a Family Guide to
Special Education Services

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

VOLUME 11

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Family Guides for Special Education Services

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Other MDE Resources

- **General resources for parents:**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources

- **Parent Engagement and Support**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families
  ☎ 601.359.3498

- **Procedural Safeguards: Your Family's Special Education Rights**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)

Definition

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disability; or of environmental, cultural differences, or economic disadvantage.

SLD Categories

Students can be identified as have a specific learning disability in one or more of several subcategories. Subcategories include:

- Basic Reading (BR)
- Reading Comprehension (RC)
- Reading Fluency (RF)
- Written Expression (WE)
- Oral Expression (OE)
- Listening Comprehension (LC)
- Math Calculation (MC)
- Math Problem-solving (MPS)

Evaluation Requirements

Pre-Referral Requirements

To ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a SLD is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the multidisciplinary evaluation team must consider, as part of the evaluation:

A. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in general education settings, delivered by qualified personnel; and

B. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child's parents.

The public agency must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the child to determine if the child needs special education and related services, and must adhere to the evaluation and reevaluation timeframes unless extended by mutual written agreement of the child's parents and a group of qualified professionals:

C. If, prior to a referral, a child has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction; and

D. Whenever a child is referred for an evaluation.

Evaluation Requirements

When determining whether a child has a SLD, public agencies:

A. May consider whether a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention(s) is sufficient to determine eligibility (i.e., Response to Intervention—RtI); and, in addition,

B. May use other alternative research-based procedures; and/or

C. May use a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement.

NOTE: Severe discrepancy is defined as 1.5 standard deviations below the measure of intellectual ability.

Team Composition

The multidisciplinary evaluation team must include the child's parents and a team of qualified professionals, including:

A. The child's general education teacher; or

B. If the child does not have a general education teacher, a general education classroom teacher qualified to teach a child of his or her age; or

C. For a child of less than school age, an individual licensed by the State Board of Education to teach a child of his or her age; and

D. A special education teacher; and

E. At least one person qualified to conduct and interpret individual diagnostic examinations of children, such as a school psychologist, psychometrist, speech-language pathologist, or remedial reading teacher.

Report Requirements

When the evaluation team is considering eligibility under the SLD category, the eligibility determination report must include:

A. Documentation of an observation using the following guidelines:

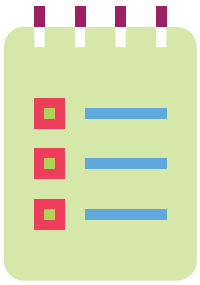
1. The public agency must ensure that the child is observed in the child's learning environment (including the general education classroom setting) to document the child's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty.
2. The multidisciplinary evaluation team must:

   i. Use information from an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the child's performance that was done before the child was referred for an evaluation; or

   ii. Have at least one member of the multidisciplinary evaluation team conduct an observation of the child's academic performance in the general education classroom after the child has been referred for an evaluation and parental consent is obtained.

3. In the case of a child of less than school age or out of school, a group member must observe the child in an environment appropriate for a child of that age.

B. Statements indicating:



1. Whether the child has a specific learning disability; and
2. The basis for making the determination; and
3. The relevant behavior, if any, noted during the observation of the child and the relationship of that behavior to the child's academic functioning; and
4. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any; and
5. Whether:

   i. The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or fails to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards in the following areas:

      a. Oral expression
      b. Listening comprehension
      c. Written expression
      d. Basic reading skill
      e. Reading fluency skills
      f. Reading comprehension
      g. Mathematics calculation
      h. Mathematics problem-solving;

   ii. The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in the paragraph (5.i.) above when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; or

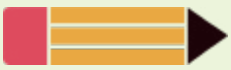
iii. The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards or intellectual development that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments.

6. The determination of the group concerning the effects of a visual, hearing, or motor disability, intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency on the child's achievement level; and
7. If the child has participated in a process that assesses the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention:

   i. The instructional strategies used and the student-centered data collected; and
   ii. The documentation that the child's parents were notified about:

      a. MDE's policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected and the general education services that would be provided; and
      b. Strategies for increasing the child's rate of learning; and
      c. The parents' right to request an evaluation.

