

Diagnostic Symptoms of Dysorthographia

(Spelling Disorders)

Introduction

Many parents may not understand the specific symptoms in reading, math, spelling or writing that may signify a serious learning disability. This ***Parent Teacher Conference Handout*** provides parents with the symptoms that may reflect a serious learning disability in the area of spelling.

Definition

Dysorthographia is the learning disability associated with spelling (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2006; Akron's Children's Hospital, 2003). Spelling is the ability to use letters to construct words in accordance with accepted usage. Spelling ability is viewed by some teachers and school administrators equally with other academic skills. Being a poor speller does not necessarily mean that a child has a learning disability. However, when poor spelling occurs with poor reading and/or arithmetic, then there may be reason for concern (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2006b).

Diagnostic Symptoms

Diagnostic symptoms of ***dysorthographia*** include (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2004):

- Addition of unneeded letters
- Omission of needed letters
- Reversals of vowels
- Reversals of syllables
- Phonemic spelling of nonphonemic words
- Difficulty in understanding the correspondence between sounds and letters

Further Key Points

Spelling problems, like reading problems, originate with language learning weaknesses. Spelling disability does not reflect a general "visual memory" problem but a more specific problem with awareness of and memory for language structure, including the letters in words (International Dyslexia Association, 2004).