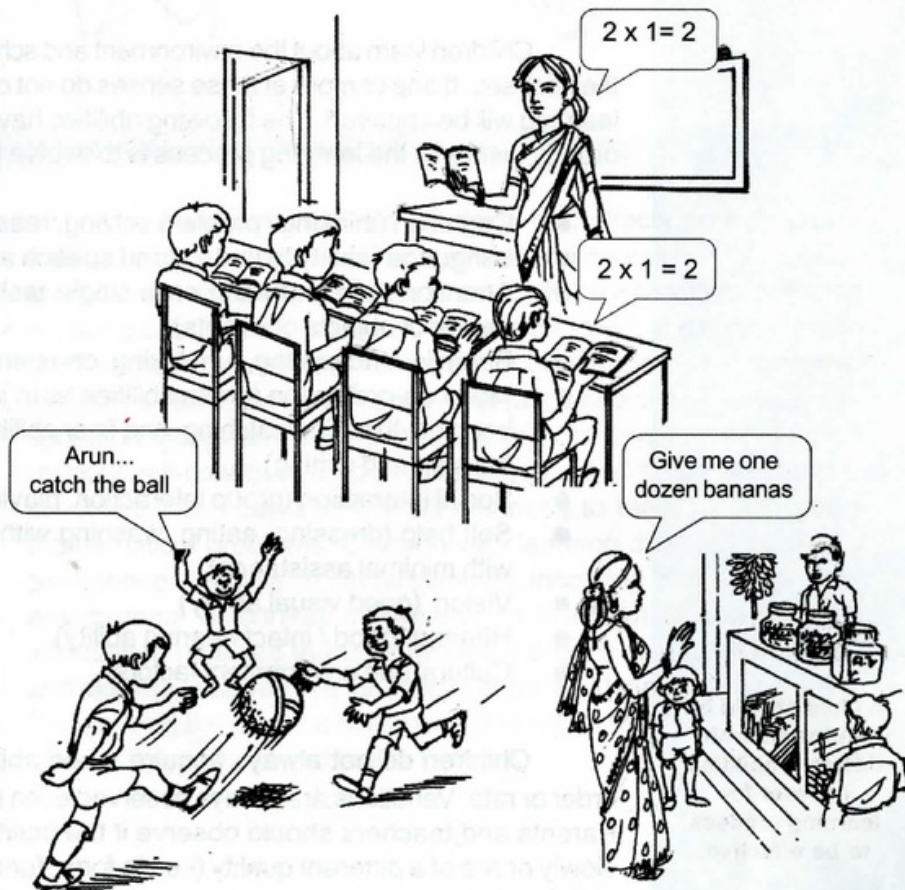
M. Jayaram
Director



THINGS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LEARNING DISABILITY

Learning

Learning is not confined to books, paper and pen. Exposure to varied situations in our daily life provides opportunities for intellectual growth. Real life situations offer interesting and meaningful environments for learning. Learning is a process of gathering information from people, things, events, written material and environment. The information so gathered is stored in the brain and used whenever needed.



We learn from
things & events
happening around
us



Receiving messages through various senses is called 'perception' and good perception helps in learning.

How do we learn?

Regardless of age, each of us learn everyday. We learn because our vision, hearing, touch and smell bring in information about things to us. We find the temperature of an object by touching it. We know that someone is at the door when we hear the door bell ringing. The process of perception involves receiving messages through our senses and perceiving meaning of those messages. Good perception helps in learning.



Touching



Tasting



Smelling



Seeing

Children learn about the environment and school subjects using their senses. If one or more of these senses do not operate effectively, learning will be impaired. The following abilities have to develop in an orderly fashion if the learning process is to evolve in a child.

- Cognition (thinking / problem solving, reasoning)
- Language (ability to understand speech and speak)
- Attention (concentrating on a single task. E.g., observing details of objects or events).
- Behaviour (tolerating, turn taking, co-operating)
- Motor co-ordination (gross abilities as in jumping, hopping, throwing/catching, and finer abilities as in buttoning the shirt and writing)
- Social interaction (group interaction, playing with children)
- Self help (dressing, eating, washing without assistance or with minimal assistance).
- Vision (good visual ability)
- Hearing (good / intact hearing ability)
- Cultural and environment factors