C. Each group member, including parent(s), must certify in writing whether the report reflects the member's conclusions. If it does not reflect the member's conclusions, the group member must submit a separate statement presenting her or his conclusions.



Helpful Vocabulary

Accommodation—Tool that enables a student with a disability to better access the general curriculum. Some accommodations are applicable to instruction only (for example, an assignment that is shortened but still addresses the state standard); others are permitted for both instruction and assessment (for example, change in formatting or timing).

Dyscalculia—A specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts.

Dysgraphia—A specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills.

Dyslexia—A specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)—Foundational requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) stipulating that special education and related services must be provided at public expense (that is, without charge to parents), meet state requirements, include an appropriate education that leads to outcomes such as employment or higher education, and conform to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared for the student.

Inclusion—The practice of educating children with disabilities in the general education classroom. Inclusion in special education programs is an important part of the continuum of special education placements required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In an inclusion classroom, a student with disabilities feels included, accepted, and makes friends, and the student's peers learn to better understand their classmate's disabilities.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)—A law that makes available a free public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)—A document written for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with state and federal policies.

Memory—Three types of memory are important to learning. Working memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory are used in the processing of both verbal and nonverbal information. If there are deficits in any or all these types of memory, the ability to store and retrieve information required to carry out tasks can be impaired.

Modification—Adjustment to an assignment, test, or activity in a way that significantly simplifies or lowers the standard or alters the original measurement. Modifications change what a student is taught or expected to learn, and most are applicable to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Nonverbal learning disabilities—A learning disability in which an individual has trouble interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions or body language and may have poor coordination.

Oral/Written Language Disorder and Specific Reading Comprehension Deficit—Learning disabilities that affect an individual's understanding of what they read or of spoken language. The ability to express oneself with oral language may also be impacted.

Phonological awareness—An individual's awareness of and access to the sound structure of her or his oral language. This awareness proceeds from word length phonological units in compound words (e.g., cowboy), to syllables within words, to onset-rimes units within syllables, to individual phonemes within rimes, and finally to individual phonemes within consonant clusters.

Proficiency—The ability for a student to accurately apply knowledge. Measures of proficiency do not always include efficient or automatic performance.

Progress monitoring—The frequent and continuous measurement of a student's performance that includes interim assessments during the school year. Progress monitoring may include more frequent measurement of student performance to determine growth over shorter periods of time.

Related services—Additional support services that a child with disabilities requires, such as transportation, occupational, physical, speech pathology services, interpreters, medical services, etc.

Self-stimulatory behavior—Behaviors whose primary purpose appears to be to stimulate one's own senses. An example is rocking one's body: Many people with ASD report that some 'self-stims' may serve a regulatory function for them (including, calming, adding concentration, shutting out an overwhelming sound.) Other examples: hand-flapping, toe walking, spinning, echolalia.

Significant cognitive disability (SCD)—In order for a student to be classified as having a significant cognitive disability, **all** of the following criteria must be true:

- The student demonstrates significant cognitive deficits and poor adaptive skill levels (as determined by that student's comprehensive evaluation) that prevent participation in the standard academic curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards, even with accommodations and modifications.
- The student requires extensive direct instruction in both academic and functional skills in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of those skills.
- The student's inability to complete the standard academic curriculum is neither the result of excessive or extended absences nor is primarily the result of visual, auditory, or physical disabilities, emotional behavioral disabilities, specific learning disabilities, or social, cultural, or economic differences.

Speech-language pathologist (SLP)—A speech-language pathologist works to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive communication, and swallowing disorders in children and adults.

Specially designed instruction (SDI)—Universally required component that defines special education and stipulates that students with disabilities receive instruction that includes changes in content, methodology, and/or delivery. It is not dependent on setting and is a primary responsibility of special education professionals.

