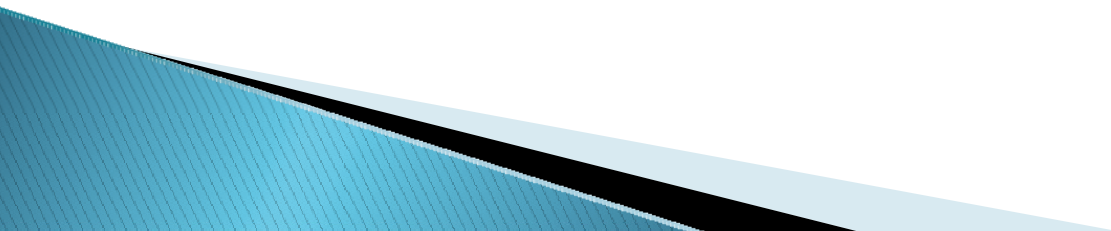


Learning Disabilities

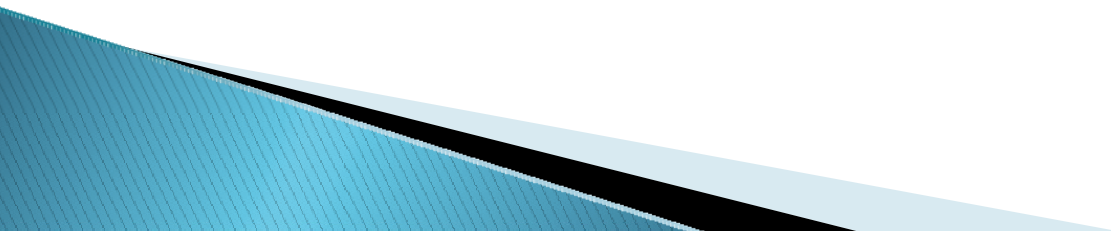
Liz Latham
EDU 4209

Learning Disability

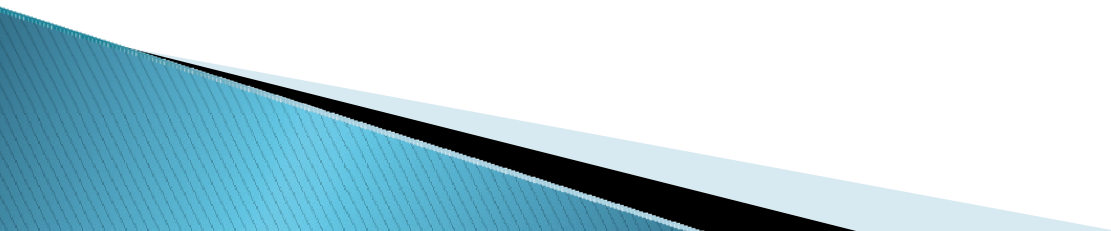
- ▶ Is a neurological disorder that affects one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. The disability may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations.
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Is a learning disability a problem with intelligence or motivation?

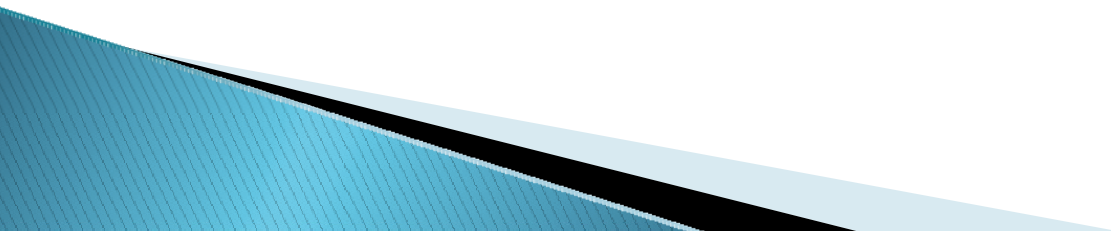
No. Kids with learning disabilities are generally of average or above average intelligence. Their brains are simply wired differently. This difference affects how they process and receive information. There is generally a gap in a person's potential and actual achievement in one or more areas of academics.



Are all learning disabilities the same?

