



Specific Learning Disorder: A Parent's Guide



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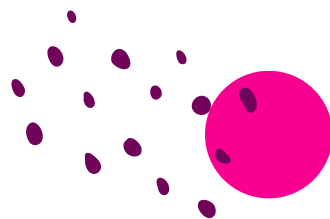
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What is Specific Learning Disorder (SLD)?

Specific Learning Disorder, often referred to as SLD, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a child's ability to acquire and use specific academic skills, such as reading, writing, or mathematics, despite having average or above-average intelligence. SLD is not related to a lack of effort or intelligence but rather to how the brain processes information.





Types of Specific Learning Disorder:

There are three primary types of Specific Learning Disorder:

SLD with Impairment in Reading (Dyslexia):

Affects reading and can lead to difficulties in decoding words, reading fluency, and spelling.

SLD with Impairment in Written Expression (Dysgraphia):

Impacts writing skills, causing difficulties in handwriting, spelling, and organising written work.

SLD with Impairment in Mathematics (Dyscalculia):

Affects mathematical abilities, leading to challenges in understanding mathematical concepts and performing arithmetic operations.



Checklist for Parents: Characteristics of Specific Learning Disorder:

Use this checklist to identify potential signs of SLD in your child:

- ✓ Struggles with reading fluency.
- ✓ Difficulty recognising words.
- ✓ Frequent spelling errors.
- ✓ Slow writing speed and illegible handwriting.
- ✓ Challenges in understanding and remembering math concepts.
- ✓ Frequent math calculation errors.
- ✓ Avoidance of reading, writing, or math-related tasks.
- ✓ Frustration or anxiety during academic activities.
- ✓ Inconsistencies in academic performance.

Diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder:

SLD is typically diagnosed by a qualified professional, such as a Paediatrician, Psychologist or Speech Pathologist. The evaluation process may include:

- A thorough review of the child's developmental history.
- Standardised assessments.
- Observation of the child's behaviour and learning style.
- Discussion with others involved in a child's care (e.g., Teachers).



What Can Parents Do if They Suspect SLD in Their Child?

If you suspect that your child may have SLD, here are some steps you can take:

1. Talk to Your Child's Teacher: Communicate your concerns with your child's teacher and request a meeting to discuss observations and academic performance.

2. Seek a Professional Evaluation: Consult with a qualified professional who can assess your child's learning difficulties and provide a formal diagnosis. At Inspire our Speech Pathologists and Psychologists assess for Specific Learning Disorder.

3. Support Your Child Emotionally: Provide a supportive and understanding environment to reduce anxiety and frustration associated with learning challenges.



Next Steps to Support a Child with SLD:

Once diagnosed, you can take the following steps to support your child:

1. Individualised Education Plan (IEP): Collaborate with your child's school to create an IEP tailored to your child's specific needs.

2. Tutoring or Educational Therapy: Consider additional support through tutoring or educational therapy programs. At Inspire our Speech Pathologists and Educators provide support services to children with SLD.

3. Advocate for Accommodations: Ensure your child receives appropriate accommodations in the classroom, such as extended time for assignments or tests.

4. Develop a Routine: Establish a consistent homework and study routine to help your child manage their workload.

Strategies for Children with SLD:

Here are some strategies to support children with SLD:

- Use multisensory teaching methods.
- Use assistive technology (e.g., utilising talk to text to plan written work).
- Break tasks into smaller steps.
- Provide visual aids and graphic organisers.
- Offer frequent breaks during tasks.
- Encourage frequent reading practice.
- Incorporate hands-on learning activities.
- Use mnemonic devices for memory.
- Highlight key information in texts.
- Provide a quiet and organised workspace.



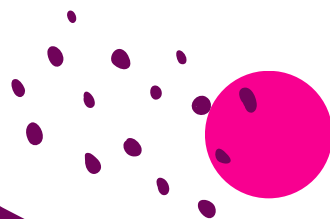
Strategies for Children with SLD



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- Set realistic goals and celebrate achievements.
 - Use repetition and practice.
 - Encourage self-advocacy skills.
 - Promote a growth mindset.
 - Create a positive learning environment.
 - Offer positive reinforcement.
 - Develop a daily routine.
 - Encourage physical activity for improved focus.
 - Foster a love for learning through interests and hobbies.
 - Collaborate with educators and specialists for ongoing support.



To best support children with Specific Learning Disorder, a multidisciplinary approach is instrumental. Please feel free to reach out to our team at Inspire Allied health and Education Group to find out how we can support your child and family.





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