

What is a Learning Disability?

IDEA's Definition: Our nation's special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

“A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Learning disabilities do not include, “learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.”

Smityh and Strick(1997) Learning Disabilities: A to Z

“The discrepancy between what it seems the child ought to be able to do and what he or she actually can do, however, is the hallmark of this kind of handicap. What children with learning disabilities have in common is *unexpected underachievement*.”