

Learning Disabilities Fact Sheet

Literacy & Learning Disabilities

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- Learning disabilities refer to a group of brain-based disorders that make it difficult for people to process information. People with learning disabilities have difficulty taking in, sorting and retrieving information.
- People with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence.
- There are many different types of learning disabilities. Learning disabilities that affect literacy skills can be organized into three categories: 1. problems processing visual information, 2. problems processing auditory information, and 3. problems organizing information for comprehension, storage and retrieval.
- Learning disabilities affect at least 10% of people in Canada.
- Learning disabilities affect at least 30% of people with low literacy skills.
- Disproportionate numbers of adults with LDs can be found in prisons (30 - 70%), on welfare (25 - 40%) and in job training programs (15 - 30%).
- It is estimated that between 30 and 80% of learners in literacy and basic education programs have learning disabilities.
- Researchers have found that if assistance is not given to learners with learning disabilities before the age of 8, there is a 75% chance of reading difficulties continuing into high school.
- 35% of learners in high school who are identified with learning disabilities drop out of school. This is twice the rate of their peers who drop out who do not have learning disabilities.
- Many adults are not aware that the problems they had in school, jobs or relationships are due to “hidden” or undiagnosed learning disabilities.
- People with learning disabilities can learn and be successful.

¹ Most information taken & adapted from Movement for Canadian Literacy, Fact Sheet, Literacy and Learning Disabilities. Retrieved November 12th, 2004, from: www.literacy.ca/litand/7.htm