

# Learning Difficulties



## What are learning difficulties and where to find help and support?

The answer is that it is different for every person who has one. We all learn differently, finding some things easier than others. A learning disability is when those things we find less easy get in the way of the child making good progress and achieving their potential. There are many types of learning disabilities and for every person it is a unique combination.

The first step is working out what a person finds easy (their strengths) and what they find more difficult (their weaknesses). It is important to do both as we can use the things we find easy to help overcome the difficult things. You can help do this at home by thinking about what a child finds hard and when it happens. This might help to start to know what kind of difficulties there are: it could be how they remember and find that information; it could be how they make their hands and fingers work; it could be how to spell words, which way round letters go or struggling to understand something you ask them to do. If this sounds familiar, then please ask your child's teacher, or health visitor, for more help.

Schools have lots of tests and activities they can do to help work out what the difficulties are. For some children a simple change in how we help them learn can be enough - showing them pictures to help make instructions memorable, practicing forming letters using sand or coloured crayons helps it stick in their minds, for example. Sometimes the difficulties are not so easy to identify or might be more complex and need a specialist. Schools will then work with other professionals to find out more. You can pay for assessments to be done privately if you wish, but schools and the Local Authority can do these free of charge.

If you think your child is struggling, don't wait! You know your child better than anyone else does. The sooner you say something, the quicker they can be helped.

## Who can help?

- You know your child really well - try and work out what they find difficult and when. Your child may also be able to explain what they find difficult and when. They may also know what helps or makes it easier.
- Your child's teacher can help and they can ask for extra help from the school's Special Needs Coordinator or from other professionals.
- Sometimes schools will suggest you ask your GP for help as they can refer you to the Paediatricians and School Doctor.
- If your school cannot help you, then you can ask the Local Authority to help and make an assessment - see our Handy Guide on this topic.

## Where to find out more on website:

[www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) and look under Useful Information