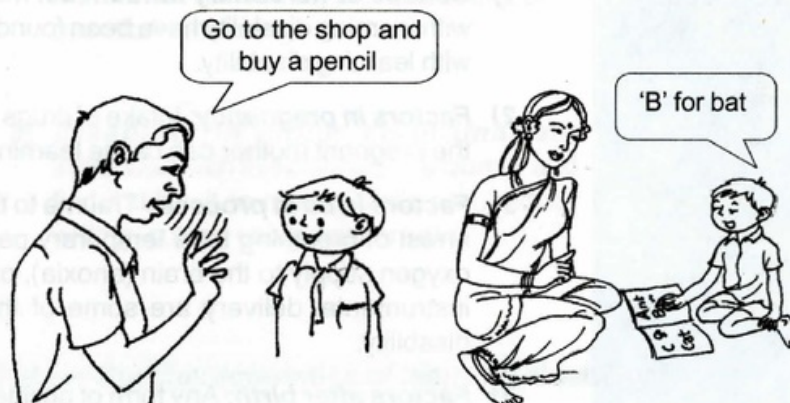
Children do not always acquire these abilities in the same order or rate. Variations are always observed even in normal children. Parents and teachers should observe if the abilities are emerging slowly or are of a different quality (i.e., in form, functions, strength or skills).

A child should be endowed with different abilities in order for learning process to be effective.



Children acquire various abilities in different order & rate.

Understanding speech and speaking are important abilities, which are acquired in children much before the child learns to read. Most often, young children learn to speak from the model provided by older children and adults. Before learning to read, the child must have adequate listening vocabulary (understanding the words heard) and speaking vocabulary (i.e. ability to express different words). This helps the child to understand words and sentences.



What is learning disability?

3 Learning disability is a condition that affects an individual's ability to either understand what they see and hear or link information processed at different parts of the brain. Children with such processing or linking difficulties are known as learning disabled, and most of these children have normal or above normal intelligence. Overtly, these limitations can show up in many ways: (a) as specific difficulties with spoken language and written language, (b) poor physical co-ordination (c) poor self control or (d) poor attention. Such difficulties extend to schoolwork and can interfere with learning to read, write or solve mathematical problems. Children with learning disability generally experience difficulty in understanding incoming stimuli from the environment or convey information in the form of speech. The information received through the sense organs such as eyes, ears and skin are received in a jumbled or scrambled manner in the brain, thus making the process of learning difficult for the child. This is true of learning academic subjects in school.

Learning is impaired when one or more than one sense is affected



It is difficult to identify the exact cause for learning disability in a child.

What are the causes of learning disability?

The most common causes of learning disability are identified to a greater extent. Yet, it is very difficult to pin-point the cause in any given child.

Some of the identified causes are:

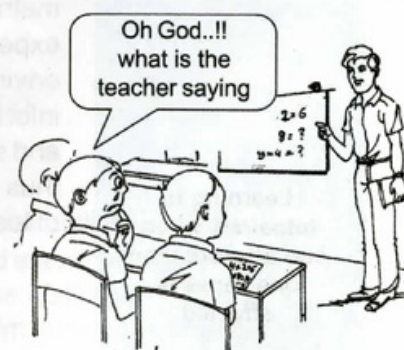
- 1) **Genetic or hereditary influences:** More number of children with learning disability have been found in families or relatives with learning disability.
- 2) **Factors in pregnancy:** Intake of drugs / exposure to toxins by the pregnant mother can cause learning disability.
- 3) **Factors in birth process:** Trauma to the head during labour, arrest of breathing for a temporary period leading to lack of oxygen supply to the brain (anoxia), premature delivery and instrumental delivery are some of the causes of learning disability.
- 4) **Factors after birth:** Any form of accident or disease like high fever, encephalitis, meningitis, stroke, malnutrition etc., resulting in direct or indirect injury to the brain, may cause learning disability.

Types of learning disability:

In academic areas, learning disability may be found in one or more domains of learning. This problem differs from one child to another child. Hence, it is not possible to compare one individual with learning disability with another.

In general, the nature and characteristics of learning disability varies. Different terms are used to identify disorders under learning disability and they are as follows:

- 1) **Dyslexia:** A disability in which the individual has difficulty in understanding words, sentences or paragraphs.
- 2) **Reading disability:** Difficulty or inability to read letters/words or sentences. The child will experience difficulty in understanding what is read out to him.



Characteristics of learning disability vary from individual to individual.



Children with learning disability are generally better in abilities such as speaking, playing and physical skills when compared to their academic abilities.

3) **Dysgraphia:** A writing disability in which the individual finds it difficult to write alphabets without errors or write within a defined space.



6+2 = ah..ah.. um..um..

4) **Dyscalculia (Arithmetic disability):** Refers to difficulty in basic arithmetic / mathematical concepts, reasoning or quantitative thinking.



5) **Disability in motor co-ordination:** Individuals with this disability are clumsy and find it difficult to master skills required for writing, cutting using scissors etc.



What are the characteristics of learning disability?