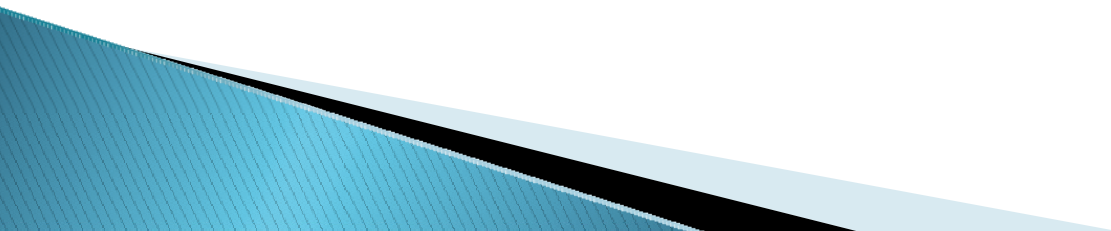
- ▶ No. Learning disabilities affect every person differently, and they differ at various stages of development. Learning disabilities can range from mild to severe. Some people can have more than one learning disability. In addition, about one-third of people with a learning disability also have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder(AD/HD).
- 

What causes learning disabilities?

- ▶ Experts aren't exactly sure, but they think they may be due to:
 - ▶ Heredity – Often learning disabilities run in a family. Talk to relatives about their learning habits and their children's learning.
 - ▶ Problems during pregnancy – illness, low birth weight, premature,...
 - ▶ Incidents after birth – head injuries, poor nutrition, toxins,...
- 

Signs and symptoms of learning disabilities and disorders

Children without learning disabilities may experience some of these difficulties at various times, and not all children with learning disabilities exhibit all the symptoms. The time for concern is when there is a consistent unevenness in your child's ability to master certain skills.



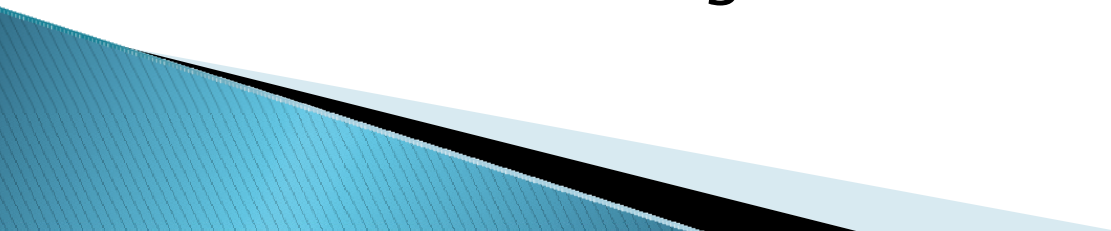
Preschool signs and symptoms

- Problems pronouncing words
 - Trouble finding the right word
 - Difficulty rhyming
 - Trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes, days of the week
 - Difficulty following directions or learning routines
 - Difficulty controlling crayons, pencils, and scissors or coloring within the lines
 - Trouble with buttons, zippers, snaps, learning to tie shoes
- 

Grades K–4 signs and symptoms

- ▶ Trouble learning the connection between letters and sounds
 - ▶ Unable to blend sounds to make words
 - ▶ Confuses basic words when reading
 - ▶ Consistently misspells words and makes frequent reading errors
 - ▶ Trouble learning basic math concepts
 - ▶ Difficulty telling time and remembering sequences
 - ▶ Slow to learn new skills
- 

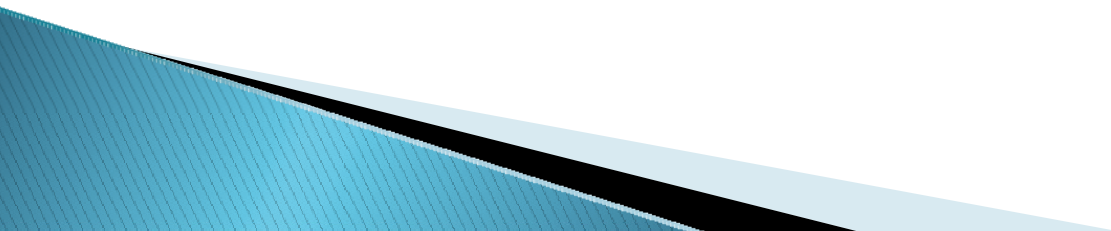
Grades 5–8 signs and symptoms

- ▶ Difficulty with reading comprehension or math skills
 - ▶ Trouble with open-ended test questions and word problems
 - ▶ Dislikes reading and writing; avoids reading aloud
 - ▶ Spells the same word differently in a single document
 - ▶ Poor organizational skills (bedroom, homework, desk is messy and disorganized)
 - ▶ Trouble following classroom discussions and expressing thoughts aloud
 - ▶ Poor handwriting
- 

