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Learning Disabilities

If you think your child has a learning disability, have someone who knows deafness and learning disabilities test your child. Then get help early.

Many children who are deaf have learning disabilities.
And many children with learning disabilities have a hearing loss.

Many people don't realize until they're older that they struggled so much with school because of a learning disability. This is especially true for children who are deaf.

What a learning disability is

A **learning disability (dis-a-bill-i-tee)** is a problem that makes it hard for people to understand what they see and hear.

This can make it harder for your child to learn in school.

Hearing children with learning disabilities can have problems with:

- Speaking
- Writing
- Paying attention
- Self-control

Deafness makes it harder to overcome learning disabilities.

Learning problems make it harder to read or understand what people are saying or signing.

Sometimes your child may act out because he gets very frustrated and angry.
Learning can be so hard!

Learning disabilities and deafness sometimes get mixed up

Many learning disabilities affect how a child speaks, writes or does math.

But deaf children are often behind schedule for learning some of these skills.

So people often think the problem is just because of the deafness.

There are different kinds of learning disabilities

- A learning disability that makes it hard for people to understand words and how they go together is called **dyslexia**.
 - Deaf children can have dyslexia for both written and signed words.
- A learning disability that makes it hard for people to solve math problems is called **dyscalculia**.
- A learning disability that makes it hard for people to write letters correctly is called **dysgraphia**.

What causes learning disabilities

No one knows why some children have learning disabilities while others don't.

But some things that cause deafness can also cause learning disabilities.

Here are some things that can cause hearing loss **and** learning disabilities:

- Infections when babies are still in the mother's womb:
 - German measles.
(Half of children born with German measles have a hearing loss. A quarter of children born with German measles have learning disabilities.)
 - CMV - a viral infection
- When the baby is born too early
- Problems in the babies' genes
- Infections when the child is young:
 - Meningitis - when the tissue around the brain and spinal cord get infected and swell up.

Get your child tested for a learning disability

If your problem is having trouble with school, get him tested for a learning disability by a psychologist. Knowing your child has a learning disability can help your child's teachers plan how to help your child.

How you can help your child

Learning disabilities make life more challenging for your child and your family.

But your child can accomplish anything he wants. Make sure your child knows that!

Find out what special help your child can get. This could be:

- Tutoring during the summer.
 - Tutoring can help your child remember what he learned during the school year.

Help your child do schoolwork

- Give your child more praise so he becomes more confident about doing schoolwork.
 - Having learning disabilities makes it harder for your child to read, write, do math, and even make friends.
Your child will need lots of encouragement and extra help.

Your child can grow up to be a healthy, independent person
Find out if your child has a learning disability, and help him.
This will help your child grow up to be a strong, capable adult.

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<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/deafplus/ld.jsp>