

Quick Facts on Learning Disabilities

Teen learning disabilities have a profound effect on our society. Out of the 20 million kids who cannot read at grade level, nine million (that's almost half) have a learning disability. As children develop into teenagers, their learning disabilities become more pronounced. And, if the problem is not identified and solved, it can lead to frustration with school, poor performance, and dropping out.

In addition to affecting the teenager, teen learning disabilities also have an effect on society. Substance abuse, joblessness, welfare and even criminal behavior can be outgrowths of frustrations felt due to learning disabilities. It is estimated that learning disabilities cost society right around \$7.5 billion each year. Getting help for teens with learning disabilities should be a high priority.

Quick facts about teen learning disabilities and education

Teen learning disabilities can affect school performance, causing teens to drop out of school. However, it is cost-effective to help teens with learning disabilities learn how to cope with the disability.

- 80 percent of teen learning disabilities have to do with reading
- 35 percent of teenagers with learning disabilities do not finish high school
- Special education costs, on average, right around \$10,000 per year per teen

Stats about joblessness and teen learning disabilities

Teen learning disabilities can affect the way a teen does a job for the rest of his or her life. Without learning the skills necessary to overcome the disability, a teen may find that he or she has lifelong trouble getting and maintaining employment.

- 62 percent of teens with learning disabilities do not have employment one year after completing high school
- 25 percent of the population of young adults (including teens) does not have the literacy skills necessary to do typical jobs
- The most common obstacles to getting off welfare and getting and holding a job are: 1) substance abuse and 2) learning disabilities

Teen learning disabilities and crime

Frustrations associated with teen learning disabilities can be the root of substance abuse problems and criminal, or even violent behavior. Getting help for learning disabilities can result in less crime and fewer substance abuse problems.

- 60 percent of teens being treated for substance abuse have learning disabilities

- 50 percent of delinquent juveniles have learning disabilities that have not been detected
- The rate of learning disabilities among criminal offenders is 50 percent
- 31 percent of teens with learning disabilities are arrested between three and five years after graduating from high school
- It costs \$31,000 per year, per offender, to take care of a criminal offender

The costs of teen learning disabilities

It is possible to save both huge costs when the issue of teen learning disabilities is addressed. By investing \$10,000 per year for the six years that a teen is in school in order to help him or her compensate for a learning disability, we could save tens of thousands of dollars over the life of a teen by giving him or her the tools to stay out of jail. Learning disabilities, when properly acknowledged and treated, are not permanent stumbling blocks. Teenagers who get help for their learning disabilities can go on to be fully participating, healthy members of society.

Teen Learning Disability Statistic Sources:

1. "Alarming LD Statistics," The Haan Foundation.

Adapted from: www.teenhelp.com