The common characteristics found in children with learning disability are:

1) **Academic difficulties:** There will be marked discrepancy/ differences between the intelligence of the child and his/her academic performance. Some children with learning disability may show above average abilities in certain areas while being poor in some other areas. Some of these are:

- Poor reading ability.
- Poor copying ability (has difficulty in copying from board).
- **g** or writing ability (writing consists of errors like reversals, letter reversals like 'b' for 'd' or word reversals such as 'saw' for 'was', 'on' for 'no')
- **Letter** inversions such as 'u' for 'n', 'w' for 'm'

A child with learning disability has problems in reading, writing, copying & other academic skills





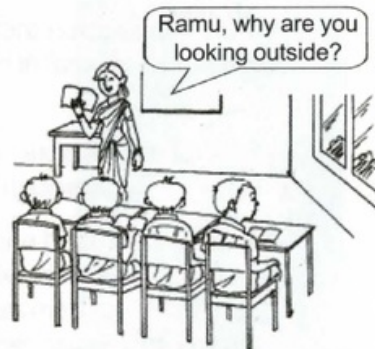
A child who is at risk for reading and writing problems shows poor abilities in academic skills. This is generally observed by parents/teachers at the age of 5-6 years.

Poor attention & memory may commonly be found in some children with learning disability.

- Poor hand writing, poor spacing between letters and words in sentence.
- Does not finish home work or is too slow to complete writing tasks.
- Is a slow achiever in some areas, above average in others.
- Overall school performance is poorer than expected.



2) **Attention deficits:** Attention with respect to reading, writing, calculation and listening tasks is poor in comparison to children of the same age/group. This is clearly observed in a class room situation.



3) **Sensory- motor deficits:**

- Has difficulty in judging size and shape relationships
- Has difficulty in colouring pictures.
- Has difficulty in cutting, pasting and craft work.
- Has difficulty in telling time.
- Has difficulty in telling the difference between right and left.
- Has difficulty in understanding spatial relationships like under, over, top, bottom.

What is the time now ?



12'O'clock

Show me your right hand..



This is my right hand..

4) **Memory deficits:** Children with learning disability often exhibit memory deficits.

- Has difficulty in naming familiar people or things and recalling events
- Has poor concentration
- Is unable to say the letters of the alphabet or days of the week in order
- Is unable to follow multiple/complex directions in speech due to poor memory.

Sunday..
Monday..
Tue....
.....





A child with learning disability may show behavioral deviations.

5) Behavioural deficits: A child with learning disability may also show abnormal behaviour.

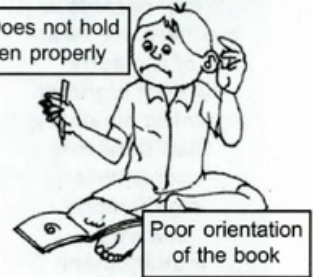
He/she may:

- be clumsy
- be lazy
- be stubborn and hyperactive
- show poor ability in finer muscular co-ordination.

E.g: Difficulty in closing and opening the lid of a bottle

- show poor eye-hand co-ordination ability. E.g.: poor in colouring & writing skills
- have short attention span. E.g: Inability to concentrate on a story which is read out to the child
- show low frustration level. E.g: Becomes angry or sad very quickly when the child's mistakes are pointed out or throws temper tantrums
- be socially immature

Does not hold pen properly



People just dont understand me..



6) Speech deficits:

Some children with learning disability may have problem in acquiring speech and language skills.

- There could be delay in the development of speech or immature speech.
- They may experience difficulty in finding the right word or forming appropriate sentences while speaking.
- They may have difficulty in articulating the sound of a language at times.

Note: Some of the above mentioned characteristics may be seen in many children at various stages of their development. If a child exhibits several of these characteristics and if they persist during the growth of the child, then it is essential to consult a specialist for evaluation and remediation of the problem.

What are the early signs of learning disability?

Early warning signs/high risk factors for learning disability which need to be observed by parents in their children studying in kindergarten to 4th grade level are as follows :

- Late talking compared to other children of the same age.
- Pronunciation problems.
- Difficulty in matching rhyming words.
- Difficulty in learning alphabets /numbers / days of the week.

Speech defects may also be seen as one of the characteristic in children with learning disability.



If the parents & teachers are aware of the early warning signs of learning disability, then they can contribute significantly towards a management program.