Ways to Help at Home

Eleven Things Parents Can Do to Help Their Children With Learning Disabilities

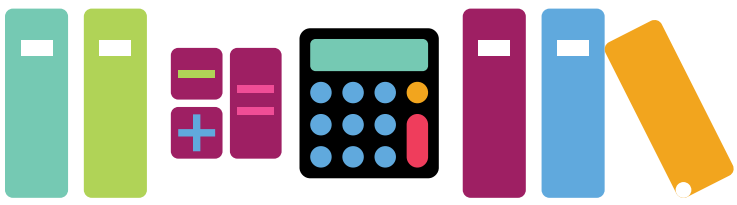
Adapted from
nfcenter.wustl.edu/family-resources/emotional-wellness/11-things-parents-can-do-to-help-their-kids-with-learning-disabilities

1 Celebrate the fact that all people have different things that they are good at and things that are harder for them. It is important to recognize and appreciate everyone's strengths and weaknesses.

2 Praise effort rather than outcome. It is important to recognize when a child is trying her or his best rather than focusing on the right or wrong answer. For example, you can say, "I really like how hard you are trying to figure out this math problem" or "I am so proud of how you are sticking with this math." This same strategy can be used for other activities (e.g., "I really like how hard you worked to catch the ball during baseball practice.").

3 Provide breaks while doing schoolwork to allow the child to relax and refocus.

4 Sandwich difficult tasks between easier tasks. For example, if your child prefers math to reading, start with a few math problems, complete the reading assignment, and then complete the preferred math task. The easy task will get the child going and finishing with a preferred task will help to end the homework session on a positive note.



5 Ask the child with the learning disability if she or he would like help with a daily task that involves academic skills before jumping in to help. The child might want to figure it out by herself or himself.

6 Model that it is okay to get things wrong. For example, if you make a mistake while writing a letter, say, "Oops. I spelled that word wrong. Oh well. I will mark it out and start over."

7 Teach children to express negative emotions in a safe way. Children with a learning disability will experience a lot of frustration about schoolwork and may be angry that they have a learning disability while a sibling does not. Acknowledge that it is okay to feel this way and provide outlets for safely expressing these emotions.

8 Treat each child as an individual and do not compare abilities across children or compare how one child was at the other child's age (e.g., "Suzie was reading when she was your age.").

9 Make time for the child's preferred activity. Children with a learning disability often require a lot of time to complete academic work. While time-consuming for the family, it is important that time is scheduled regularly for the child with a learning disability to engage in a task she or he prefers and at which she or he excels. This activity will help your child feel capable and promote self-esteem.

10 Find a hook that keeps your child interested in school. Children with a learning disability may dislike school due to frustration about schoolwork, so it is important to find something about school that the child enjoys and finds motivating to keep her or him hooked into attending school. This might involve getting your child involved in an activity at school (e.g., choir, band, student council, sports team, art club, science club, etc.), finding a meaningful way for your child to volunteer (e.g., participating in school fundraisers, serving as a library aid, etc.), or ensuring that your child has a good relationship with a peer or educator at school.

11 Find a role model who also has learning problems to show your child that success is achievable. The role model does not have to be famous. Your child might relate to a friend, neighbor, or religious leader who is willing to talk with your child about her or his learning problems. This may inspire your child to work toward achieving a lofty goal despite having learning difficulties.

Treatment for SLD often also involves multimodal teaching. If a child has trouble comprehending a subject with his or her eyes and ears alone, other senses such as touch, taste, and even smell can play a role in the learning process.

Five Ways to Lift Up Lagging Readers

Adapted from
additudemag.com/strategies-for-struggling-readers-adhd-dyslexia

1 **Seek reading support sooner than later.** If your child is lagging behind classmates in reading, don't wait. Early reading lags are predictive of future reading problems.

2 **Choose books at your child's level.** To become a strong, satisfied reader, your child needs to read books at her or his level. A good rule of thumb is this: If your child makes more than one reading error in 10 words, the reading level is likely too difficult. Ask your local librarian to help you find interesting books that are at your child's level. Research suggests that if a child who is highly interested in the topic will work harder to try to read the book.

One more thing: Don't squabble with your child if she or he insists on checking out a book beyond her or his level.

