

1. When not to seek a diagnosis
 - a. Know the range of _____.
 - b. Is your child content, making progress and _____.
2. Common misunderstandings
 - a. I should be able to _____.
 - b. It's not a learning problems, it's just my _____.
 - c. It may be a mental health problem, but we should _____.
3. When to seek an evaluation or Diagnosis
 - a. When you don't know why a child is struggling and one or both of you are _____.
 - b. Even before you start to homeschool if you or family see that your toddler or infant shows certain warning signs. See links below.
4. Why a good diagnosis can help your child's past, present, and future
 - a. Past: changes how child views self, and how we _____.
New insight on student's _____.
 - b. Present: can get new _____, _____. Follow-up.
 - c. Future: family _____.
What _____ does your child tell him or herself? Should it change?
Accommodations
Documentation may qualify your child for SSI, adult services, Medicaid waivers, and enable you to set up _____.
Help you train your child to self-_____.
5. How to get started or find a more accurate diagnosis
 - a. First, _____ resources and your _____.
 - b. Screen versus evaluation:
 - c. Begin with _____ to rule out physical conditions.
(E.g. sleep apnea can produce ADHD-like symptoms.)
 - d. Cost and how to find less expensive options.
 - e. Cost of _____ getting diagnosis.
 - f. To prepare for evaluations:
 - i. Ask about _____.
 - ii. Bring short _____ that document behaviors.
 - iii. Questions to ask before you book.
 - iv. On evaluation day, reduce stress by:
 - v. Acknowledge that getting tested will be work. "We know you're smart, we know you're trying (or discouraged). We need o learn better ways to teach you." Rehearse what to expect.

Top pick: *The Mislabeled Child* by Dr. Brock Eide and Dr. Fernette Eide. Owners of the Eide Neurolearning Clinic near Seattle, these homeschooling parents have produced a readable, comprehensive guide to many kinds of learning challenges. The chapters cover a different kind of difficulty. Each chapter includes four sections: symptoms, causes, how to get evaluated, and what helps.

To learn the developmental milestones:

CDC, Cleveland Clinic, understood.org, Childmind.org (from American Academy of Pediatrics).

To understand and help with specific issues:

For **auditory processing disorder**, read Teri James Bellis' book, *When the Brain Can't Hear*, or Karen J. Foli, *Like Sound Through Water: A Mother's Journey Through Auditory Processing Disorder*.

For **dyslexia**, read Dr. Brock and Fernette Eide's second book, *The Dyslexic Advantage*. Visit dyslexicadvantage.com for online forums, videos, and more.

For **sensory processing issues**, see *Raising A Sensory-Smart Child* by Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske.

Consider getting screened by a pediatric occupational therapist—see my two-part blog post on how they can help.

Emotional Health

Eliza Huie, *Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child* is a good short introduction.

For childhood trauma disorder (PTSD in children), see Jolene Philo's *Does My Child Have PTSD?* and differentdream.com

For **depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders**, psychologist Dr. Richard Ruth recommends the free information from the National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/index.shtml>, adding:

But I stress that what they read should be a starting point for a conversation with a mental health professional, not a substitute for it. There's so much information that it's a challenge for a family to integrate it all, and, too often, books for parents present opinions as facts.... If parents read something from the NIMH, make a list of their questions or concerns, and schedule a consultation with a mental health professional, a lot can be accomplished. It's no longer the case that just talking over things yields an automatic recommendation for years of therapy.

At LearnDifferently.com, read my two-part post on working with a psychologist, based on my interview with Dr. Richard Ruth.

The second half of Simonetta Carr's book, *Broken Pieces and the God Who Mends*

Them, is resources for mental health issues. (The first half is a memoir.)

Speech and Language Issues

Homeschooler and speech therapist Amanda Owens, a speech therapist in Indiana has many resources on her website, <https://www.illuminatecommunicate.com>

American Speech and Hearing Association, www.ASHA.org, can help you find SLPs in your state.

Helpful lists at: <https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/echolalia-when-children-repeat-what-you-say/>

For **distractibility, impulsivity, hyperactivity, inattention, AD/HD, or ADD**, there are many good books reviewed on my blog. See also:

- To understand the condition, read Joel Nigg, Ph.D., *Getting Ahead of ADHD*, includes the idea that attention disorders are better understood as issues of self-regulation.
- To help children (not teens) improve focus, Garber, Garber and Spizman, *Is My Child Hyperactive? Inattentive? Impulsive? Distractible?*

For **autism**, there many resources, including the HSLDA.org, Tony Attwood, and many more. People with autism vary widely. The BBC documentary on Dr. Temple Grandin, *The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow*, provides one woman's first-person insights. Available on YouTube. Ron Suskin's memoir, *Life, Animated*, and Kristine Barnett's memoir *The Spark*, tell very different stories. Both are reviewed on my website. Homeschool veteran Sarah Wayland and Dr. Donna Henderson just published in June 2023, *Is This Autism? A Guide for Clinicians and Everyone Else*.

Some of Happily Family online conferences have included material for families of students with learning problems.

For ADHD and autism, see Diana Kennedy's two books: *The ADHD-Autism Connection* and her newest book, *Bright Not Broken: Gifted Kids, ADHD, and Autism*.

Kids who are **gifted and have a learning disability** are sometimes called GT/LD, Twice Exceptional, or "2E" for short. See above and also:

- Colleen Kessler's website, raisinglifelonglearners.com
- GiftedHomeschoolers.org Gifted Homeschoolers Forum
- SENGifted.org (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted)
- 2ENewsletter.com
- HoagiesGifted.org

Medication or not?

Timothy E. Wilens and Paul G. Hammerness *Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medications for Kids –get the latest edition (4th).*

College and work

Melanie and Hal Young, *Help is On the Way: A Homeschooler's Guide to Accommodations for the SAT, ACT, and College.*

Henry B. Reiff, Ph. D. *Self-Advocacy Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities: Making it Happen in College and Beyond.*

Carol Reynolds, Ph.D. *Why Freshmen Fail and How to Avoid it!* (Not specifically related to learning disabilities, but covers many of the nonacademic pitfalls that catch students with learning challenges.)

Dale S. Brown, *Learning a Living: A Guide to Planning Your Career and Finding a Job for People with Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Dyslexia.*

Dale S. Brown, *Steps to Independence for People with Learning Disabilities.* Download free here: <http://ldaamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/steps-to-independence.pdf>

On the web

- Understood.org has videos & information on many learning challenges. DyslexicAdvantage.com (Don't miss the "Turkey and the Crow video.")
- Help4ADHD.org, a project of CHADD (Children and Adults with AD/HD)
- eIDA.org The International Dyslexia Association
- spdfoundation.net/library/checklist.html Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation
- NAMI.org the National Alliance on Mental Illness
- LDOnline.org