

# Learning Disabilities Checklist

**Most people have problems with learning and behavior from time to time.** During the school years, parents and educators should be on the alert for consistent (and persistent) patterns of difficulty that children and adolescents may experience over time as they may signal an underlying learning disability (LD). While variations in the course of development are to be expected, unevenness or lags in the mastery of skills and behaviors, even with children as young as 4 or 5, should not be ignored. And because LD can co-occur with other disorders, it's important to keep careful and complete records of observations and impressions so they can be shared among parents, educators and related service providers when making important decisions about needed services and supports.

**Keep in mind that LD is a term that describes a heterogeneous ("mixed bag") group of disorders that impact listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, math, and social skills.** And remember: learning disabilities do not go away! A learning disability is not something that can be outgrown or that is "cured" by medication, therapy, or expert tutoring. So, early recognition of warning signs, well-targeted screening and assessment, effective intervention, and ongoing monitoring of progress are critical to helping individuals with LD to succeed in school, in the workplace, and in life.

**The following checklist is designed as a helpful guide and not as a tool to pinpoint specific learning disabilities.** The more characteristics you check, the more likely that the individual described is at risk for (or shows signs of) learning disabilities. When filling out this form, think about the person's behavior over at least the past six months. And when you're done, don't wait to seek assistance from school personnel or other professionals.

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For more information visit our websites: [www.LD.org](http://www.LD.org); [www.GetReadytoRead.org](http://www.GetReadytoRead.org); [www.RTINetwork.org](http://www.RTINetwork.org)

## NCLD's mission is to ensure success for all individuals with learning disabilities in school, at work, and in life:

- Connecting parents and others with resources, guidance, and support so they can advocate effectively for their children.
- Delivering evidence-based tools, resources, and professional development to educators to improve student outcomes.
- Developing policies and engage advocates to strengthen educational rights and opportunities.

## Domains and Behaviors

Areas with a box (☐) indicates a characteristic is more likely to apply at that stage of life. Check all that apply.

	Pre-School Kindergarten	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	
<b>Gross and Fine Motor Skills</b>				
Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-hand coordination (e.g., piano lessons, basketball, baseball)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble with buttons, hooks, snaps, zippers, and learning to tie shoes		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Creates art work that is immature for age		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Demonstrates poor ability to color or write "within the lines"		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Grasps pencil awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Experiences difficulty using small objects or items that demand precision (e.g., Legos, puzzle pieces, tweezers, scissors)		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Dislikes and avoids writing / drawing tasks		<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Language</b>				
Demonstrates early delays in learning to speak	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Has difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble naming people or objects		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has difficulty staying on topic		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Inserts invented words into conversation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty re-telling what has just been said		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uses vague, imprecise language and has a limited vocabulary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demonstrates slow and halting speech, using lots of fillers (e.g., uh, um, and, you know, so)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uses poor grammar or misuses words in conversation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mispronounces words frequently		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confuses words with others that sound similar		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Inserts malapropisms ("slips of the tongue") into conversation (e.g., a rolling stone gathers no moths; he was a man of great statue)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty rhyming				
Has limited interest in books or stories		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty understanding instructions or directions		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble understanding idioms, proverbs, colloquialisms, humor, and/or puns (note: take into account regional and cultural factors)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty with pragmatic skills (e.g., understanding the relationship between speaker and listener, staying on topic, gauging the listener's degree of knowledge, making inferences based on a speaker's verbal and non-verbal cues)				

Developed in consultation with NCLD's Professional Advisory Board. This checklist was made possible by a grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.



	Pre-School Kindergarten	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	High School and Adult
<b>Reading</b>				
Confuses similar-looking letters and numbers		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Frequently loses place while reading		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confuses similar-looking words (e.g., beard/bread)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reverses letter order in words (e.g., saw/was)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demonstrates poor memory for printed words		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has weak comprehension of ideas /themes			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has significant trouble learning to read		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble naming letters		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has problems associating letter and sounds, understanding the difference between sounds in words or blending sounds into words		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Guesses at unfamiliar words rather than using word analysis skills		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reads slowly		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Substitutes or leaves out words while reading		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has poor retention of new vocabulary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dislikes and avoids reading or reads reluctantly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Writing</b>				
Dislikes and avoids writing and copying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates delays in learning to copy and write	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has messy and incomplete writing, with many "cross outs" and erasures		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty remembering shapes of letters and numerals		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Frequently reverses letters, numbers, and symbols		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Uses uneven spacing between letters and words, and has trouble staying "on the line"		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Copies inaccurately (e.g., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spells poorly and inconsistently (e.g., the same word appears differently other places in the same document)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty preparing outlines and organizing written assignments			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fails to develop ideas in writing so written work is incomplete and too brief			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Expresses written ideas in a disorganized way				
<b>Attention</b>				
Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty sustaining attention in work tasks or play activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort such as homework and organizing work tasks		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loses things consistently that are necessary for tasks / activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is easily distracted by outside influences		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is forgetful in daily/routine activities		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Pre-School Kindergarten	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	High School and Adult
<b>Math</b>				
Has difficulty with simple counting and one-to-one correspondence between number symbols and items / objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has difficulty mastering number knowledge (e.g., recognition of quantities without counting)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty with learning and memorizing basic addition and subtraction facts		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty learning strategic counting principles (e.g., by 2, 5, 10, 100)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poorly aligns numbers resulting in computation errors			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty estimating (e.g., quantity, value)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty with comparisons (e.g., less than, greater than)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble telling time		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble conceptualizing passage of time		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has difficulty counting rapidly or making calculations		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble learning multiplication tables, formulas, and rules			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble interpreting graphs and charts				
<b>Social/Emotional</b>				
Does not pick up on other people's moods / feelings (e.g., may say the wrong thing at the wrong time)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May not detect or respond appropriately to teasing		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty "joining in" and maintaining positive social status in a peer group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has trouble knowing how to share/express feelings			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has trouble "getting to the point" (e.g., gets bogged down in details in conversation)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty with self-control when frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Has difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment, and unexpected challenges		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has trouble setting realistic social goals			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has trouble evaluating personal social strengths and challenges			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doubts own abilities and prone to attribute successes to luck or outside influences rather than hard work			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other</b>				
Confuses left and right		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a poor sense of direction; is slow to learn the way around a new place; is easily lost or confused in unfamiliar surroundings			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finds it hard to judge speed and distance (e.g., hard to play certain games, drive a car)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has trouble reading charts and maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is disorganized and poor at planning			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often loses things		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty listening and taking notes at the same time			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performs inconsistently on tasks from one day to the next		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has difficulty generalizing (applying) skills from one situation to another		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>