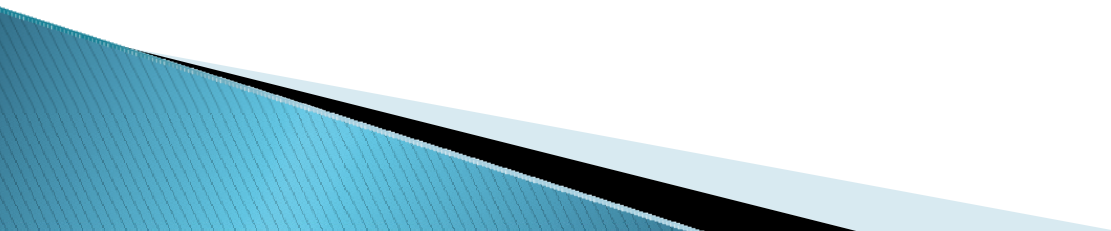
Types of Learning Disabilities



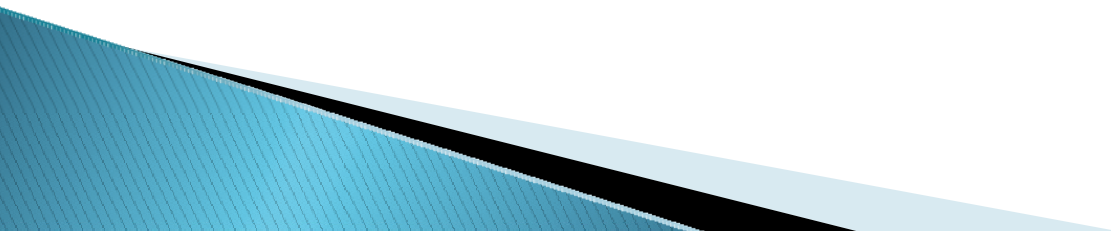
Learning disabilities in reading (dyslexia)

- ▶ Basic reading problems – difficulty understanding the relationship between sounds, letters and words
 - ▶ Reading comprehension – inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs
 - ▶ Reading speed and fluency
 - ▶ General vocabulary skills
- 

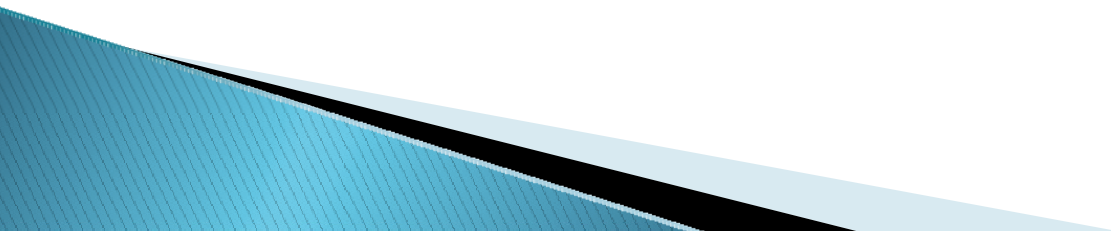
Learning disabilities in math (dyscalculia)

- ▶ Computation
 - ▶ Remembering math facts
 - ▶ Concepts of time and money
 - ▶ Counting principles (counting by 2s or 5s)
 - ▶ Organization of numbers
- 