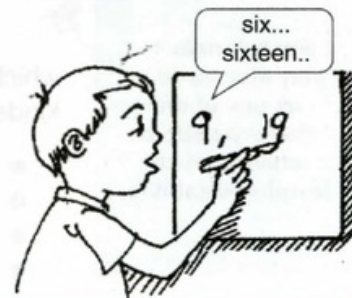
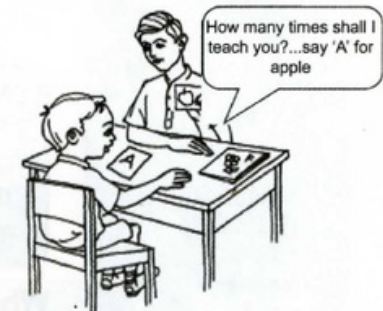
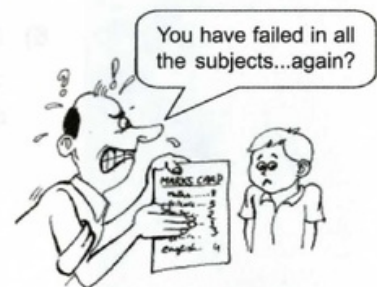
- Poor interaction skills with other children.
- Poor ability to follow directions/routine instructions (e.g. give me a glass and close the door).
- Slow in learning the relationship between sounds and letters.
- Reversals of letters, confusions of letters like "b" for "d" while reading or writing.
- Slow in recalling events/stories.
- Poor pencil grip while writing.
- Requires more time to learn any new event / lesson.
- Poor physical co-ordination as seen in activities like climbing the tree, hopping, skipping etc.

What are the warning signs in classroom situations which need to be observed by teachers?

Students with learning disability exhibit greater difficulties in classroom situation. Teachers serve as the essential link between parents and professionals who treat children with learning disability.

The following are some of the warning signs, which can be easily identified by teachers.

- General difficulty in learning academic subjects although the child seems to be bright in outdoor skills and oral skills.
- Difficulty in telling time or remembering order of days/months.
- Specific and persistent errors in writing. E.g. writing letters P for D, 'B' for D' and 'saw' for 'was'.
- Poor hand writing including poor spacing while writing.
- Poor drawing skills.
- Inability to follow oral directions in classroom situation.
- Difficulty with numbers. Confusing '6' for '9'.
- Slowness in finishing work
- Overactive compared to peers at times.
- Very clumsy
- Easily distracted
- Frustrated over failures too quickly



An alert and observant teacher can identify the signs of learning disability in a student at a very early age.



A team of professionals evaluate a child with learning disability.

Who will manage such problems/disability and how?

Learning disability does not mean that an individual so affected cannot learn or master academic skills at all. Such individuals require special attention and also require to be taught using a different method for teaching specific skills. Parents and teachers should seek professional help to understand the problems/disability in greater detail, to confirm the presence of the problem, and to provide remedial measures.

Professionals who can help

Generally a team of professionals evaluate the individual with learning disability. Evaluation includes direct observation, tests to measure child's abilities (strength in specific areas) and disabilities (weakness in specific areas). The team includes:

A Speech-Language Pathologist: evaluates the nature and degree of the learning difficulty, strength and weakness in specific areas, and suggests remedial measures to improve reading and writing skills.

A Clinical Psychologist: assesses intelligence, evaluates behavior, and suggests remedial measures.

A Special Educator: provides detailed programs for individuals to improve their academic (school-related) skills through specialized/individualized teaching skills.

A Neurologist: assesses the deficits in neurological skills.

Other professionals may also be involved at times.

What is a remediation program in learning disability?

A team of professionals evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in various domains of learning and formulate a program to manage learning disability in a child. This is called a remediation program. Any remediation program generally includes the following:

A. Improving basic abilities

1) Activities that can be carried out by parents

- Parents should be aware of the child's learning problems. They should understand the entire problem and recognize the child's learning potential.

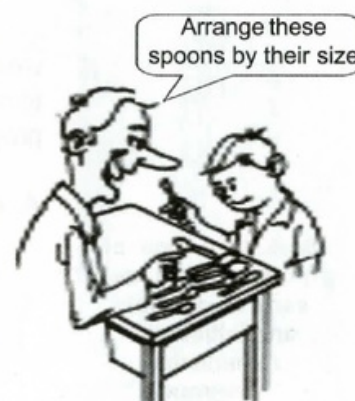
Seek the advice of professionals as early as possible and initiate the remediation program.



Many basic skills can be improved in a child with learning disability in home environment.

Formulating a program to manage learning disability in a child is called a remediation program.

- Parents should give the child objects to encourage the use of senses (vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell) to the maximum extent.
- Parents can transform any ordinary household activity/time like meal time, bed time, a drive in the car or a market trip into a meaningful situation.
- Repetition is needed for learning by all children, especially children with learning disability since they require longer time to master each task.
- Parents should provide at home variety & scope to learn a task in the same manner as in a remedial program.
- Parents should introduce the task step-by-step, and encourage learning in small steps.
- Praise the child for even the slightest improvement shown. Such a feedback will improve the motivation and confidence of the child.
- Plan and encourage activities based on imitation. E.g., imitation of rhymes, speech sounds and sentences.
- The child should be encouraged to observe things for more details such as observing for shape, color, and texture. The child should be helped in recognizing the cause and effect relationship of various tasks and events, which occur in home environment.
- Encourage the child to collect stamps, coins or stones. Help him/her to arrange and categorize these according to size, value, shape etc. Such activities improve perception.
- Provide different types of toys and building blocks etc. to encourage development of concentration and structured play.
- Allow the child to explore and to be more creative. Include a lot of creative activities at home. E.g., drawing, coloring, painting, cutting etc.





