

WARNING SIGNS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with learning disabilities related to language issues may experience warning signs as young as preschool. These difficulties are often unexpected for the individual's age, educational level, socio-economic background, or cognitive abilities.

PRESCHOOL

- ❑ Difficulty with rhyming
- ❑ Difficulty learning the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, colors, shapes, spelling and writing his/her own name
- ❑ Difficulty following multi-step directions or routines
- ❑ Talks later than most children
- ❑ Slow to add new vocabulary words
- ❑ Unable to recall the correct word when speaking
- ❑ May have difficulty pronouncing words; i.e.: *busgetti* for *spaghetti*, *packback* for *backpack*
- ❑ May have difficulty interacting with peers
- ❑ Fine motor skills may develop more slowly than peers
- ❑ Difficulty telling/retelling a story or event in the correct sequence
- ❑ Difficulty separating sounds in words and blending sounds to make words

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 4TH GRADE

- ❑ Slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds
- ❑ Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- ❑ May confuse small words: at – to, said – and, does – goes
- ❑ Makes consistent reading and spelling errors, including:
 - letter reversals: 'd' for 'b' as in *dog* for *bog*
 - word reversals: *tip* for *pit*
 - inversions: 'm' for 'w' or 'u' for 'n'
 - transpositions: *felt* for *left*
 - substitutions: *house* for *home*, *grandpa* for *grandfather*
- ❑ Slow to learn new vocabulary
- ❑ Difficulty organizing and planning
- ❑ May transpose number sequences (21 = 12) and confuse arithmetic signs (+ - X =)
- ❑ Difficulty remembering/recalling facts
- ❑ Difficulty recalling the correct word (uses phrases like "you know" often)
- ❑ Slow to learn new skills, relying heavily on memorization without understanding
- ❑ Can be impulsive and prone to accidents
- ❑ Often uses an awkward pencil grip; may have poor penmanship
- ❑ May have difficulty learning to tell time on a non-digital clock
- ❑ May have poor fine motor coordination

5TH THROUGH 8TH GRADE

- ❑ Student is usually reading below grade level
- ❑ Letter sequences may be reversed: *solid* for *soiled*, *left* for *felt*, *unclear* for *nuclear*
- ❑ May be slow to discern and learn prefixes, suffixes, root words, and other reading/spelling strategies
- ❑ Difficulty with spelling; may spell the same word differently on the same page
- ❑ Avoids reading aloud; avoids reading for pleasure
- ❑ May have difficulty with word (story) problems in math
- ❑ May have illegible handwriting, using an awkward (fist-like) grip or overly tight grip
- ❑ May avoid writing or only write the minimal amount required
- ❑ Slow or poor recall of facts
- ❑ May have difficulty with comprehension
- ❑ May have difficulty making friends and using appropriate behavior/language in social situations
- ❑ May not be able to interpret body language and facial expressions of others
- ❑ May forget to hand in homework, forget to bring it to school, or forget to bring the assignment home
- ❑ May have difficulty with time management, planning, organization
- ❑ May have difficulty learning a foreign language

It should also be noted that students with language learning difficulties often display unusual talents and possess unique gifts, especially in areas which require three-dimensional insights. Among these are:

- ❑ music
- ❑ art
- ❑ science
- ❑ mechanical workings (hands-on activities)
- ❑ sports
- ❑ engineering
- ❑ architecture
- ❑ drama
- ❑ mathematics
- ❑ problem solving, creative thinking
- ❑ people skills