

Symptomology Checklist – Learning Disabilities

From “Complete Learning Disabilities Handbook”, by Joan Harwell
(Check behaviors seen. Mark: S = sometimes; O = often)

Visual Perceptual Deficits

- reversals: *b* for *d*, *p* for *q*
- inversions: *u* for *n*, *w* for *m*
- yawns while reading
- complains eyes hurt, itch/rubs eyes
- complains print blurs while reading
- turns head or paper at odd angles
- closes one eye while working
- cannot copy accurately
- loses place frequently
- rereads lines/skips lines
- does not recognize an object/word if only part of it is shown
- reading improves with larger print/fewer items on page/uses a marker to exclude portion of page
- sequencing errors: *was/saw*, *on/no*
- does not see main theme in a picture, picks up some minute detail
- slow to pick up on likenesses/differences in words; changes in environment
- erases excessively
- distortions in depth perception

Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficits

- letters collide with each other/no space between words
- letters not on line
- forms letters in strange way
- mirror writing (hold the paper to a mirror and you see it as it should look)
- cannot color within lines
- illegible handwriting
- holds pencil too tightly; often breaks pencil point/crayons
- cannot cut
- cannot paste
- messy papers

Auditory Perceptual Deficits

- ___ auditory processing: cannot understand conversation or learning delivered at the normal rate/may comprehend if information is repeated very slowly
- ___ auditory discrimination: does not hear differences in sounds: short i, vs. short e; plosive sounds b, p, d, t, c, g, j, n, m; does not hear final consonants accurately
- ___ cannot tell direction sound is coming from
- ___ does not recognize common sounds for what they are
- ___ cannot filter out extraneous noise; cannot distinguish teacher's voice from others – hears wrong answers, steadfastly maintains "teacher said it" (Some children get very tense in noisy classroom)
- ___ does not follow directions
- ___ does not benefit from oral instruction

Spatial Relationships and Body Awareness Deficits

- ___ gets lost even in familiar surroundings such as school, neighborhood
- ___ directionality problems, does not always read or write left to right
- ___ no space between written words
- ___ cannot keep columns straight in math
- ___ bumps into things; is accident prone
- ___ does not understand concepts such as over, under, around, through, first, last, front, back, up, down

Conceptual Deficits

- ___ cannot read social situations, does not understand body language
- ___ cannot see relationship between similar concepts
- ___ cannot compare how things are alike or different; classification activities are difficult
- ___ does not understand time relationships – yesterday, today, tomorrow, after/before, 15 minutes versus 2 hours, "hurry"
- ___ does not associate an act with its logical consequence, "If I talk, I get detention." (being punished for no reason. Unfair.)
- ___ little imagination
- ___ no sense of humor; cannot recognize a joke/pun
- ___ tends to be expressionless
- ___ slow responses
- ___ not able to create, to 'think', to create poetry, original stories
- ___ cannot make closure; cannot read less than clear copies, cannot finish a sentence such as "I like it when . . . "; difficulty filling in blanks
- ___ excessively gullible

- ___ cannot do inferential thinking: What might happen next? Why did this happen?
- ___ great difficulty in writing
- ___ bizarre answers/or correct answers found in bizarre ways
- ___ cannot think in an orderly, logical way
- ___ does not understand emotions, concepts such as beauty, bravery
- ___ classroom comments are often 'off track', or reasons in bizarre ways
- ___ difficulty grasping number concepts: more/less >/<; can't estimate
- ___ mispronounces common words

Memory Deficits

- ___ cannot remember what was just seen (shown)
- ___ cannot remember what was just heard
- ___ cannot remember sequence of 4 numbers given auditorally
- ___ cannot copy math problems accurately
- ___ cannot remember spelling for common/frequently encountered words
- ___ remembers things from long ago, but not recent events
- ___ poor sight vocabulary – few words known to automatic level
- ___ slow to memorize rhymes/poem (makes many errors)
- ___ appears to know something one day, but not the next
- ___ limited expressive language; does not remember names for objects – “that thing”
- ___ limited receptive language
- ___ makes same error again and again; does not seem to benefit from experience
- ___ writing poor – cannot remember to capitalize, punctuate, skip a line, indent, etc.

Motor Output Deficits

- ___ Perseveration – gives same response again and again (gets stuck on a topic)
- ___ distortions in gross motor functions – cannot skip, hop, hit ball, etc.
- ___ difficulty cutting, pasting, coloring, writing (can point to correct way to form a letter, but cannot produce it on paper)
- ___ can point to correct spelling, but cannot copy it accurately
- ___ can dictate story or paragraph, but cannot write it.
- ___ does not communicate orally to a degree appropriate for age
- ___ mouth noises
- ___ tics

Behavioral Components

Attention Deficit Disorder

- ___ good days - - bad days
- ___ cannot sit still/ cannot stand still

- ___ impulsive; does not consider consequence before acting
- ___ low frustration tolerance; short fuse
- ___ cannot finish assignments in allotted time
- ___ visually distractible; looks up to all visual stimuli
- ___ auditorally distractible; responds by looking up to noise
- ___ fidgety: drumming fingers, tapping toes, fooling with objects; makes mouth noises; incessant talking
- ___ short attention span
- ___ spaces out – confused – does not sit up/head on desk/'tired'
- ___ negative or oppositional behavior
- ___ little work produced; daydreams
- ___ reads something correctly, but mind is elsewhere as evidenced in poor comprehension
- ___ overreacts to stimuli (cannot mind own business)
- ___ does not follow rules; often claims didn't hear them
- ___ may be cruel, mean to others; makes fun of them
- ___ mood swings
- ___ disorganized; loses books, papers, lunch box, coat

Failure Syndrome

- ___ describes self as "dumb"
- ___ does not take reprimands well
- ___ tends to avoid group activity
- ___ avoids activity; does little; claims illness
- ___ daydreams/withdrawal
- ___ class clown – acting out behavior
- ___ immature behavior; babyish; seems younger, dependent

Serious Emotional Overlay

- ___ explosive, unpredictable, dangerous behavior, lashing out
- ___ preoccupation with death, destruction; prefers dark colors and red, purple, yellow
- ___ no work produced, coupled with lack of enthusiasm for anything
- ___ tells bizarre stories and purports they really happened
- ___ shallow feeling for others
- ___ cannot distinguish reality from fantasy
- ___ withdraw; alone; little communication
- ___ feels 'picked on'; uses projection, denial; never assumes responsibility for actions
- ___ fearful, anxious, insecure, tense.