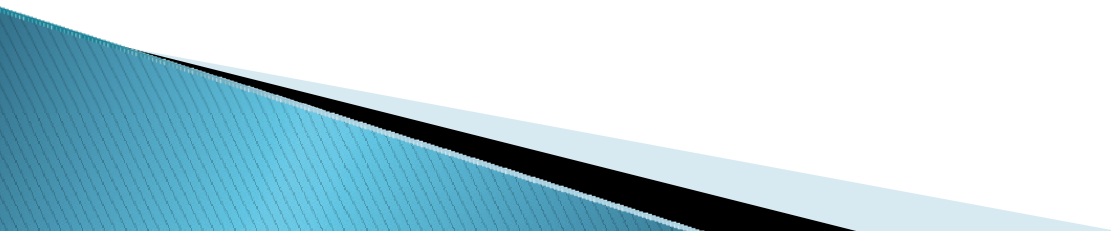
Learning disabilities in writing (dysgraphia)

- ▶ Can involve the physical act of writing or the mental activity of comprehending and synthesizing information
 - ▶ Neatness and consistency of writing
 - ▶ Accurately copying letters and words
 - ▶ Spelling consistency
 - ▶ Writing organization and coherence
- 

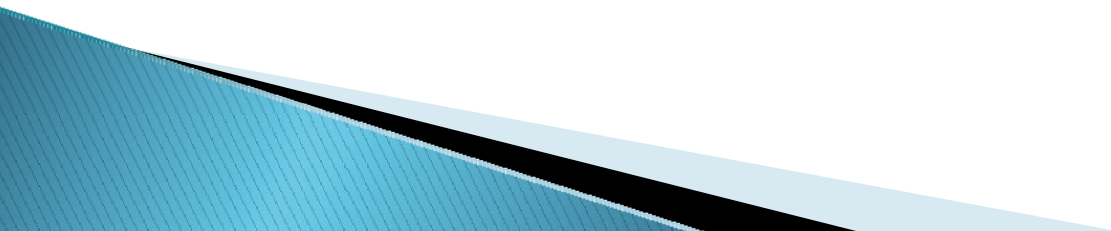
Learning disabilities in motor skills(dyspraxia)

- ▶ Difficulty with fine motor skills – cutting, writing, drawing
 - ▶ Difficulty with gross motor skills – running, jumping, skipping
 - ▶ Difficulty with physical activities that require hand–eye coordination, like holding a pencil
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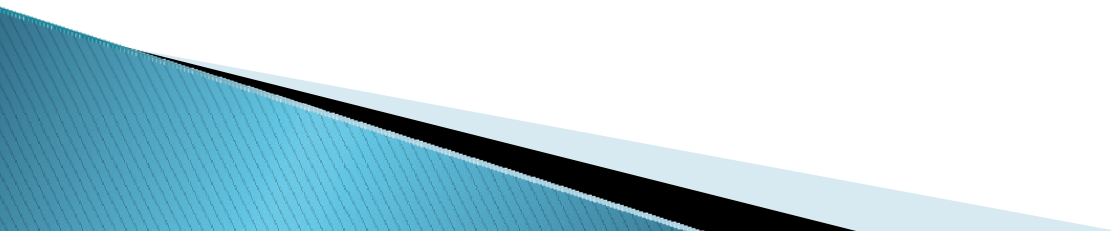
Learning disabilities in language (aphasia/dysphasia)

- ▶ Problems with verbal language skills – ability to retell a story
 - ▶ Difficulty with speech fluency
 - ▶ Difficulty with understanding the meaning of words
 - ▶ Difficulty with parts of speech and directions
- 

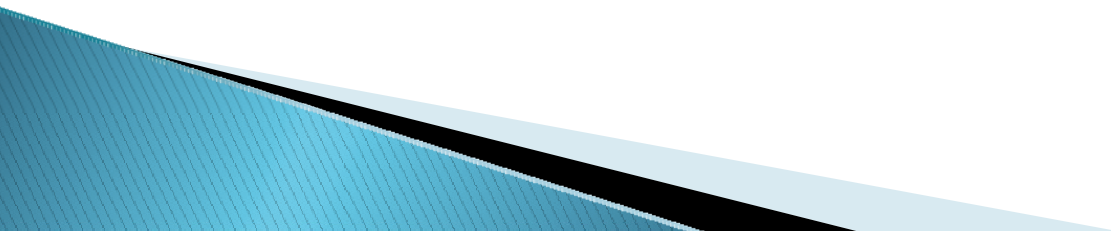
Auditory Processing Disorder

- ▶ Difficulty interpreting auditory information
 - ▶ Inability to distinguish subtle differences in sound, or hearing sounds at the wrong speed make it difficult to sound out words
 - ▶ Trouble with reading and language
- 