3 **Consider audiobooks.** Research has shown that reading comprehension improves when children read books and listen to them simultaneously. This is particularly true for children with short attention spans and lower reading skills. Audiobooks are not a substitute for one-on-one reading time with a parent. Reading to your child is important on multiple levels. For example, it builds reading fluency, parent-child connection, and stronger vocabulary skills.

4 **Limit screen usage.** Excessive screen-related activities, like video gaming, have been associated with lower academic performance in school. That's why it is super important for parents to monitor their child's screen time and promote alternative activities such as a trip to the library or a family bike ride.

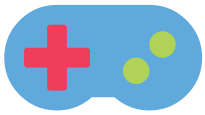
5 **Try to read to your child for a few minutes daily.** Daily reading helps teach fluency as well as build language and listening skills. Reading together is also a wonderful way to bond while stimulating your child's imagination and expanding their understanding of the world.

How to Help a Child Struggling With Math

Adapted from prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/child-struggling-with-math

- **Make math fun.** For some children, all it takes is a change in perspective to transform math from something feared into something loved. A traditional pen-and-paper approach won't always work and that's when you need to get creative.

  Tip: Consider reintroducing math to your child through a game-based lens. This can take on many forms like word problems, math books, math apps, and more.



- **Find daily applications.** Math is all around us and exists in our everyday lives, but do your children know that? Incorporating math into their day-to-day routine can help them understand—and appreciate—its relevance.

  Tip: Involve your child when it comes to activities like shopping, cooking, or gardening. Each of these real-world applications involves numbers, facts, and concepts which can help solidify knowledge and understanding, as well as enjoyment in math.

- **Practice with your child daily.** On the surface, this tip may seem as simple as sitting beside your child while she or he does homework and ensuring she or he completes it, but involvement in your child's education has many benefits.

  Tip: Set aside time to practice math for as little as 10 minutes each night. This will help reinforce what your child is learning in class and keep foundational concepts front-of-mind as teachers introduce more advanced concepts in class.

- **Identify problem areas.** If you can identify them yourself, amazing! If not, get in touch with your child's teacher for a more intimate and accurate idea of how you can help increase your child's ability to succeed.

  Tip: Working with your child's teacher, come up with an at-home action plan. This is also an excellent opportunity to share the types of learning that works best for your child at home—something your child's teacher may not know.

Focus on strengths, not just weaknesses

Your child is not defined by her or his learning disability. A learning disability represents one area of weakness, but there are many more areas of strengths. Focus on your child's gifts and talents. Your child's life—and schedule—shouldn't revolve around the learning disability. Nurture the activities where your child excels and make plenty of time for them.

- **Adopt a positive attitude.** While children can have negative attitudes toward math, your attitude toward the subject may need to change first. Most of the time, the negative attitude is simply because the students have told themselves they cannot do mathematics, they are never going to use it anyways, and so forth. School-based factors are compounded when they are reinforced at home, such as parents' negative attitudes toward mathematics.

Tip: Even if you despise math, try your best to maintain a positive mindset about it around your child. Don't simply exclaim you were never good at math either or dismiss the problem and tell your child to ask her or his teacher. Instead, encourage your child when she or he gets stuck and attempt to work through the problem together until you arrive at a solution. By practicing this, parents can become a positive influence on their child's attitude toward math. As a result, this can increase children's overall achievement and interest in math well into adulthood.

Ten Tips to Help Children with Dysgraphia

1 **Change the paper used for writing.** A person with dysgraphia experiences significant challenges in the writing process. These challenges involve the inability to organize information that is stored in memory and getting words on to paper by handwriting or typing them.

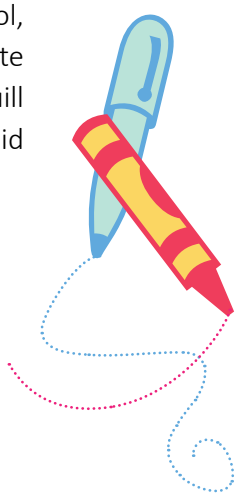
These two challenges prevent individuals with dysgraphia from understanding the spacing between letters, words, and sentences. In order to help your child visualize the space and to minimize frustration, first consider replacing your child's lined paper with graph paper or turn the lined paper sideways, with each letter getting its own block/space and leaving an empty block/space between words.

Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder characterized by writing disabilities. Specifically, the disorder causes a person's writing to be distorted or incorrect. In children, the disorder generally emerges when they are first introduced to writing. They make inappropriately sized and spaced letters, or write wrong or misspelled words, despite thorough and appropriate instruction.

You might also try using various kinds of highlighted printing papers or changing the color of the writing paper. A particular pastel color for paper may help alleviate some of the visual stress caused by white papers. The right colored paper for your child could make a positive difference, if only in the way she or he approaches the writing task.

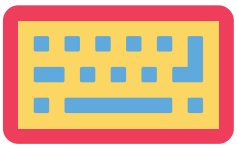
2 **Change the writing tool or instrument your child uses.** Dysgraphia affects fine motor control, and because of this, gripping a pencil or pen lightly isn't natural. Encourage your child to write as if she or he were holding a feather or take it a bit further and give her or him an actual quill and ink. Feathers are delicate and children tend to handle them much more gently than a solid object like a pencil. If a quill is not readily available, consider using chalk, as it will crumble when pressed too hard.



As for writing surfaces, the bigger, the better. Use an easel or a large sheet of white poster board. Another option is to use sliding glass doors on which to write (with washable markers or transparency pens) as they are huge, and the glass surface naturally encourages children to write much more softly than they would on other surfaces. An added benefit is that these large glass doors can easily and quickly be washed.

In addition, adding a soft, comfortable pencil grip or holder to the writing tool can provide support for a struggling writer. These types of pencil grips can be found online from various special needs sources.

3 **Teach your child to type and effectively use a computer keyboard.** To help eliminate much of the stress of repeated writing difficulties, allow your child to express her or his ideas and thoughts with a word processor or computer keyboard. Providing this option can relax and enable your child to make more progress in learning in all content areas



4 **Introduce your child to gross motor skill exercises.** Show your child a few gross motor skill exercises to strengthen the arm and hand, then incorporate these exercises into your child's daily routine. Make them fun, combining them with rhymes or your child's favorite kind of music.

5 **Introduce fine motor control exercises.** Introduce fine motor control exercises to strengthen the fingers and wrist and add them to your child's daily activities. By combining these exercises with some relaxing instrumental music selections, your child may relax a bit more and be able to concentrate on the exercises more successfully.

6 **Consider bypassing printing and proceed directly to cursive writing.** The move to cursive writing, too, can significantly reduce the levels of frustration experienced by many with dysgraphia, allowing them to relax and become better able to write. This might be a temporary bypass of printing, or it could become more permanent, depending on the results observed with the cursive writing.

7 **Develop and utilize narration or speaking skills whenever possible.** Dysgraphia causes some individuals to experience a block between thinking something and writing it. Narration is an excellent tool for helping your child record her or his thoughts. Saying letters and words aloud as they are recorded on a small tech device (e.g., mp3 player, digital recorder, etc.) or with a text-to-speech program will also be beneficial when it is time to write down those words. A handy list will have already been created.

8 **Work together to evaluate and change your writing goals as needed.** Discuss at least once per week about how the accommodations are working to help your child. Even if your child is young, she or he can provide valuable input as to what is working and what is not. Your child may even have additional ideas to add or request, especially after you have begun to show her or him just a few helpful strategies or accommodations.

9 **Demonstrate and use large air writing techniques.** Demonstrate and use large air writing of letters to develop a more efficient motor memory for the sequence of steps necessary in making each letter. You might also introduce sand writing, which involves using the finder to write out letters in a sided tray of sand. These multisensory approaches often yield very positive results.

10 **Make use of other multisensory techniques.** Make use of a variety of multisensory techniques to further develop handwriting skills. These can include:

- Writing trays
- Using Ziploc sensory writing bags
- Adding smells and textures to paint or glue
- Forming letters using modeling clay
- Practicing writing in dirt or sand
- Forming letters with everyday objects
- Writing with shaving cream

Tips to Expand Your Child's Oral Language

Reading and talking with children plays an important role in developing their vocabulary. Consider using the following tips at home to expand your child's oral language:

1 Create or learn songs to expand your child's vocabulary. Use songs to describe your daily routines, periodically adding new verses that include new vocabulary words.

