

CHANGING YOUR THINKING

EASY READ DOCUMENT

WHAT IS A LEARNING DIFFICULTY?



There is a lot of confusion about the difference between a learning disability and a learning difficulty.



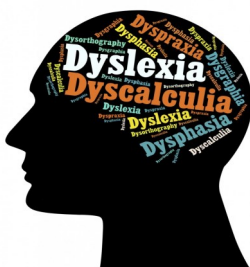
A learning disability affects learning across all areas of life. But a learning difficulty affects a specific area. Also a learning disability affects intelligence but a learning difficulty does not.

MILD
MODERATE
SEVERE

A learning difficulty can be mild or moderate or severe.

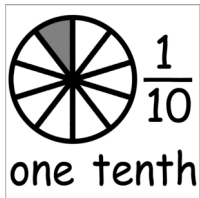
There are many types of learning difficulties.

Some of the more common ones are:



- ♦ Dyslexia
- ♦ Dyspraxia
- ♦ Dyscalculia
- ♦ ADHD (Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder)

A person can have one or more learning difficulties.



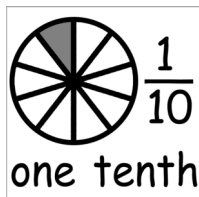
Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty affecting 1 in 10 people.



Dyslexia causes problems with reading and writing. No one knows what causes it. But it can run in families.



Dyslexia is a life long problem but with support most children go to mainstream schools.



Dyspraxia is another common learning difficulty affecting 1 in 10 people. It is about 3 times more common in boys.

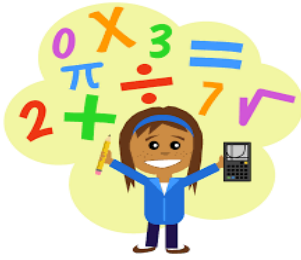


Dyspraxia causes problems with co-ordination making the person clumsy. It also can cause problems with using hands. So someone with dyspraxia might have messy handwriting and find it difficult to tie shoelaces or to use buttons. No one knows what causes dyspraxia but it can run in families.



Dyspraxia is a life long problem but the with the right support, the symptoms can be managed. As well as doctors, support might come from Occupational Therapists (OTs) and psychologists.

Dyscalculia is a quite common learning difficulty affecting 1 in 20 people.



Dyscalculia causes problems with learning maths. No one knows what causes dyscalculia.



But with the right support in schools people can improve their maths skills.

Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a quite common learning difficulty affecting 1 in 25 children.



ADHD causes problems with behaviour. This includes poor concentration, being restless and acting on impulse. No one knows what causes ADHD but it can run in families. With the right support the symptoms can be managed.



As well as teachers, support can include medications or psychological therapies or a combination. Symptoms of ADHD improve with age. So only about 1 in 50 adults have ADHD.





Learning difficulties are usually diagnosed in childhood.



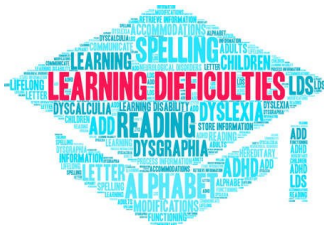
So if you think your child has a learning difficulty then talk to your GP or your health visitor.



Or if your child is in school in Wales you can speak with the school's additional needs co-ordinator (ALNCO). Or if your child is in school in England you can speak with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).



Then your child could be given an assessment. The assessment could be given by a paediatrician, an occupational therapist or a psychologist.



If your child has one learning difficulty, then they might have another learning difficulty or autism. Children with ADHD might also have mental health problems, sleep problems or autism.



This is why it is important to get the right diagnosis. Only then can you understand your child's problems and get them the right support.

There are organisations with help and advice.

These include the **NHS website www.nhs.uk**

For **Dyslexia** and **Dyscalculia**:

The Dyslexia Association

www.dyslexia.uk.net

Helpline 011592 4688

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Helpline 0333 405 4555

For **Dyspraxia**:

www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Helpline 01462 454986

For **ADHD**:

Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS)

www.addiss.co.uk

Helpline 020 8952 2800

Also **Mencap** for people with learning disabilities

www.mencap.org.uk

Helpline 0808 808 111





Joanna lives in Cardiff. Joanna has a learning disability and a learning difficulty. To see a short film about Joanna and her life click on the link below.

[About my Dyslexia - Joanna - YouTube](#)