

No.2/November 2011

LEARNING DISABILITIES



3
TIPS

UNDERSTANDING YOUR UNIQUE GIFTS

Allying individuals with the **leading tools, teachers and advocates** to achieve a successful education and life of learning

Know the facts
How to address
early signs



Diamond in
the rough
Comprehensive
education



Parents as
advocates
Know your child's
needs

PHOTO: ALL COVER PHOTOS BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

CHALLENGES

One of the **most important messages** we can give kids with learning disabilities is they can be successful both inside and outside the classroom.

Learning strategies lead to success

After being diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD, I came to understand that learning disabilities don't come with an owner's manual. This, more or less, is the short answer to why some 2.5 million students are struggling each year in America's schools. I know you're probably hoping I can tell you how to quickly unleash your child's potential, but if you want to help a child succeed with a learning disability, then you should probably avoid any advice that sounds like a "quick fix." Why? Learning disabilities are lifelong adventures. What can make all the difference is knowing how to self-advocate and find allies when you reach a hurdle.

I grew up among the first generation of students who were given the label "learning disability." In fifth grade, I didn't know how to read—or at least not very well. I'd been diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD and felt the weight of those labels as failures. Did I think I'd one day go to Brown University? No. I was just hoping to make it to sixth grade.

We in the "Republic of People Who Learn Differently" simply represent a paradox. We drop out of high school at twice the normal rate. We are overrepresented in the federal justice system, accounting for up to 42 percent of prisoners. But on the flipside we represent an exceptionally high number of CEOs, entrepreneurs, and A-list actors. We include Steven Spielberg, Whoopi Goldberg, Steve Jobs and Tom Cruise.

So we don't "kind of" fail. We fail miserably. And we don't "kind of" succeed. We really succeed.

Of course, in fifth grade I didn't know how to be Tom Cruise, and since learning disabilities don't come with an owner's manual, I had no idea how to empower myself as a learner. Part of the reason I made it through school is that I finally came around to being proud of the way my mind does work with its gifts and flaws. I stopped trying to overcome dyslexia—dyslexia doesn't go away—and started making the most of learning strategies that allowed me to succeed.

To empower kids and put them on the best possible track toward reaching their full potential, consider

"Learning disabilities are lifelong adventures. What can make all the difference is knowing how to self-advocate and find allies when you reach a hurdle."

David Flink
Executive Director
& Co-Founder of
Project Eye-To-Eye
National



as a start these three things that students with learning disabilities absolutely need:

An early diagnosis

We need to know how our brain works so we can find learning strategies that are effective for us.

Accommodations

From audio books and spell-check to extra time on written tests, we need tools that support our learning style.

Allies & mentors

We need people who can teach us when and how to ask for help.

I hope that you will keep these three things in mind and take advantage of the insights and resources on the pages that follow, because together we can work to empower every student who learns differently.

DAVID FLINK

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WE RECOMMEND



PAGE 07

Andrew Friedman
A conversation on providing accessible digital audiobooks to students with learning disabilities and visual impairment.

MEDIA PLANET

LEARNING DISABILITIES, SECOND EDITION, NOVEMBER 2011

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Distributed within:
Chicago Tribune, November 2011
This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve the Chicago Tribune or its Editorial Departments.



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How much longer?

See for yourself!

ADHD & DYSLEXIA

Show them "how much longer!"
Take a 3-inch Timer or iPad/iPhone App to every activity.

SCHOOL

Show them what "5 more minutes" really means!
Encourage children to challenge themselves until the timer runs out.

HOME

Show them when time is up!
Take all the conflicts out of homework, chores, sharing and bedtime.

AUTISM

Show them abstract concepts in a visual way!
Autism Researchers use Time Timers to foster communication skills.



TIME TIMER

Order at timetimer.com
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As seen on TV, in the Washington Post and at Children's Hospital-Boston.

