

Who is eligible for LD services in Minnesota public schools?



The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) develops the eligibility criteria for special education services of a specific learning disability for students in Minnesota's public schools. The Department's criteria is framed by relevant federal law and the interpretation of that law by lawmakers and MDE professionals.

How does Minnesota determine LD eligibility in public schools?

To meet criteria for a specific learning disability in the Minnesota public school system, there must be evidence of: (all three components must be met)

- A. Severe Underachievement** in one of seven areas: basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical computation, math reasoning, written expression, oral expression, or listening comprehension.

Classroom observation and documentation of prior intervention attempted are usually required to proceed to the assessment (testing) stage. Underachievement is determined through measures such as diagnostic testing, classroom work, and teacher reports. Assessment tools may include the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, and classroom work samples.

- B. Severe Discrepancy** between ability and achievement (in one of the seven areas listed above) as determined by a -1.75 standard deviation, between ability and achievement as measured on individually administered ability and achievement tests. These ability tests include the Wechsler Intellectual Children's Scale (WICS) or Woodcock Johnson Cognitive Abilities Assessment.
- C. An Information Processing Deficit** involving visual, auditory, kinesthetic, processing speed, or various memory functions is present. Evidence of an information processing deficit is gathered through standardized tests, observations, review of records, etc.

If it is determined that the child has a learning disability, the child then qualifies for Special Education services in their school and district.

What can I do if my child doesn't qualify for Special Education services?



It is important for parents and professionals to understand that learning problems range on a broad continuum. Some children have difficulties learning given a specific instructional method; while others experience mild, moderate, or severe learning difficulties that are persistent and unresponsive to multiple instructional methods across settings. It is possible for a child to have a learning problem that impacts his/her ability to learn in the regular classroom, but not qualify for services because the learning problem does not meet the state specified criteria for LD. Although a child does not qualify for learning disability services, parents should take steps to find extra help to address the student's problems in the classroom. Research indicates that it is **not advisable to "wait and see"** if the child's progress improves with time. Parents and professionals should collaborate and consider seeking extra help for the child's learning problem, which may mean that the parents have to look beyond the school to receive extra help.

Please note that the underachievement cannot be the result of environmental, cultural, or economic influences. For specific information please contact Minnesota Department of Education (see below) or the Special Education Director of your local public school.

Where can I learn more?

LDA of Minnesota operates LDA Learning Center, which provides tutoring, assessment and individualized consultation services at 952-922-8374.

SLD Companion Manual, contains information about learning disabilities in Minnesota's public schools at <http://education.state.mn.us/>

Specific questions relating to learning disabilities in Minnesota's public schools can be directed to:

Nancy W. Larson
State Learning Disabilities Consultant
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway. 36 W. Roseville, MN 55113
(651)-582-8200

LDA of Minnesota

For more than 36 years, **Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota** has been serving the needs of people of all ages at risk for learning disabilities or related learning difficulties by maximizing their potential so that they may lead more productive and fulfilled lives. Services include educational assessments, one-to-one and small group tutoring, consultations, family literacy activities, school-to-work transition programming, professional training, public education, and high-quality educational products.

LDA of Minnesota is the state affiliate of LDA of America, a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to identifying causes, promoting prevention of learning disabilities, and enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their families by encouraging effective identification and intervention, fostering research, and protecting their rights under law.