



BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS OF THE SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Learning Disabled children are known for their learning difference as well as their behavioural differences. The factors which affects these children in learning effectively are mostly their peculiar behaviours and set of behavioural patterns from which these children can be easily isolated from the normal children in primary level of classrooms. According to their IQ level, learning disabled children are managing their behaviours in high school, higher secondary and higher education. The reason for school drop outs are mainly because of their behaviour and poor understanding of the teachers on their behavioural patterns and issues. Hence, this study analyses and brings out the behavioural traits of learning disabled children for the benefit of the same.

Key words: Learning Disability, Behavioural pattern.

INTRODUCTION:

Learning Disability (LD) is not associated to mental retardation as the learning disabled normally have average or high IQ. Opinions and understanding of learning disability have been radically changed over the past decades. Especially, learning disability cannot be cured, but with the correct back-up, encouragement and intervention, learning disabled children can perform well in schools. Learning disability is correlated with the difficulties in the learning process of the child. National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) defines the basis of learning disability is the central nervous system dysfunction. It cannot be grouped all underachievers in schools as the learning disabled. In addition, NJCLD explains that the major difference and processing deficits are supposed to be inherent in the children due to the central nervous dysfunction. Yet, the medical confirmation of a central nervous system dysfunction is not required for the student to meet the eligibility criteria.

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The NJCLD (USA, 1981) offered the following definition of learning disability and it was accepted at international level.

“Learning disability is a generic 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 and presumed to be due to the central nervous system dysfunction. Even though learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or environmental influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors) it is not the direct result of these conditions or influences.”

TYPES OF LEARNING DISABILITY

1. Disability in Comprehending Communication

In this disability, the child finds difficulty to understand even signs and gestures. The child with a severe degree of this problem is loss of ability to understand speech and written material and the child cannot learn to speak, read and write. The child finds difficulty in communicating even through signs and gestures.

2. Disability in Reading

The child with reading disability faces difficulty in reading. There is a total loss of ability to read in children with a severe degree of this problem and this is termed as ‘Word Blindness’. The children who are affected with a mild degree of this problem finds difficulty in reading.

3. Disability in Writing

The children affected by a mild degree of writing disability write legibly if they are identified and helped early. But the children with severe writing disability cannot learn to write and these children are hard to integrate in the mainstream school curriculum.

4. Disability in Numerical ability

The children with this disability finds difficulty in arithmetic even in simple Calculations. Inability to manipulate the number relationships is the cause behind this disability.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

A specific learning disability is unique to the individual and can come out in a variety of ways. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gave a definition to “specific learning disability” as follows:

“(i) General. Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. (ii) Disorders not included. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.”

TYPES OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

Dyslexia	-	a reading disability.
Dysgraphia	-	a writing disability.
Dyscalculia	-	a math disability.
Dyspraxia	-	a motor coordination disability.
Dysphasia	-	a language disability.
Aphasia	-	a language disability.
Central Auditory Processing Disorder	-	a sensory disability related to processing sounds.
Visual Processing Disorder	-	a sensory disability related to processing images.
Non-verbal Learning Disorder	-	a visual-spatial disability related to body control.

Learning disability can affect the child in any one of the specific skills or multiple skills. So, it is tough to point out all the LD children’s behaviors. Here are some of the characteristics most frequently found in the LD children and it can be one or combination of characters.

1. Difference in Activity: The child can be hyperactive or hypo active, the hyperactive child finds difficult in sitting in the class even for minimum of five minutes and it disturb the child’s concentration on studies. Hence, this hyper activeness leads to attention problems. In contradictory, the hypoactive child misses the concentration by day dreams, to bring back the child’s attention by pointing out the child and calling

the child affects the self-esteem. So, these two ends of activity makes the child to struggle in learning and disturb the class.

2. Difference of Abilities: Ability level of performance can vary to average, above average and High.
3. Problems in Gross and Fine motor skills: Gross and fine motor problems affect the sitting posture, writing and drawing skills. Coordination of the gross muscles in hands, legs and shoulders will be poor in the children who are affected. This poor coordination between the muscles brings difficulty in sitting posture for writing and drawing. Hence the child will be having poor handwriting and cannot sit long time for writing. Frequent changing of sitting postures disturb the child in concentration. In addition, the coordination and strength of fine muscles in hands helps in handwriting and drawing, difficulty in these fine muscles leads to illegitimate handwriting which brings low marks, grades and possibly affects the child's confidence in studies. Ultimately, the child with this condition has less interest in writing, the same time, the child shows interest in oral exams and shines in the oral answers according to the IQ.
4. Attention Problems: LD children are known for their poor concentration and their attention is fixed on repeated activities because of their short attention span. Hyper activeness, hypo activeness, poor coordination of muscles, eye hand coordination, memory skill, emotional problems and various other individual problems can affect the child's concentration. As the classroom demands concentration, the child finds difficulty in attentiveness and draws the attention of the teacher either by hyper or hypo activities. The effective recollection of data from memory depends on a peaceful atmosphere in inner and outer but most of the time, the LD child is having a disturbed state of mind because of the differences in the recollection abilities which makes the child to fail in exams. When the child needs extra time to recollect the data, the classroom demands the data in a limited time or immediately brings the confidence to low level.
5. Auditory perceptual problems: Auditory discrimination and auditory memory is poor because of the attention deficit. Recollection ability of auditory stimuli or sequences are poor, so the child finds less interest in hearing the lessons. The similar sounds confuses the child and makes them poor spellers. Only the teacher with good abilities in using different techniques and knowledge on auditory stimuli can catch the child's attention. Child pretends like hearing because of this problem.
6. Visual perceptual problems: Visual stimuli confuses the LD child as their visual discrimination and recollection ability of the visual memory is different. The child

cannot copy the board properly, even copying from the note book becomes tough and the child finds difficulty in understanding the letters having resemblances (p,q). The child skips the letters, words and lines while copying. Combination of particular letters, and silent letters makes them to lose the interest in learning. So, the child starts drawing the letters instead of writing the letters and drawing the letters in their own pattern disturbs the speed in writing.

7. Emotional problems: Most of the time, they exhibit compulsive behavior because of their disturbance in emotions due to various reasons. So, the standard of social competence is below to their age group and the childish talk is most common in all most all the LD children. They prefer one to one relation and not good at making friends. Their bossy nature becomes a problem in making friends and retaining their relation for long. The relationship with their peers and teachers become difficult because of their learning differences. They find difficult in routine work. They exhibit poor skill in organizing and performing routine work.

CONCLUSION

Written exams brings poor score and some children struggle in their oral exams also. Their academic performance displays low grades instead of their high IQ. Difficulties in the expressive and receptive language skills makes them to struggle in all the subjects. Low grades and insults after a hard work brings compulsive behaviours in the child. The child becomes stubborn and resist to change and learning. So, the early intervention and help will bring fruitful results in learning and behavior of the learning disabled children.

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