

Inclusive class

„If they can't learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn.“

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Learning disorders

When children have learning disorders that go unnoticed and aren't properly dealt with, it often leads to a pattern of underachievement, disillusionment, decreased motivation, compromised self-esteem, and subsequent development of secondary emotional and anxiety-related issues.

Various circumstances could be an indicative that a child might have a learning problem:

- low academic performance
- difficulties in a specific area of learning
- loss of enthusiasm for school-related learning
- avoidance of attending school
- manifestation of behavioral or interpersonal challenges



Tips for teachers

- create an individualized educational plan that outlines specific accommodation and support strategies for the student
- appropriate accommodation and support
- refrain from reprimanding students for errors caused by their condition
- peer collaboration and support
- encourage and praise efforts and progress, no matter how small
What to do?
- give always a positive feedback
- be patient and understanding of the students challenges and progress
- involve parents in the process, providing resources and strategies they can use at home to reinforce learning
- monitor the student's progress and adjust teaching methods accordingly

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is a set of specific difficulties in learning mathematics/arithmetic and in performing mathematical/arithmetic tasks¹.

Child with dyscalculia might also exhibit:

- challenges in comprehending mathematical symbols
- struggling to memorize and arrange numbers
- facing issues with time-telling, or encountering difficulties in counting
- they may experience trouble grasping concepts like place value, quantity, number lines, and positive/negative values
- understanding and solving word problems

¹ <http://hud.hr/diskalkulija/>

- tasks involving giving change and managing money can be particularly challenging



Tips for teachers

- use of fingers as a tool
- incorporate diagrams to illustrate mathematical concepts
- use of graph paper for clarity
- manipulative objects or solids for hands-on learning
- create visual representations for word problems
- repetition and practice are crucial
- examples of real-world applications
- educational apps and software designed for students with dyscalculia
- multisensory approach (visual aids, tactile materials, and auditory instructions)
- colored pencils to distinguish between problems (ex. even and odd numbers)

Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a writing difficulty that can refer to problems with handwriting or expressing ideas in writing (L. Cooley, 2017).

Dysgraphia might exhibit challenges such as

- illegible handwriting
- mixed of print and cursive, upper and lower case letters, irregular sizes and shapes
- unfinished words or letters, omitted words
- irregular spacing between words and letters
- struggles in pre-visualizing the formation of letters
- slow copying or writing speed
- difficulty coordinating thinking and writing simultaneously

Activities: letter art, stitch wit, jump into the space of sentences, ink pad to fingerprint spaces, graph paper.



Tips for teachers

- teach keyboarding skills as an alternative to handwriting
- incorporate sensory integration activities into classroom
- incorporate oral exams as an assessment method
- permit the use of a tape recorder for recording lectures
- offer the option to use wide-ruled paper, graph paper or raised line tactile paper
- suggest the utilization of pencil grips
- introduce speech-to-text or dictation software

- give students extra time for writing assignments and tests
- incorporate activities that improve fine motor skills
- present alternatives to written assignments, such as video-taped or audio-taped reports
- graphic organizers can help students plan and organize their thoughts before writing

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a distinct learning disorder that impacts reading and associated language-based processing abilities. It can influence reading fluency, decoding, comprehension, recall, writing, and spelling.

Dyslexia might exhibit challenges such as:

- errors in arranging letters
- they could display a significant gap between their comprehension when listening and when reading specific texts
- challenges can extend to spelling, handwriting, and even mathematical tasks
- recalling familiar words might be difficult
- overall, they struggle with various aspects of written language




Tips for teachers

- create a calm space for tasks such as reading and responding to comprehension questions
- break down sequences into manageable chunks
- opt for books with larger print and ample spacing between lines
- incorporate audio books as an alternative
- supply students with handouts
- use assistive technology, enable to use a laptop for in-class essays
- exclude spelling assignments in subjects like history and science
- permit diverse formats for book reports
- implement multi-sensory teaching techniques
- guide students in using logic over memory
- supply tracking aids like rulers and text windows
- utilize various colors for words to enhance differentiation
- use a graphic organizer

Autism

Autism - clinically known as an autism spectrum disorder - most often defined as a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by difficulties in social communication, interaction and limited and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities.

Activity ideas that can be beneficial for children in the spectrum:

- no verbal communication required
- natural expression of ideas and emotions for children on the spectrum due to strong visual tendencies
- challenges in understanding other's perspectives for children on the spectrum
- peer involvement enables a visual perspective and promotes acceptance 
- higher sensitivity for textures, sounds, and smells
- art exploration serves as stress relief

Activities: sensory play, visual schedule creation, social stories, puzzle, communicational apps, nature walks, art and craft activities, music and movement, role-playing, cooking or baking, building with blocks, smelling games, emotional cards, mindful breathing, fidget toys, musical chairs, rhythm instruments like shakers, rain sticks, or drums, grounding techniques, retreat zone, animal-assisted activities


REMEMBER: each child is unique, so it's essential to consider their individual preferences, sensitivities, and abilities when selecting activities.

Tips for teachers

- avoid sensory overload (not too many colors and objects in the classroom, limit noises)
- avoid multitasking
- use visual tools
- be predictable, they benefit from routines- classroom routines
- use multi-sensory learning (visual, auditory and movement instruction)
- provide choices (ex. choosing between different activities)

ADHD Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

In the case of ADHD, teachers and parents should be encouraged to positively reinforce the child's desirable behaviors and assign appropriate consequences to inappropriate behaviors. Students with ADHD thrive in an environment characterized by structure, routine, and clearly defined expectations.



Tips for teachers

- establish and adhere to clear scheduled and routines
- verify that instructions are comprehended
- display instructions on the board and break down complex directions into segments
- consider their seating preferences and arrangements
- provide supervision as needed
- model a clam behavior
- permit the use of tools such as bouncy band, sand tray, stress ball, or rubik's cube for sensory outlet
- introduce a seat cushion to assist in maintaining stillness
- implement checklists to aid in self-monitoring
- provide a homework organizer to support organization

Behavioral disorders

Oppositional defiant disorder


Children with oppositional defiant disorder:

- displays frequent anger, irritation, or annoyance
- engages in frequent arguments with adults and resists following rules
- exhibits diminished self-esteem
- low tolerance for frustration
- tends to assign blame to others for personal misfortunes

Conduct disorder

Children with conduct disorder:

- frequently defies parental and authority figures' instruction
- early involvement with substances like cigarettes and alcohol
- lack empathy toward other
- aggression towards animals and individuals (bullying, physical altercations, or even sexual abuse)
- easily engages in physical confrontations, often initiating fights
- engages in frequently lying and displays criminal behaviors
- tends to run away from home



Tips for teachers

- build positive relationships
- established calm-down area
- set clear expectation and boundaries
- use positive reinforcements

- introduce journaling as an outlet for expressing emotions, sensations, and thoughts instead of resorting to anger or outbursts
- incorporate mindfulness exercises
- implement anger management training
- teach self-regulation
- implement relaxation methods and art therapy
- model appropriate behavior

Literature

Myles L. Cooley (2017). *Djeca s teškoćama u učenju i mentalnim smetnjama u redovitoj nastavi. Kako ih prepoznati, razumjeti i pomoći im da postignu uspjeh u školi*. Naklada Kosinj, Zagreb.

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<http://hud.hr/diskalkulija/>

<https://www.autizam-suzah.hr/autizam/>

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