

EVALUATING AND IDENTIFYING A STUDENT FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

When a parent, teacher or caregiver suspects a student may have a disability, there are important steps that are necessary to know and take. A diagnosis of a medical condition alone is not sufficient to establish eligibility for exceptional student education. Consistent with [Title 34, Section 300.306](#) of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team must consider multiple sources of data and information to determine not only if the student is a student with a disability, but also that the student requires special education and related services. If a parent submits documentation from a licensed professional under chapter 490 which demonstrates that a K-3 student has been diagnosed with dyslexia, evidence-based interventions must be provided based on the student’s specific areas of difficulty as identified by the licensed professional (see [Section 1008.25\(5\), Florida Statutes](#)). The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) has many resources to guide parents, teachers and caregivers through the process of evaluating and identifying a student who is suspected of being a student with a disability requiring exceptional student education.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

Specific Learning Disability is a term that describes an Exceptional Student Education eligibility category, which refers to learning disorders that can affect a student’s ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason and do math.

[Specific Learning Disabilities \(SLD\)](#)

Learning Disability	Typical Characteristics
<p>Dyslexia: A learning disability affecting primarily reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in learning to read, write, spell and do arithmetic • Difficulty with learning letters and their sounds • Difficulty in following oral and written instructions • Cramped or illegible handwriting • Difficulty reading quickly enough to comprehend and persisting with longer texts • Easily distracted, difficulty in retaining information • Confusion in sequence of letters and symbols • Delayed spoken language • Confusion about directions in space and time, right and left, north and south, yesterday and tomorrow • More than average test taking anxiety
<p>Dysgraphia: A learning disability affecting primarily writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variably shaped and poorly formed letters, excessive erasures and cross-outs in writing • Poor spacing between letters and words • Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing • Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip • Heavy pressure and hand fatigue • Slow to write and copy with legible or illegible handwriting
<p>Dyscalculia: A learning disability affecting primarily mathematics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty counting backwards • Extreme difficulty in performing simple calculations, difficulty with mental arithmetic skills • A poor sense of numbers and estimation • Difficulty in understanding place value • Addition is often the default operation • High levels of mathematical anxiety
<p>Developmental Aphasia: A learning disability affecting primarily language and communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor comprehension skills • Difficulty in forming words and sentences, speaking and word recall • Trouble understanding speech • Difficulty in reading and writing • Leaving out words like 'the,' 'of' and 'was' from speech • Speaking only in short phrases that are produced with great effort • Putting words together in the wrong order