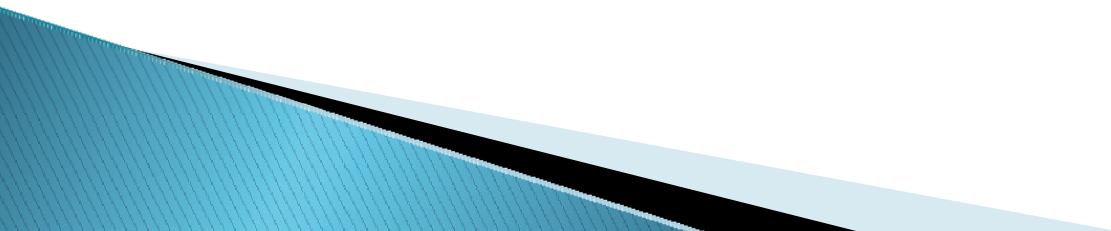
Visual Processing Disorder

- ▶ Difficulty interpreting visual information
 - ▶ Missing subtle differences in shapes, reversing letters or numbers, skipping words or lines
 - ▶ Misperceiving depth or distance
 - ▶ Having difficulty with hand-eye coordination
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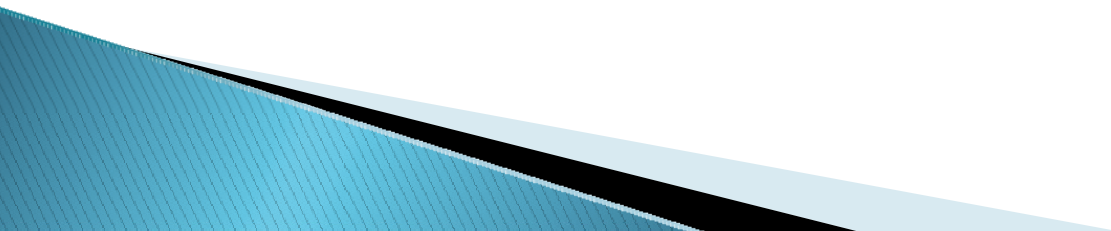
What can be done?

- ▶ Learning disabilities are not always easy to diagnose.
 - ▶ Check with your child's school or physician
 - ▶ Don't let anyone tell you to “wait and see” or “don't worry about it” if your child is struggling.
 - ▶ Medications do not help learning disabilities
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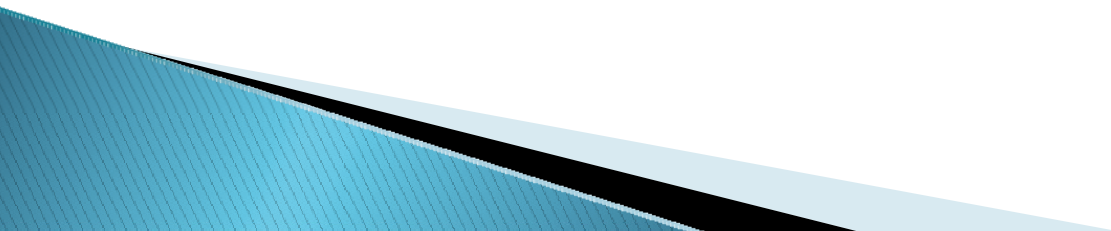
Start with your child's school

- ▶ Ask for an SST (Student Study Team)
 - ▶ Response to Intervention (RTI) will most likely be the next step. Accommodations to help your student may be put into place
 - ▶ Help your child at home, inform yourself about the suspected learning disability
 - ▶ Work with the school to see if RTI is helping, keep your own records of how your child is performing at home
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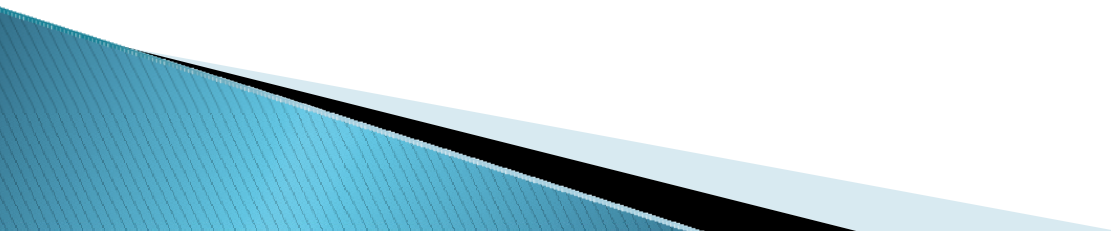
What if RTI doesn't work?

