

Learning Differences:

A Teacher's Guide to the Essentials



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Overview

- Define learning differences and explain types
- Role of Teachers
- Identifying Concerns
- Communicating with Parents
- Assessment Process
- Diagnosis and Feedback (NLC)
- Remediation and how it works at CCA

Learning Differences/Disabilities

● Definition

- **Learning differences/disabilities** are neurologically-based processing problems. These processing problems can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing and/or math. They can also interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time planning, abstract reasoning, long or short term memory and attention. www.idaamerica.org

● History

● How they are diagnosed

- not until formal education begins
- rule out medical conditions
- persistent difficulty in an academic area-early onset
- not due to lack of quality instruction, intellect, or exposure
- “unexpected academic underachievement”

● Public v. Private school

- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/at-a-glance-which-laws-do-what>

Types of Learning Differences

- Language Disorders (affecting receptive and expressive language)
 - Dyslexia and other reading disorders
 - Dysgraphia
 - Oral language and Communication
 - Auditory and Visual Processing
- Math Disorders
 - Dyscalculia
- Other things that impact learning
 - anxiety, depression
 - attention, executive functioning

Identifying Concerns

- A process that takes time...more time for younger students
- Consider typical developmental variations, curriculum, and setting
 - strong phonics at CCA
 - early exposure to literacy
 - low student-teacher ratios
- Based on experience and education
- Documentation is essential
- Consulting with school head, other teachers, and support staff

Role of Teachers

- Experts in developmentally “typical” behavior for a specific age range
 - Dawn Dale- 16 years in 1st grade, mostly at CCA (270 1st graders)
 - 4th grade team- varied settings, PLUS 10 years in special education (680 3rd and 4th graders)
- Orient expectations/curriculum to development
 - seen at all grade levels
- More objective than parents
- Sometimes lack confidence in communicating concerns to parents

Communicating with Parents

- Preceded by communication with school head
- Kids v. Adults- prepare for your audience
- Goals
 - they hear and receive the information: call to action
 - they can communicate information to their child
- Based on your experiences with the child
 - provide due process
 - identify strengths
 - identify specific concerns/current impact in school/use the language of your profession
 - ask for feedback/reactions/processing
 - collaboratively make home/school plans/schedule future meetings
 - ask for support if you need it and...DOCUMENT

Assessment Process

- Recommendations for assessment are made by school heads unless otherwise directed by him or her.
- Parents contact assessment provider; Parents and child are the “client”
- Teacher feedback is requested only after release is obtained from parents
- Psycho-educational assessment: “Big Picture”
 - history of development (emotional, physical, social, behavioral, academic)
 - IQ and achievement
 - investigation of presenting concern and related factors
- Full day of testing

Diagnosis and Feedback- NLC

- Approximately 2 weeks to score and prepare feedback
- Face-to-Face feedback with both parents
- Written report (example)
 - results of all assessments
 - summary (with diagnosis-if applicable)
 - school and home recommendations
 - tables with scores
- Parents provide feedback to school
- We attend school meetings at parent request only

Remediation and CCA

- Meant to be temporary
- Requires some flexibility
- Classical Education: language-based teaching philosophy
- CASP: Covenant Academic Support Program
- Communication over time

Resources

www.helpguide.org

www.understood.org

www.welltrainedmind.com/classical-education/

<http://ldaamerica.org/>



Thank you!

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