

Definition of “Learning Disabilities”

Learning disabilities (LD) is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities.

These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other disabilities (for example, sensory impairment, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance), or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural or linguistic differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences.

Throughout life, the condition can affect self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities. The condition can interfere with a participant’s ability to obtain or retain employment or enter and participate in the SonomaWORKS program.

*Interestingly, there is no clear and widely accepted definition of learning disabilities. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of the field, there is ongoing debate on the issue of definition, and currently at least twelve definitions appear in the professional literature. There are several technical definitions offered by various health and education sources.

From: The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, and the CDSS Advisory Workgroup on Learning Disabilities.