As a parent,
stimulate the child
using various
creative activities.

- Parents should use various opportunities to develop skills in the child. For example, finger skills can be improved while cooking or doing gardening activities.
- Encourage imitation of non-speech activities too, such as blowing a balloon, imitating facial expression etc. Imitation of arm & leg movements can also be encouraged. E.g. teach the child to follow instructions such as "put your hands up", "Bend on one side" etc.
- Gain the child's confidence and encourage the child to communicate and express his feelings (speak out his feelings)
- Develop listening skills in the child and make the child understand your speech.
- Encourage physical activities like jumping, hopping, throwing or catching a ball etc., as such exercises improve coordination ability of body structures.
- Play music to the child and encourage the child to clap, dance or beat with the rhythm of the music played.
- Provide books with colourful pictures and encourage the child to point to pictures which you name.
- Stop all activities before the child becomes tired.
- Take time to have fun with the young child. As a routine, spend sometime with the child doing some pleasurable activity which the child enjoys.
- Parents must provide supplementary training at home. There must be total co-ordination and co-operation between the teacher/special educator and parents.



Cooperation and
participation of a
parent dictates the
success of
remediation
program for
learning disability.

2) Activities that can be carried out by teachers:

- Use innovative techniques and provide more opportunities for learning. E.g. use colour codes for letters, wooden cut outs for identification of letters etc.
- Always draw a student's attention before giving directions in a classroom.



Let learning be an enjoyable and interesting activity for the child.

- Call the student by name. This will help the child to focus his attention on the selected task.
- Use more visual teaching aids.
- Write the assignments clearly / legibly on the board.
- Make the child aware of the position of the paper while writing.
- Encourage good up-right sitting posture while writing.
- Encourage the child to use typewriter, if handwriting is illegible or the student has a very poor co-ordination of fingers.
- Help the child to regain his self-confidence by patiently understanding his ability and disabilities.
- Teach such children to properly hold and grip the pencil.
- Make the learning activity an interesting one for the child.
- Praise the child frequently for the attempts made. Expressions such as "Good", "That's great", "You are doing well" etc. go a long way.
- Try to eliminate / or decrease auditory or visual distractions E.g., traffic noise near the class room, flickering tube lights in the classroom etc.
- Seat the child with learning disability in the front row to minimize distraction and maximize attention.
- Give such students extra time to answer both for oral and written questions.
- Give clear instructions to parents regarding home assignments; provide details of progress or quality of performance by the child to the parent as frequently as possible.
- Contact the professionals whenever you need their help in managing the child (academic as well as behaviour).



Encouragement by a teacher in any form paves way for a fruitful life to a child with learning disability.



A child with learning disability can be successful with support from parents and teachers.

Note: Parents and teachers of children with learning disability must be aware of all the difficulties experienced by such children. They must offer patience, understanding and provide alternative methods of learning. The parents and teachers should provide a congenial co-operative atmosphere with support of all the family members and students (in the class) respectively.

B. Improving listening skills of the learning disabled child

Ability to listen and pay attention is essential for children of school going age.

Teach the child how to follow directions

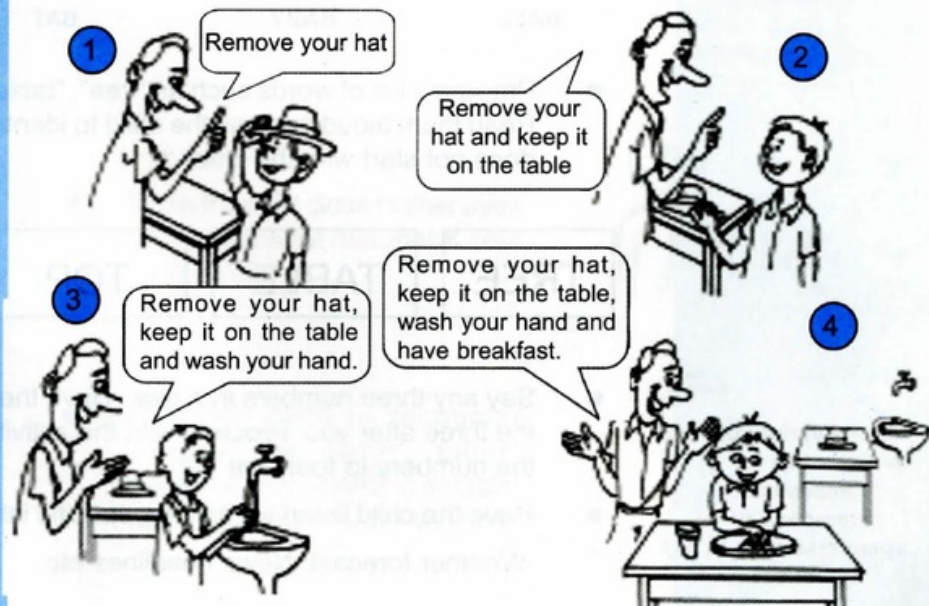
Eg: **Start with very simple requests like**

“Give me a pen”

“Close the door”

When the child starts responding properly to very simple requests, he/she can learn more complex commands in a step-by-step fashion.

