

## 10 New Tips for Helping Your Child with Learning Disorders

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1. Get a proper assessment of the disorder. Make sure it is in language that you can understand – if there is a reading delay; find out if the issues are visual or auditory.
2. Have frequent assessments of vision and hearing. Many processing disorders are misdiagnosed due to poor vision or the resulting occlusions of ear infections.
3. Try to use common toys at home to help with learning – Lego's provide nonverbal instructions and can be an excellent method of teaching sequencing to children – examine them while they build with the Lego's to see if there are any difficulties with fine motor control.
4. Cooking with a child can be an excellent means of establishing "real world" definitions of math issues such as understanding ratios and counting.
5. Start reading using books with nonsense words (such as Dr. Seuss books), which reinforce phonemic awareness skills. Nonsense words force children to sound the words out, and can be an excellent method of assessing early difficulties with phonemic awareness.
6. Create a homework ritual, using the same time and place every night for homework. If a child is trying their hardest and cannot get the work done within the established amount of time, have them stop and write a note to the teacher.

Also establish with a teacher the average length of time needed to complete certain assignments. If the assignment is taking longer than average for more than two weeks – with your child providing full effort – contact the teacher to change the assignments. Homework should reinforce learning skills – not frustrate.

7. Utilize a child's strengths to accommodate for their weakness, if the child is a good musician, have them memorize their spelling words rhythmically.
8. It is never too early to teach a child to underline or highlight essential details in reading to promote proper reading comprehension. Make a game out of reading passages, and trying to remember essential details.

**9.** Allow and encourage your child to read everything, a love of reading may start with comic books or magazines about sports, and children who read for pleasure do better in school.

**10.** Always address a child's strengths as well as his or her weaknesses. Learning disabilities can be hard for a child to understand, because by definition their capacity for learning is outpacing their academic achievement. If children understand the underlying issues, whether it is a difficulty with hearing sounds or difficulties understanding number relationships, they are more apt to be motivated to try a variety of accommodations.

**\*\***All of these tips require motivation. Your child must understand that he or she is bright, even though his or her school performance may not reflect it. This is the key to maintaining good motivation.