

Learning Differences

All humans are born with inherent strengths and weaknesses. Modern educational theory has evolved away from discussing cognitive ability as “normal” vs. “disabled” to appreciating the spectrum of neurodiversity of how individual brains process different types of information.

What are the most common learning differences?

- [Dyslexia](#) – difficulty with reading and language-based processing skills
- [Dyscalculia](#) – difficulty understanding numbers and learning math facts
- [Dysgraphia](#) – difficulty that affects handwriting and fine motor skills

What can I do if my child is struggling to learn?

1. Schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher. It is important to understand the range of expected development for their age.
2. Ask about your family history. Learning differences can be genetic.
3. Rule out any problems with vision or hearing.
4. Remember how much emotion impacts learning. Promote a growth mindset to improve self-esteem. Seek help if your child is experiencing anxiety or depression. ([WA Mental Health Referral Service](#))
5. Address any socioeconomic issues. Reach out if your family needs help with food, shelter, or safety. ([Washington 211](#))
6. Consider formal evaluation or tutoring.

Where can I go for help?

Birth to Three Centers | 0-3 years: These centers can provide an evaluation of any developmental concern in the first 3 years of life. They usually focus on motor, language, and social-emotional skills.

- [Early Intervention Programs](#)

Public Schools | 3-21 years: All public schools are required by law to offer free assessments for students living in their district who may need extra help learning. These evaluations focus on whether your child qualifies for special services. School district psychologists will not determine if your child has dyslexia, dyscalculia, or dysgraphia.

- Understanding the difference between a [504 Plan vs. IEP](#)

Private Neuropsychologists: These professionals can perform a formal evaluation for learning differences, provide a detailed assessment of your child’s strengths and weaknesses, and advise on specific school accommodations and private tutors.

- Contact your PCP if you need help finding a Neuropsychologist

Primary Care Provider (PCP): Your child’s PCP will proactively monitor your child’s growth, development, hearing, and vision at annual wellness exams. You can also schedule a visit with your child’s PCP at any time to discuss specific concerns including:

- [Hearing check](#)
- [Vision check](#)
- [ADHD evaluation: Overview of Allegro’s Process for Evaluating Academic or Behavioral Concerns](#)
 - Limits of what your PCP can offer: [Behavioral Health | Allegro Pediatrics](#)

Community Supports: Resources are available to help educate yourself and advocate for your child.

- [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)
- [Learning in School - PAVE](#)
- [Open Doors for Multicultural Families](#)