Teach him/her to follow step-by-step complex commands in the same fashion.





Developing listening skills is important in learning to read.

- Help the child to localize and discriminate sounds: Discrimination is the ability to differentiate sounds through listening. This helps in learning to read. A child who has not developed his listening skills is likely to have difficulty in reading. The child should be trained to identify and localize different sounds. This is an important step in learning.
- Ask the child to listen to and identify sounds from the street
- Ask the child to identify familiar and household sounds such as sound of running water, bell and whistle.

Some additional activities:

Awareness of speech sounds can be taught by the following activities:

- Make a scrapbook with pictures that begin with given sounds. For example, pictures of "ball", "baby", "bat" and "boy" beginning with letter 'b' in each case.



- Prepare a list of words such as "tree", "table", "top", "book". Read them aloud and ask the child to identify the word that does not start with the letter 't'.



- Say any three numbers in a row. Have the child repeat all the three after you. Proceed with the activity by increasing the numbers to four, five etc.
- Have the child listen to radio for specific information. E.g., Weather forecast, News headlines etc.

Use a variety of activities to improve awareness of speech sounds in the child.



Good perceptual abilities improve reading and writing skills.

C. Improving the sense of touch, taste and smell

- Make the child aware of the sense of touch by blindfolding the child and making the child feel and identify things.
- Make the child trace letters and numbers.
- Assist the child in perceiving temperature variations (cold/hot), weight differences (heavy/light), and texture differences (rough/smooth).
- Make the child close his/her eyes and guess what material is kept on the palm.
- Help the child to recognize concepts like 'sour', 'bitter', 'sweet' etc. by providing eatables which he/she can smell and taste.

Feel this object and name it .



- Make the child trace letters and numbers.

Which book is heavier, the one on your right hand or the one on the left ?



- Assist the child in perceiving temperature variations (cold/hot), weight differences (heavy/light), and texture differences (rough/smooth).

Close your eyes and name the object which is placed on your palm.



- Make the child close his/her eyes and guess what material is kept on the palm.



The lolly pop is sweet



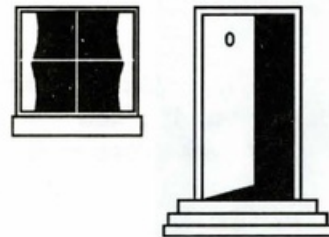
Stimulation of senses facilitates learning.



Help the child identify the size and shape of various household articles.

Some additional activities:

- Teach the child to recognize shapes and sizes.
Eg: **Bangle is round. Door is rectangular in shape.**
- Teaching prepositions will help the child to understand spatial concepts.
- Prepare a workbook as follows:
- **The cup is _____ the table. The dog is _____ the chair**
- Similarly teach other prepositions such as 'in front of', 'behind', 'through', 'between'.



D. Improving language skills of the learning disabled child

Some of these activities will assist in building vocabulary and word meanings. Parent can carry out the following activities to improve the language skills in a learning disability child.

- Have the child name various objects around him/her and describe the activities he/she does.
- Play games like scrabble, solving cross word puzzle etc., with the child.
- Ask the child to find all the things in the room which are red in colour if you are teaching him/her "red".
- Teach the names of different colours while the child is putting his/her green shirt/dress on or bringing a red towel or putting on black shoes.
- Name all the things in a room, where the child is present.
- Name the fruits/vegetables used at home.



Good language ability helps to improve reading & writing skills.



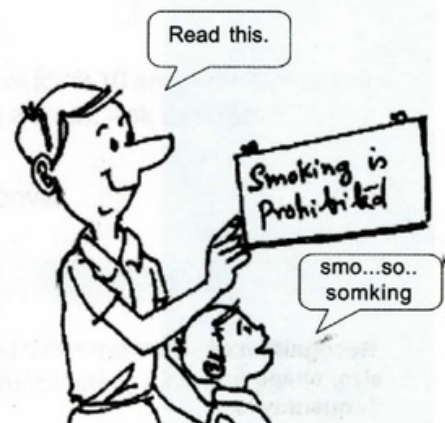
Explain about things and events when you take the child out.

