



Public Site

How to Support your Child with a Learning Disability while Learning at Home

This is a difficult time for all students, but it is especially challenging for those with Learning Disabilities. If you are a parent of a student with an LD diagnosis, we are here to help!

In general, students with LDs will benefit from a regular routine and additional supports to meet their unique learning needs. Children with LDs are smart and they can learn, they just learn differently from their peers. They can think, reason and connect to everyday experience, so try to find ways to explain concepts by making connections to other things that they know. The key is to use their strengths to help support their areas of need. They have amazing potential once we remove the obstacles to learning. They benefit from different strategies, or accommodations, to help get information into and out of their brains.

If your child has a **Learning Disability in Reading**, they will have difficulty reading independently. The most common accommodations include reading to them and using text-to-voice technology to read to them. What was a reading comprehension task becomes a “listening comprehension” task. These strategies will be most helpful if your child has well-developed language skills (to understand the text) and auditory working memory (to remember what they heard in order to process and understand it). If they have language processing problems, try to simplify the language so that it is easier to understand. If they have working memory problems, break down the information into smaller pieces (e.g. one sentence at a time, or a few words at a time). Repeat it as slowly and as often as necessary for them to understand. They will benefit from discussing what they have read/heard with you.

If your child has a **Learning Disability in Written Expression**, they will have difficulty writing independently. The most common accommodations include writing for them (also known as scribing) and using voice-to-text technology. In both cases, what was a written expression task becomes an “oral expression” task. These strategies will be most helpful if your child has well-developed language skills so that they can explain their ideas out loud. They may need help to break the question down into smaller parts to make it easier for them to answer. Help them to brainstorm ideas and write them down to create a visual reminder of what they want to say. Some students benefit from using alternate ways to “show what they know” such as making a model or a drawing to illustrate a concept. Working memory problems can also interfere with writing. If your child forgets their idea before they can write it down, encourage them to use the strategies listed above. Remind them that the computer can really save them time, energy and frustration, especially when they can learn to use features like word prediction and spell check. This is a great time to practice using this technology so that they get more comfortable.

If your child has a **Learning Disability in Mathematics**, they will have difficulty doing math independently. The most common accommodations include using a calculator for calculations and using voice-to-text/text-to-voice technology to help with the language demands of word problems. They may need assistance to figure out what the question is really asking before they can do the calculations. They also may have difficulty remembering all of the steps of a multi-step problem or operation, especially if they have working memory problems. Remind them to show their work, which makes it much easier to find their errors before they move on to the next step. Encourage them to always check their work to make sure than they used the correct operations (+/-) and use the calculator to make sure their answer is correct.

The best thing that you can do right now to support your child is to be available for them. Be understanding that learning is challenging for them at the best of times, but even more so now with so much stress and uncertainty in their lives. If you or your child get frustrated during learning activities, take a break! Return to



the task when you have had a chance to take some deep breaths or go for a walk. Be gentle with them, and with yourself! Maybe spend some quiet time just reading a book to them, with no expectations for them other than listening. Don't let learning at home interfere with your primary role as a parent, comforter and protector. Just do your best, and talk with your child's teacher about any specific questions about their lessons.

There are many helpful website that have additional information to help you support your child. A few options include:

www.ldao.ca

www.ldathome.ca

www.smartkidswithld.org

www.understood.org

If you would like more information about LD in general, or your child's specific LD, please contact your child's teacher and they will get in touch with one of us. If one of us did your child's Psychological Assessment, you will already have a copy of a report that contains lots of helpful recommendations, but feel free to ask additional questions.

Take care and God bless!

Sincerely

WCDSB Psychoeducational Consultants

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