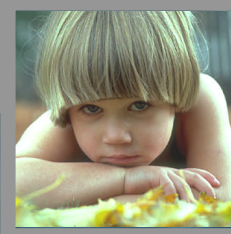
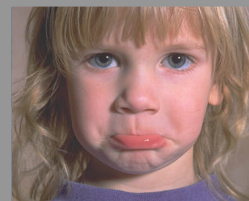


# LEARNING DIFFERENCES



Simply defined, a learning difference hinders a person's ability to process new information when presented in a format that is foreign to their particular learning style. In rigidly structured learning environments, a learning difference creates a gap between intellectual capacity and performance. This discrepancy becomes most evident during a child's school-age years. Traditionally, schools have a standard way of teaching. Although most teachers do their best to assist these students, for the most part they do not have the knowledge, skills or resources to support students with learning differences.

Over the past five years, research projects like those funded by The National Institute of Health and Child Development (NICHD) have gathered and evaluated a great deal of data and new knowledge on learning and reading acquisition. If we are fortunate, this important base of new information will make its way into the classroom—a process that could potentially linger very slowly and gradually over a number of years. Until then a tragedy remains that children who learn differently **WANT** to learn, and without early identification and proper instruction they may not have that opportunity.

Research indicates that twenty percent of this nation's population has some type of learning difference. Essentially, this means that one in five students are being under-served and are struggling in school. Science has proven beyond a doubt that this faction of our students has the cognitive ability to be great contributors and achievers in society. In fact, it is common for individuals with learning differences to have average and frequently above average levels of intelligence.

Dyslexics, who share a common struggle with reading, may be highly intelligent, which serves to highlight the disparity between their reading level and their cognitive aptitude. Often, these children possess a creative genius for multi-dimensional thinking and complex problem solving that is rarely realized and most often suppressed in the school settings.

Learning differences may cause difficulties with structured learning in a variety of areas: reading, listening, speaking, writing, spelling, arithmetic, memory, organization and attention. Without identification and proper instruction, these differences may eventually impede a child's self-esteem, deny them the ability to learn, suppress their socialization skills, lead to depression, and, ultimately, deny them the opportunity to attain a fulfilling life. It is often said that a learning difference, gone undetected, is the greatest killer of a child's spirit.

LD's are the "hidden handicap"—often not considered serious, nor easily recognized and accepted. However, no other ailment is as far reaching or debilitating in our society—it crosses gender, ethnicity, religion, and political and economic sectors. But, remember...

with **SUPPORT** at home,

**EARLY IDENTIFICATION,**

and proper **INSTRUCTION**

kids who learn differently  
will **SUCCEED** at learning!

