

What are some characteristics of LD in adults?

This informal screening checklist includes characteristics that tend to be displayed in varying degrees by adults with learning disabilities. Check the characteristics that the adult experiences often or most of the time. There should be a pattern of both strengths and weaknesses rather than a profile of general learning difficulties.

Reading (Decoding and Comprehension)

- difficulty sounding out words
- difficulty remembering sight words after repeated practice
- skips words
- rereads lines
- slow rate of silent reading
- oral reading is slow or choppy
- has a limited reading vocabulary
- reads words backwards (was/saw, net/ten)
- does not understand what is read
- does not remember what was read
- difficulty determining main idea
- answers questions with an over-dependence on guessing
- does not read for pleasure or information

Math (Computation and Problem-solving)

- has not memorized math facts
- confuses math symbols
- poor computational skills for adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing
- difficulty copying numbers
- difficulty working with numbers in columns
- confuses placement of numbers in computation
- difficulty with telling time, counting money, making change
- difficulty following the sequence of steps to math problems
- avoids employment situations requiring math skills

Writing (Spelling, Writing, Handwriting)

- spells phonetically only: Munday, Toosday, Winsday
- mixes capital and lower case letters: SunDay, MoNey
- leaves out letters
- reverses letters and simple words: was for saw
- avoids writing words that are difficult to spell
- awkward grip or style of writing
- slow rate of writing
- poorly formed letters
- letters are too small or too large
- letters and words are not spaced appropriately or stray outside of the lines
- difficulty with correct grammar and usage
- poor organization of thoughts and ideas
- rarely writes letters or notes
- does not proofread for errors

Oral Expression (Speaking)

- mispronounces words
- has difficulty organizing what to say
- makes many grammatical errors
- difficulty retrieving the right words for the situation
- uses the wrong word but with similar sounds
- uses mostly simple sentences
- has difficulty staying on the topic

Behavioral and Social

- difficulty with concentration and attention to task
- difficulty sitting still
- acts or speaks without thinking
- easily frustrated
- difficulty establishing relationships or friendships
- difficulty relating to authority figures
- blames others for mistakes or problems
- overly dependent on others
- acts inappropriately in social situations
- withdraws from socializing
- misunderstands humor or sarcasm
- lacks confidence and motivation

Work and Study Skills

- poor organization: messy work or study area, frequently misplaces or loses things
- poor time management: often late, works slowly or too quickly
- difficulty setting goals and completing work within time limits
- difficulty getting started
- difficulty staying with a task until completion
- problems with following directions
- difficulty with change or transition
- unpredictable performance from day to day

Processing (Visual, Auditory and Spatial)

- loses place while reading
- squints to see print
- reverses letters (b for d)
- transposes numbers (43 for 34)
- difficulty remembering what is seen
- difficulty remembering what is heard
- talks loudly
- turns an ear towards the speaker
- often asks for repetition
- difficulty hearing differences in similar sounding words
- difficulty following along in large groups
- problems with directionality: up/down, left/right, north/south/east/west
- difficulty interpreting maps, tables, charts, graphs
- gets lost easily in familiar and unfamiliar environments

Where can I learn more about characteristics of LD in adults?

LDA of Minnesota: 952-922-8374 or <http://www.ldaminnesota.org>

LDA of America: <http://www.ldaamerica.org>

Gerber, P. *Characteristics of Adults with Specific Learning Disabilities*. LDOnline. http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/adult/characteristics.html

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (1999) *Bridges to Practice, A Research-based Guide for Literacy Practitioners Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Washington, DC.

Riviere, A. (1998) *SCREENING For Adult With Learning Disabilities*. National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center. Washington, DC.

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.