

# How do I select good software programs for my child with LD?



LDA recommends using some basic criteria for selecting a software program to fit your or your student's needs.

1. The software should have tasks that fit the learning goal. A student who is learning to read should be required to do more than listen to sounds played over and over. Ideally a student who is learning to read should be asked to match sounds with letters, categorize words with similar sounds, create new words with similar sounds, etc. Similarly, a program that teaches writing should require the student to do more than identify errors in sentences by selecting the correct answer. It should let the student write, read back what the student has written, point to errors and /or make suggestions. Ideally the software program you purchase should have audio, visual, and creative capabilities. If a program is teaching a strategy for writing, reading, or math, then the steps of the strategy should be presented first and pointed out as the student works.
2. The software should truly be interactive. Students should be able to do more than listen, read and click. Ideally students should be able to create, drag and drop, adjust settings to fit their needs, and print their work. All software programs should have audio, visual, and input capabilities.
3. The software program should be supported by research. A study has been conducted showing that students who used the program improved their skills over students who didn't use the program or who used other software programs.

## Where do I go to find these types of programs?

Instead of giving an exhaustive list of programs for each age and skill range, we have provided a list of websites that review and sell programs that fit the listed criteria.

CAST is a non-profit organization that promotes best-practices in meeting individual needs of learners. The section on Universal Design For Learning (UDL), as conceptualized by CAST, strives to make the curriculum adjustable for students with varied abilities and learning styles. The tools and resources described on these linked pages support UDL concepts. Some of our favorites listed on this site are: Write Out-Loud, Bailey's Book House, Intelli-tools, and Inspiration. The website that lists software programs can be found at: <http://www.cast.org/udl/ToolsResources3.cfm>

LD Online also has a technology review section that reviews software programs for students with learning disabilities and difficulties. It should be noted that programs that are good for students with learning disabilities could also benefit ESL and non-disabled learners. Go to the following web page for articles and software reviews. [http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/technology/product\\_list/writing.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/product_list/writing.html)

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Learning Needs.com is a website that sells software that meets the requirements of UDL. As you look for software, keep in mind the three criteria listed above. Some of the software is more game oriented and geared for drilling facts than teaching learners how to solve problems.  
<http://www.learningneeds.com>

Don Johnston Learning is a website that sells software geared for individuals with learning and cognitive disabilities. <http://www.donjohnston.com>

Mind Play sells reading programs that are research based. <http://www.mindplay.com/>



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## 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.