

Key Facts About Learning Disabilities

- 2.5 million public school students—or about 5% of all students in public schools—were identified as having learning disabilities in 2009 and were eligible to receive educational assistance under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- The number of school-age children with learning disabilities who receive these Federally-authorized special education services escalated rapidly during the late 1980s and 1990s. However, during the last decade (2000- 2009) the number of children identified as LD in public schools has declined by 14%.
- Males comprise almost two-thirds of school-age students with LD who receive special education services.
- Conditions such as AD/HD, autism, intellectual disabilities, deafness and blindness are frequently confused with LD.
- The cost of educating a student with LD is 1.6 times the expenditure for a general education student. This is dramatically less than the average cost for all students with disabilities, which runs 1.9 times the cost for a general education student.
- In 2008, 62% of students with LD spent 80% or more of their in-school time in general education classrooms. In 2000, that figure was just 40%.
- Students with LD are retained in grade much more often than those without disabilities. In addition, they are involved in school disciplinary actions at a much higher rate than their nondisabled peers.
- Only a small percentage—estimated at between 25% and 35%—of students with LD are being provided with assistive technology to support their instruction and learning.
- The high school dropout rate among students with LD was 22% in 2008, down from 40% in 1999.
- More students with LD are graduating with a regular high school diploma—64% in 2008—up from 52% a decade earlier.
- Students with LD go on to postsecondary education at a much lower rate than their nondisabled peers, and of those who do, few seek supports in college and few earn undergraduate or advanced degrees.
- In 2005, 55% of adults with LD (ages 18-64) were employed compared to 76% of those without LD, 6% were unemployed vs. 3%, and 39% were not in the labor force vs. 21%.
- Few adults with LD access workplace accommodations or understand their rights under disability anti-discrimination laws.