

What are Learning Disabilities (LDs)?

People with LDs are smart and can learn.

LD's are brain-based problems that come in **many forms** and **affect everyone differently**.

People with LDs have **strengths** but also have areas of **weakness** that affect one or more of the following:

- Getting information into the brain (**Input**)
- Making sense of this information (**Organization**)
- Storing and recalling information (**Memory**)
- Getting information back out (**Output**)

Because LDs **do not affect all areas**, people with LDs can make up for weaknesses by using strengths in another areas.

There are many strategies that they can use to get around their difficulties in order to be successful. Strategies are ways to cope with LDs and keep up with schoolwork, relationships and employment situations.

Accommodations are adjustments or special equipment that allow people to compensate for their LDs. Many people with LDs find that using computer software really helps them. Technology is one type of accommodation.



LDs are life-long conditions that affect people differently depending on the situation. In order to find good, effective strategies for success we need to understand how a person's learning profile interacts with their environment.

To see a full definition of LDs please visit the LDAO website at www.LDAO.ca

For more information contact:



INTEGRA

Improving the Lives of Children & Youth with Learning Disabilities

Integra is an accredited Children's Mental Health Centre specialized in treating the social/emotional needs of children and youth with learning disabilities (LDs). A leader in the field of learning disabilities and children's mental health, Integra offers innovative clinical services, including individual, group and family therapy, a residential summer camp, community consultation and professional training, and research.

www.integra.on.ca
or call 416.486.8055



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

(LDAO) is a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities. LDAO supports chapters around Ontario who offer their own programs and know about resources in their communities.

www.LDAO.ca
or call 416.929.4311

LDs: A different way of learning

Learning disabilities are complicated. Helping isn't.

www.integra.on.ca

www.LDAO.ca

What do LDs affect?

No two LDs are the same.

LDs affect many different areas in different people and may make certain things more difficult but *not* impossible.

People with LDs **MAY** experience problems in any of the following areas:

School

People with LDs **MAY** experience problems with **reading, writing, math** in any of the following areas:

- Understanding what is read
- Recognizing words
- Putting thoughts on paper
- Learning number facts
- Doing arithmetic and calculation

Daily Life

Here are some examples of challenges that

MAY be experienced in **everyday life**:

- Organizing homework and prioritizing assignments
- Planning & decision making
- Learning to drive
- Finding the way in an unfamiliar environment
- Following multi-step instructions
- Finding things on a cluttered desk

Social Life

Here are some examples of challenges that **MAY** be experienced in **social situations**:

- Understanding sarcasm
- Figuring out how someone is feeling from their body language or facial expressions
- Understanding the unwritten social rules
- Taking part in groups

What can it feel like to have LDs?

LDs can affect people differently

depending on what they understand about their LDs and what supports they have around them. Some people feel proud of their unique ways of learning.

People with LDs **MAY** struggle with:

- Their work not reflecting their effort
- Keeping up with their class mates or friends in school
- Being seen as lazy and not trying hard enough
- Feeling frustrated
- Feeling a lack of confidence
- Feeling stupid even though they are intelligent
- Feeling that people in their lives don't understand them
- Not wanting to look different from their friends
- Feeling shame (about having a disability)
- Being the target of bullies
- Feeling isolated and lonely

Perrita

Perrita has LDs that affect her ability to read.

In kindergarten, she had trouble remembering the names of letters. By grade four,

Perrita could read but she took longer to read

and often had to re-read passages to understand the meaning. Special computer software helped

Perrita to follow her academic dreams and to graduate from university. Perrita now works in

the film industry. She likes to cook and her

partner sometimes reads the recipes. She still

doesn't enjoy reading novels, but likes to listen

to pod casts on her ipod.



What helps?

Many people with LDs **DO** grow up to be successful adults.

We know it **helps** when people with LDs:

- Understand their LDs and they know what helps them learn
- Can set realistic goals
- Have good problem solving skills
- Are open to asking for and getting help
- Believe they are responsible for their successes
- Believe they can learn from their mistakes

It helps to have friends and supports who:

- Help them feel respected and connected to others
- Listen to them and understand their feelings
- Welcome them into a community or group

Nathaniel

Nathaniel has LDs that make it hard for him to read facial expressions and body language. As a kid, Nathaniel had trouble fitting in with kids in his class and he was sometimes bullied. However, he had one best friend who enjoyed similar interests. Today, Nathaniel works as an engineer in a radio station and writes a popular blog about music. He's in a long-term relationship, watches a lot of action movies, and hates camping. Nathaniel deals with his LD by paying close attention to facial expressions and asking people to tell him how they're feeling, which works well for him.

Learning disabilities are complicated.

Helping isn't. We all can help by:

- Showing understanding and encouragement
- Recognizing small successes
- Learning more about LDs