

Diagnostic Symptoms of Dyscalculia

(Math Learning Disability)

Introduction

This ***Parent Teacher Conference Handout*** provides parents with the symptoms that may reflect a serious learning disability in the area of mathematics. Children with this type of learning disorder may exhibit:

- Normal or accelerated language acquisition: verbal, reading, writing. Poetic ability. Good visual memory for the printed word. Good in the areas of science (until a level requiring higher math skills is reached), geometry (figures with logic not formulas), and creative arts.
- Difficulty with the abstract concepts of time and direction. Inability to recall schedules, and sequences of past or future events. Unable to keep track of time. May be chronically late.
- Mistaken recollection of names. Poor name/face retrieval. Substitute names beginning with same letter.
- Inconsistent results in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Poor mental math ability. Poor with money and credit. Cannot do financial planning or budgeting. Checkbooks not balanced. Short term, not long term financial thinking. Fails to see big financial picture. May have fear of money and cash transactions. May be unable to mentally figure change due back, the amounts to pay for tips, taxes, etc
- When writing, reading and recalling numbers, these common mistakes are made: number additions, substitutions, transpositions, omissions, and reversals.
- Inability to grasp and remember math concepts, rules, formulas, sequence (order of operations), and basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts. Poor long term memory (retention & retrieval) of concept mastery- may be able to perform math operations one day, but draw a blank the next! May be able to do book work but fails all tests and quizzes.
- May be unable to comprehend or "picture" mechanical processes. Lack "big picture/ whole picture" thinking. Poor ability to "visualize or picture" the location of the numbers on the face of a clock, the geographical locations of states, countries, oceans, streets, etc.
- Poor memory for the "layout" of things. Gets lost or disoriented easily. May have a poor sense of direction, loose things often, and seem absent minded. (Remember the absent minded professor?)
- May have difficulty grasping concepts of formal music education. Difficulty sight-reading music, learning fingering to play an instrument, etc.
- May have poor athletic coordination, difficulty keeping up with rapidly changing physical directions like in aerobic, dance, and exercise classes.
- Difficulty remembering dance step sequences, rules for playing sports.
- Difficulty keeping score during games or difficulty remembering how to keep score in games, like bowling, etc. Often loses track of whose turn it is during games, like cards and board games. Limited strategic planning ability for games, like chess.