2 Read stories such as The Three Bears or Three Billy Goats Gruff. Act out the stories using small, medium, and large stuffed animals. Find other large, medium, and small items in your home and ask your child to classify the items according to size.

3 Play "I Spy" with your child using words that describe an object's position. ("I spy something on the carpet, in front of the couch, next to the dog.") Expand this activity by playing "Simon Says" using directional words ("Simon says put your hand above your head.").

4 Keep a journal. Spend some time every night discussing your activities from the day. Introduce new vocabulary words by elaborating on the day's activities. Write down your child's impressions of the day.

Successful Parent-Teacher Communication

Adapted from Parent-Teacher Communication: Strategies for Effective Parent Inclusion & Engagement | American University—soeonline.american.edu/blog/parent-teacher-communication

Communication is key to a successful inclusion classroom. Parents, general education teachers, and special educators can try the following tactics for successful parent-teacher communication:

- **Regular in-person communication**—This type of communication works great for parents who typically drop off and pick up their children from school.

- **Parent-teacher conferences**—This type of communication is less consistent, but parents and teachers can schedule meetings to discuss a student's work and future goals.
- **Phone calls and emails**—Parents with busy work or personal schedules may not have the opportunity to go to the school or schedule conferences. These parents may be easier to reach via phone or email. Phone calls and emails can also be used by teachers to regularly communicate with parents between conferences.
- **Text messages—**Some teachers use mass text messages or special messaging apps to communicate with parents. Several text services, such as Remind, cater specifically to teachers.
- **Open houses**—Most schools host annual open houses where parents can visit their children's classrooms. This allows teachers to meet parents for the first time or meet a second parent who may not be in regular communication.
- **Parent-teacher associations (PTAs)**—Parent-teacher associations allow parents and teachers to establish ongoing relationships and help make decisions for the school.

- **Homework handouts and newsletters**—Teachers can create handouts containing information about homework and other tasks for students to take home. Teachers can also write weekly or monthly newsletters to update parents on what is going on in the classroom and how they can participate.
- **Class websites**—Teachers can create classroom websites to post announcements, homework, and reminders to help ensure they don't get lost in communication between the classroom and home. Similar methods of communication include social media sites or learning management platforms such as ClassDojo.

Resources

- **International Dyslexia Association**—Provides information about dyslexia, including fact sheets, infographics, frequently asked questions, a provider directory, diagnosis, treatment, etc.
  dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-at-a-glance

- **Learning Disabilities Association of America**—Provides a wealth of information on understanding learning disabilities, negotiating the special education process, and helping your child and yourself.
  ldaamerica.org/parents

- **Miami-Dade County Public Schools Inclusion Team**—Provides resources and helpful information for teachers of students with disabilities, particularly those identified with a SLD and/or who receive special education services within the general education classroom setting.
  sldinclusion.com/specific-learning-disabilities

- **The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education**—A service-oriented office that seeks to improve the education experience for children with disabilities
  mdek12.org/OSE

- **The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Student Intervention Services**—Coordinates and manages the review and awarding of student dyslexia scholarships, the RFP process for the award of the dyslexia grants to districts, and the selection process of a State Board of Education-approved list of dyslexia screeners. The intervention staff provides professional development and technical assistance related to dyslexia to parents, teachers, and administrators.
  mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/Dyslexia

- **Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center**—A project of the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, the center's staff is comprised of dedicated parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, and professionals who care about the future of all children in Mississippi.
  mspti.org/resources.asp

- **U.S. Department of Education**—Their mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.
  ed.gov

- **U.S. Department of Education-Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**—The mission of the Office of Special Education Programs is to lead the nation's efforts to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families, ensuring access to fair, equitable, and high-quality education and services.
  ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers

MDE-specific resources include:

- **General resources for parents:**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources

- **Parent Engagement and Support**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families
  ☎ 601.359.3498

- **Procedural Safeguards: Your Family's Special Education Rights**
  mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution

Notes

Acknowledgments