- If the child names an item that does not relate or belong to the name category, explain why it does not belong to that group and help the child make out the difference.
- Improve his/her ability to understand or recognize the meaning of spoken words or sentences.
- Converse with the child on a variety of subjects. Expand child's vocabulary and improve comprehension skills.
- Make the child understand the concepts of past, present and future by narrating daily events.



E. Promoting readiness for reading

- Encourage the child to read from early childhood (Provide books with pictures and stories).
- Read aloud poems, rhymes and stories whenever there is an opportunity.
- Use picture-stories with clear figures and letters.
- Point out the relationship between sounds and words (i.e. how each letter sounds in a word).
- Ensure that the child has access to plenty of reading material in the house.
- Turn off the TV for a few hours at least and instead let each family member read a book.
- Let the child choose the book / story to be read
- Story books accompanied with audio tapes / cassettes can be played and let the parent and child or all children in the class room listen to it.
- If the child is older encourage him / her to visit the library and read magazine and books.
- Encourage the child to read sign boards / traffic signs / notices etc. in public places.



Providing the child with reading materials in early childhood promotes readiness for reading.



There is plenty of scope to teach arithmetical concepts at home.

- Encourage the child to make a photo album with common objects / animals etc. and write or stick their names.
- Use magnetic alphabets for word building games

F. Promoting readiness for arithmetic skills

- Teach counting to the child. Familiarize the child with numbers.
- After learning to count, the child may be taught to associate spoken word with number and quantity of objects. E.g., Here are two pens. There are three trees there.
- An abacus is helpful in teaching numbers.
- Try to help the child recognize quantitative, arithmetic concepts using real objects or pictures.

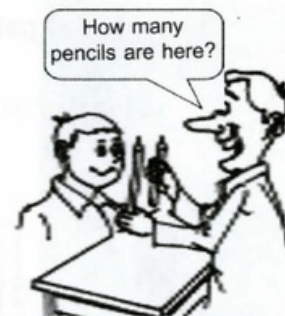
E.g. Which is bigger?

Which is heavier?

- Home is a good place to teach arithmetical concepts.

- Help the child to recognize quantifying measures. E.g. grams, kilogram, quintal
- Frequently ask questions of the type – "Is this tumbler bigger than the others" and encourage correct responses
- Instruct the child to select five spoons from a group of spoons.
- Instruct the child to give half a glass of water
- Help the child to appreciate that daily activities should be carried out at fixed time

E.g., Breakfast at eight o'clock, going to school at nine o'clock

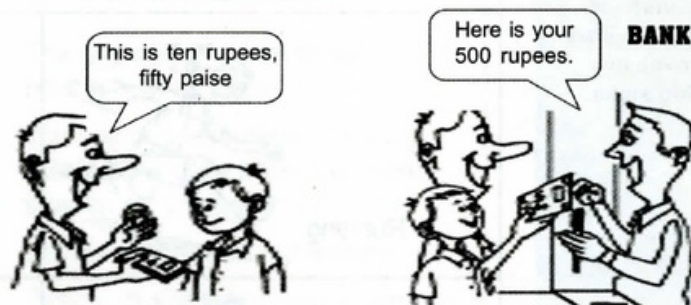


Recognition of size, shape and quantity is important before arithmetic skills are learnt.



The value of money can be taught by taking the child to Banks/ Post office/shops.

- Discuss the money value



- Teach how to count coins / notes.
- Inform the prices of various articles.
- Teach concepts like two fifty paise coins make a rupee, five rupees is lesser than ten rupees and so on.

G. Improving memory of objects / things seen / visualized

- If the child has poor memory of objects/things which are seen in the environment, it interferes with the ability to read. Some of the activities which can improve visual memory are as follows:

- Have the child describe objects from his/her memory. E.g., where is the clock kept in the house?
- Place 3-4 objects on the table. Let the child view them for 5-10 seconds. Cover the items from view by holding a cloth. Ask the child to recall what he/she saw.
- Plan similar activities as above.



H. Improving physical coordination

- Physical control (coordinated movements) of the structures of the body is essential for functioning effectively in one's environment.
- Larger muscles are trained first and later the smaller ones

Learning to read requires good visual memory.



Involving the child in a variety of physical activities improves his learning skills.

Activities for training larger muscles	Activities for training smaller muscles
<p>Running</p>	<p>Cutting</p>
<p>Jumping</p>	<p>Tracing</p>
<p>Throwing</p>	<p>Colouring</p>

1. Improving writing abilities

Improving for finer co-ordination of fingers helps in improving writing skills. The following activities can be carried out to improve writing skills (These are called pre-writing skills as they help in writing skills later).

- Feeling the shapes and recognizing the differences.



Let the child feel the shapes of these blocks

- Tracing line drawings first with the finger and then with pencil.

- Cutting various shapes along the lines drawn or dots drawn.



Let the child cut various shapes along the dotted line.

- Joining the dots and identifying the figures or letters.

