

SPECIAL Education



Ministry Challenges

- › Learning disabilities can sometimes be difficult to diagnose. Some people have multiple disabilities.
- › Parents and adults must let teachers and others know about their own or their child's learning disabilities. Educators must be willing to learn and be responsive to the needs of people with learning disabilities. This often means identifying new teaching methods. When methods are not appropriate, people with learning disabilities may drop out and are less likely to try again.
- › People with learning disabilities may have trouble responding appropriately in social situations, which may lead to feelings of inadequacy and isolation.
- › People with severe learning disabilities may have difficulties with frequent tasks, such as filling out forms, following directions, etc.

Regardless of the situation, understanding the specific challenges and learning strategies to deal with learning disabilities directly at every stage can alleviate a lot of frustration and make successful living much easier.

(Sources: National Center for Learning Disabilities)



1 in 5 children have special learning needs and government statistics indicate this figure is on the rise.

Ministry Goal

To break down barriers and attitudes to witness to and welcome children and adults with learning disabilities into full participation in the life of the church.

Resources

This resource list represents the LCMS Disability Ministry Task Force members' favorite books or resources for ministry to and with people with learning challenges. This list does not reflect an exhaustive accounting or an endorsed list by the LCMS.

- › **Lutheran Special Education Ministries'** mission statement is "A Christ-centered resource that supports children with learning needs. Visit the LSEM website at luthsped.org to find resources, partner schools and ways you can support special education ministry.
- › **Free Spirit Publishing** offers a variety of resources for educators and families with children with ADD and other learning challenges. Visit freespirit.com for a complete listing.

A learning disability is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. Learning disabilities affect how a person understands, remembers and responds to new information. Listening, paying attention, speaking, reading, writing or doing math may be difficult for people with learning disabilities.

About one third of children who have learning disabilities also have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which makes it hard to focus.

Special education services are mandated by law in public schools.

(Sources: National Center for Learning Disabilities, Medline Plus, Lutheran Special Education Ministries.)



› ***Parenting A Child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*** by Nancy S. Boyles, M.Ed., and Darlene Contadino, M.S.W., is a helpful, encouraging book that explains what ADHD is all about and guides parents through the process of recognizing the symptoms, getting a proper diagnosis, setting up a support system and working with their children to manage the behaviors that can impede academic and social success. The authors honestly discuss the problems and roadblocks associated with ADHD, but their primary focus throughout is on the strengths of these children and their unique ways of learning and communicating. This book is both positive and practical in its approach. This is an excellent resource for both parents and teachers.

› ***A Christian Educator's Guide to the Attention Deficit Disorders*** by Dr. John Juern, whose experiences as a Lutheran educator, school psychologist, family counselor and psychologist prepared him to write this book about ADD. It is geared specifically for Christian educators and contains useful information for those looking for information about ADD from a Christian perspective. This book is published by Kremer Publications, Milwaukee, Wis., 800-669-0887. It is available from the publisher or directly from the author by writing to Dr. John Juern at 2401 N. Mayfair Road, Suite 308, Wauwatosa, Wis. 53226 or by calling 414-476-1772.

› **Books:**

- *Helping Children Overcome Learning Difficulties* by Jerome Rosner
A step-by-step guide for parents and teachers that covers learning disabilities, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, and other learning challenges. This trusted guide and reference provides a detailed road map of steps to test, what to do with the test results and why.
- *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
The latest research in child development shows that many kids who have the brain and heart to succeed lack or lag behind

in crucial “executive skills”— the fundamental habits of mind required for getting organized, staying focused, and controlling impulses and emotions. Learn easy-to-follow steps to identify your child's strengths and weaknesses, use activities and techniques proven to boost specific skills, and problem-solve daily routines. Small changes can add up to big improvements — this empowering book shows how.

- *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz
One in five American children has trouble reading. But they are not stupid or lazy. In *Overcoming Dyslexia*, Dr. Sally Shaywitz, codirector of the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention and a leader in the new research into how the brain works, offers the latest information about reading problems and proven, practical techniques that, along with hard work and the right help, can enable anyone to overcome them.
- *The Autistic Brain* by Temple Grandin
Grandin introduces the advances in neuroimaging and genetic research that link brain science to behavior, even sharing her own brain scan to show which anomalies might explain common symptoms. Most excitingly, she argues that raising and educating kids on the autism spectrum must focus on their long-overlooked strengths to foster their unique contributions. *The Autistic Brain* brings Grandin's singular perspective into the heart of the autism revolution.

› **Websites:**

- International Dyslexia Association: dyslexiaida.org
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: nclld.org
- Understood.org- for parents and educators: understood.org/en
- LDOnline- the educators' guide to learning disabilities and ADD: ldonline.org
- CHADD- The National Resource on ADHD: chadd.org
- Autism Speaks: autismspeaks.org
- National Down Syndrome Society: ndss.org
- The Inclusive Church: theinclusivechurch.wordpress.com