

# TOP 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE A CHILD WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

BY THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

## 1. Learn all you can about the disability.

Learning disabilities take many forms. As a knowledgeable, informed parent, you will be better able to communicate with teachers about your child, help your child with schoolwork, and develop strategies to help him or her navigate social situations.



## 2. Keep in contact with your child's teacher(s).

Teachers want to work with parents. Let them know how your child behaves at home, any difficult times he or she is going through, any subjects or lessons he or she has particularly enjoyed in class. Parents can also play an essential role in working with teachers to develop instructional and behavioral strategies that can be used both in school and at home.

## 3. Keep a profile of what your child does well.

This can be important for your child at school and on a personal level. Too many times in the school arena, we tend to focus on the areas in which a child needs to improve. A "Strengths Profile" can help teachers and parents remember areas in which the child excels and that can be used to build curriculum that is meaningful to the child. A "Strengths Profile" is also a handy tool parents can use to banish the times when a child is feeling frustrated, a failure, or unable to cope.



## 4. Help your child understand the effect the learning disability will have on him/her in school as well as socially.

Even when a child accepts that he or she has a learning disability, the child may not realize how it will affect his or her life. Parents should help their child understand that the learning disability may mean he or she will have difficulty reading, that others may become frustrated with the child, or that the child may misread social cues, which can impact his or her social life. Of course, the parents and teachers would also develop intervention strategies to help the child cope with these factors.

## 5. Help your child get organized.

For many children with learning disabilities, organization is a difficult concept. Parents should not only buy their child an assignment book, they should also teach him how to use it. For example, the child should not only put down the day a project is due, he should also break the project into steps and assign due dates to each one. If possible, parents should also get extra copies of textbooks to keep at home.



**CHILD CARE LINKS • [WWW.CHILDCARELINKS.ORG](http://WWW.CHILDCARELINKS.ORG)**

**1020 Serpentine Lane Suite 102 • Pleasanton, CA • 94566**

**Phone: (925) 417-8733 • Fax: (925) 417-8740**

**6. Involve your child in extra-curricular activities.**

Some children with learning disabilities have a difficult time making friends and/or excelling in the school environment. Getting your child involved in extra-curricular activities provides another avenue in which your child can achieve success, as well as gain new friends.



**7. Involve your child in helping someone else.**

Too often students with learning disabilities fall into the "poor me" syndrome. Parents can not only put a stop to this but also boost their child's self-confidence by giving him or her the opportunity to help someone else. Children with learning disabilities have successfully tutored younger children, helped the elderly, worked in homeless shelters, or in other capacities. Even very young children have served others successfully.

**8. Keep your expectations for your child high but realistic.**

It is extremely important that you keep your expectations for your child high, and let your child know that you believe in him or her. If a particular task or assignment is difficult for your child, the answer is not necessarily to make it easier but to help your child find a way to do it. Also, don't forget to ask your child to think. Children with learning disabilities are often very creative and insightful. By asking their opinions and allowing them to figure out the answers to problems, you let them know you trust their intellect and their judgment.

**9. Help your child learn to ask for what they need.**

While children with learning disabilities often know what they need to learn (such as sitting close to the teacher), they may be afraid to ask for "special treatment." By teaching your child self-advocacy skills, you help him or her get the assistance they need to progress in any situation.



**10. Join or form a group of parents with similar situations.**

You can learn invaluable information from other parents. And, they can be a much-needed source of support in times of stress!

