



Learning Disabilities & ADHD

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Reading Disorders (dyslexia) are the most common type of learning disability affecting approximately 2-8% of elementary school children. Other learning disorders include Disorder of Written Expression and Mathematics Disorder.

Some Signs of LD include:

- Difficulty with, dislike of, or reluctance to read
- Extremely slow work pace
- Difficulty picking up new concepts
- Odd pencil/pen grasp
- Low achievement in comparison to ability
- Difficulty with, dislike of, or reluctance to go to school
- Poor spelling
- Leaving out words or letters in writing
- Mispronouncing words
- Poor test performance
- Confusing right and left

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders estimates that 3 - 5% of people in the US suffer from ADHD. It may be one of the most common childhood mental disorders. The symptoms of ADHD usually begin before age 7, can impair functioning at school, at home, and at work, and can persist into adulthood.

Some Signs of ADHD include:

- Fidgeting or squirming
- Excessive activity or feelings of restlessness
- Frequent interrupting
- Difficulty awaiting turn
- Inconsistent work or school performance
- Easily distracted
- Doesn't seem to listen when spoken to
- Easily bored or frustrated
- Disorganized
- Poor time management

In addition to learning disorders and ADHD, other conditions such as mental retardation, motor skills disorders, communication disorders, Autism, Asperger's, disruptive behavior disorders, and brain injury can hinder learning and lead to poor academic performance.

How Are Learning Differences Assessed?

At Ochester Psychological Services, LLC a psychoeducational evaluation begins with an Initial Assessment. This is an hour to hour and a half clinical interview with the client and/or guardian. In addition, the client and/or guardian may complete some forms and academic records will be reviewed. By the end of the Initial Assessment, a plan will be developed to address the client's needs. Most clients will be administered an IQ test to determine overall cognitive abilities and an achievement test to determine current level of academic skills. Other specialized tests may be administered as needed to provide more detailed information about specific skills in the domains of reading, writing, math, language, memory, motor skills, and/or attention. There may be questionnaires to be filled out by teachers or significant others to supplement testing data. A report will be generated integrating the results of the interview, testing, and questionnaires. A feedback session is then scheduled to explain the results and recommendations and to answer any questions.

How Can Assessment Help?

When undetected and untreated, conditions that impair learning can result in reduced school and work performance, frustration, feelings of inadequacy, and impaired social relationships. A well planned and executed psychoeducational assessment can pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and provide specific recommendations to address problem areas. In addition, a current (within three years) psychoeducational evaluation may be needed to qualify for work, school, or testing accommodations. It is important to detect conditions that may impair learning as early as possible, but even when detected later in life, appropriate treatment and accommodations can improve work and school performance as well as boost self-esteem and social functioning.

Preparing for a Learning Disability or ADHD Assessment

When preparing for a learning disability or ADHD assessment, it is important to begin gathering documentation to bring to your Initial Assessment appointment. Helpful documents include school records, IEPs, work samples, relevant medical records, and previous assessment records. It will also be important to be prepared to answer questions about developmental milestones and family history. Records are an important source of information which help determine diagnosis and recommendations.