



LITERACY AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, defines a specific learning disability as, "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia."

Learning disability is a general term that describes specific kinds of learning problems. A learning disability can cause a person to have trouble learning and using certain skills. The skills most often affected are: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning, and doing math.

Learning disabilities (LD) vary from person to person. One person with LD may not have the same kind of problems as another person with LD. Researchers think that learning disabilities are caused by differences in how a person's brain works and how it processes information. Persons with LD are sometimes labeled "dumb" or "lazy." In fact, they usually have average or above average intelligence. As many as one out of every five people in the United States has a learning disability. There is no "cure" for learning disabilities. They are life-long.

SOURCE: National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities.

NATIONAL STATISTICS

- ☞ 50% to 80% of all students in literacy and basic education programs have learning disabilities.
- ☞ 15% to 30% of all participants in job training programs have learning disabilities.
- ☞ 25% to 40% of all adults on welfare have learning disabilities.
- ☞ 2.9 million students received special education services for learning disabilities in the U.S. in 2001.
- ☞ 27% of children with learning disabilities drop out of high school.
- ☞ 51% of students receiving special education services through the public schools are identified as having learning disabilities.

SOURCE: 23rd Annual Report to Congress, 2001; National Institute for Literacy.

The majority of all individuals with learning disabilities have difficulties in the area of reading.

SOURCE: President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002.

READING PROGRAMS FOR LITERACY PROVIDERS

The following are some multisensory structured language programs offering effective teaching approaches for adults with learning disabilities:

- Alphabetic Phonics
- Barton Reading and Spelling system
- Multisensory Approach (MTA)
- The Herman Method
- Landmark Methodology
- Lindamood-Bell
- Orton-Gillingham Method
- Project READ
- Slingerland Approach
- Starting Over
- Wilson Reading System

SOURCE: Learning Disabilities Association of America