Improve fine coordination of fingers in order to improve writing.



Make writing an enjoyable activity by giving the child lots of colourful pictures/sketch pens/colour pencils.

Some additional activities

- The grip on the pencil should not be too tight or loose.
- Start with pre-writing skills by making the child trace the lines/shapes as shown in Figure 1.
- Let the child trace out letters.
- Teach the child to write simple words in a step-by-step manner.
 - Let the child trace the shapes as suggested in the Figure 2. This will help the child to understand the direction, shape and size of the letters.
 - Encourage the child to copy and write small words without assistance.
 - Encourage tracing by providing the child with colour pencils, chalk, felt pens etc.
 - Have pictures of various objects / animals. Write the names of various objects and let the child associate names with pictures as shown in Figure 3.

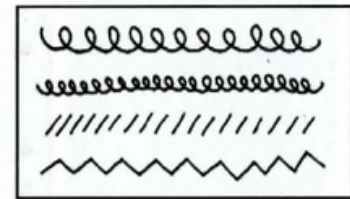


Figure 1



Figure 2

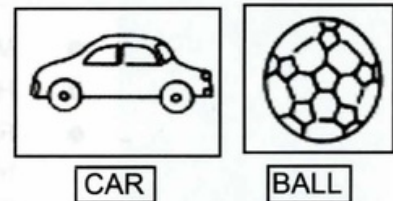


Figure 3

Note: This type of training does not require any special device/equipment. Items/articles commonly found at home and school are the best tools. Parents and teachers should approach / seek special help from specialists in the field as special help really works wonders with such children. Parents and teachers should extend full cooperation and carry out the remedial programs suggested by specialists i.e. Speech-Language Pathologists, Clinical Psychologists and Special Educators.

**Remember:**

- *Regardless of the child's learning problem, the child requires to be treated as an individual at his own level of development (physically, emotionally and mentally)*
- *His needs/interests are similar to other children of his age*
- *If he commits the same type of mistakes as other children, he should be punished in the same manner.*
- *Permissiveness or inconsistent discipline invariably leads to problems in behavior*
- *Firm, gentle control gives a sense of security to most children. This is very important for these children*
- *Social interaction is an important aspect of development. Children with learning disability have difficulty in mixing with other children for various reasons*
- *Parents should carefully choose the activities that promise successful interaction*
- *The sooner the special training is started, the greater will be chances of improvement.*

Do's

- Maintain a structured, but warm atmosphere at home.
- Handle the child consistently.
- Remember that "careless" errors are really indications of their learning problems, not laziness.
- Praise the child when he/she has earned it, even if there is only a small gain in behavior or learning.
- Provide assistance to the child in reading and writing tasks whenever needed.

**Don'ts**

- Never embarrass the child, or call him/her lazy or discourage him/her.
- Never excuse the child from normal responsibilities at home and school.
- Never do the child's work or insist on helping when they don't want help.
- Never compare your child with other children, be it a brother, sister or a neighbour.



Remember that as a parent or teacher you can help your child the best.

If your child or a child in your neighbourhood shows any of the characteristics of learning disability, contact

6 ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF SPEECH AND HEARING,

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Ph: 0821-2514449/2515410/2515805

Website: **7** www.aiishmysore.com/www.aiishmysore.org

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1 AIISH : Genesis and Growth

All India Institute of Speech and Hearing is a premier institute in the country imparting training in the field of speech and hearing. Established on 10th October 1966 as an autonomous organization, it also aims at research, management and rehabilitation in the area. The institute is located on a sprawling area of 32 acres (two campuses) in Mysore. All India Institute of Logopedics, established on 9th August 1965 as a subsidiary of DGHS, Govt. of India, was its earlier identity.

The institute is registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 (Punjab Amendment) Act, 1957 and is functioning as an autonomous body under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Established primarily as a training institute, it started training programs at postgraduate level in 1967. B.Sc (Speech and Hearing) program followed in 1968. The institute now offers Diploma (Hearing Aid and Earmould Technology), graduate (B.Sc in Speech and Hearing, B.S.Ed in HI), masters (M.Sc in Audiology and M.Sc in Speech-Language Pathology) and doctoral programs (Ph.D). The Institute also conducts short term training programs for professionals in allied specialties. The institute is affiliated to the University of Mysore for the purpose of award of the degrees.

The institute has been recognized as a Center of Excellence in the Area of Deafness (WHO), as a Center for Advanced Research (UGC) and as a Science and Technology Institute (DST).

The institute is wholly financed by the Government of India. The functioning of the institute is under the direction of the Executive Council with the Hon'ble Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare as the Chairman and the Hon'ble Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka, as the Vice-Chairman. The other statutory bodies of the institute are - the Finance Committee and Academic Committee.



Things you Always Wanted to Know about Learning Disability

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