- ▶ Request for your child to be evaluated for Special Education (Under IDEA, you have the right to ask for an evaluation)
 - ▶ This must be in writing
 - ▶ Make sure you have evidence that your child is struggling, keep school work that shows the suspected learning disability
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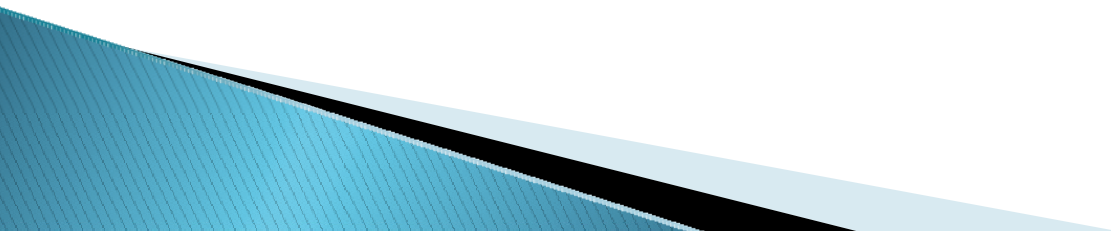
What to put in the letter

- ▶ Date
 - ▶ Your name and current address
 - ▶ The school your child attends
 - ▶ Address the letter to the administrator (it helps to send copies to your child's teacher, the Special Education department and the school psychologist)
 - ▶ Your child's name, grade and age
 - ▶ The academic difficulty that your child is experiencing, make sure you have examples
 - ▶ Questions you may have about the process
- 

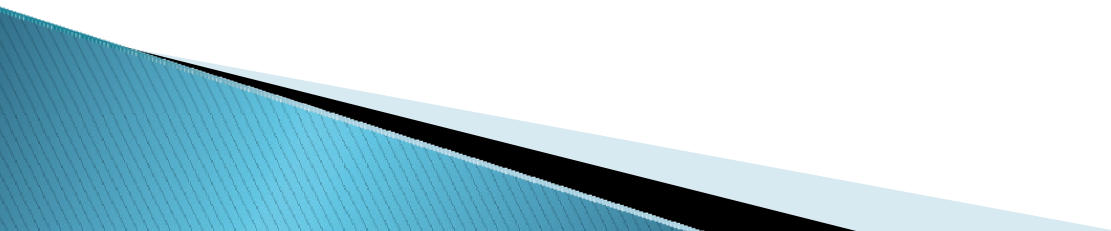
What now?

- ▶ Within 30 days of the request, the district must initiate the evaluation process
 - ▶ The district then has 90 days to complete the evaluation and hold a meeting to determine your child's eligibility
 - ▶ Make sure that you receive notice that the district has processed your request
- 

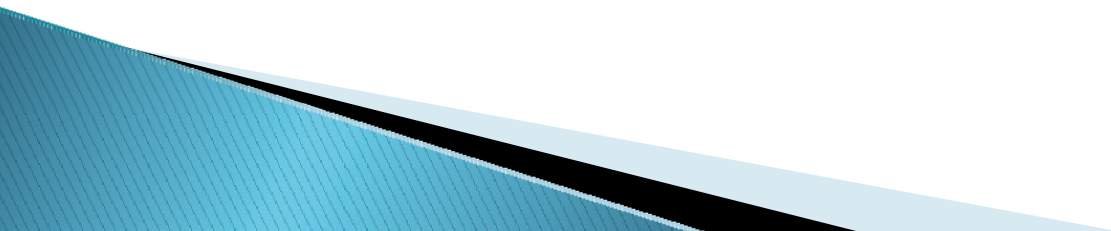
If your child is eligible

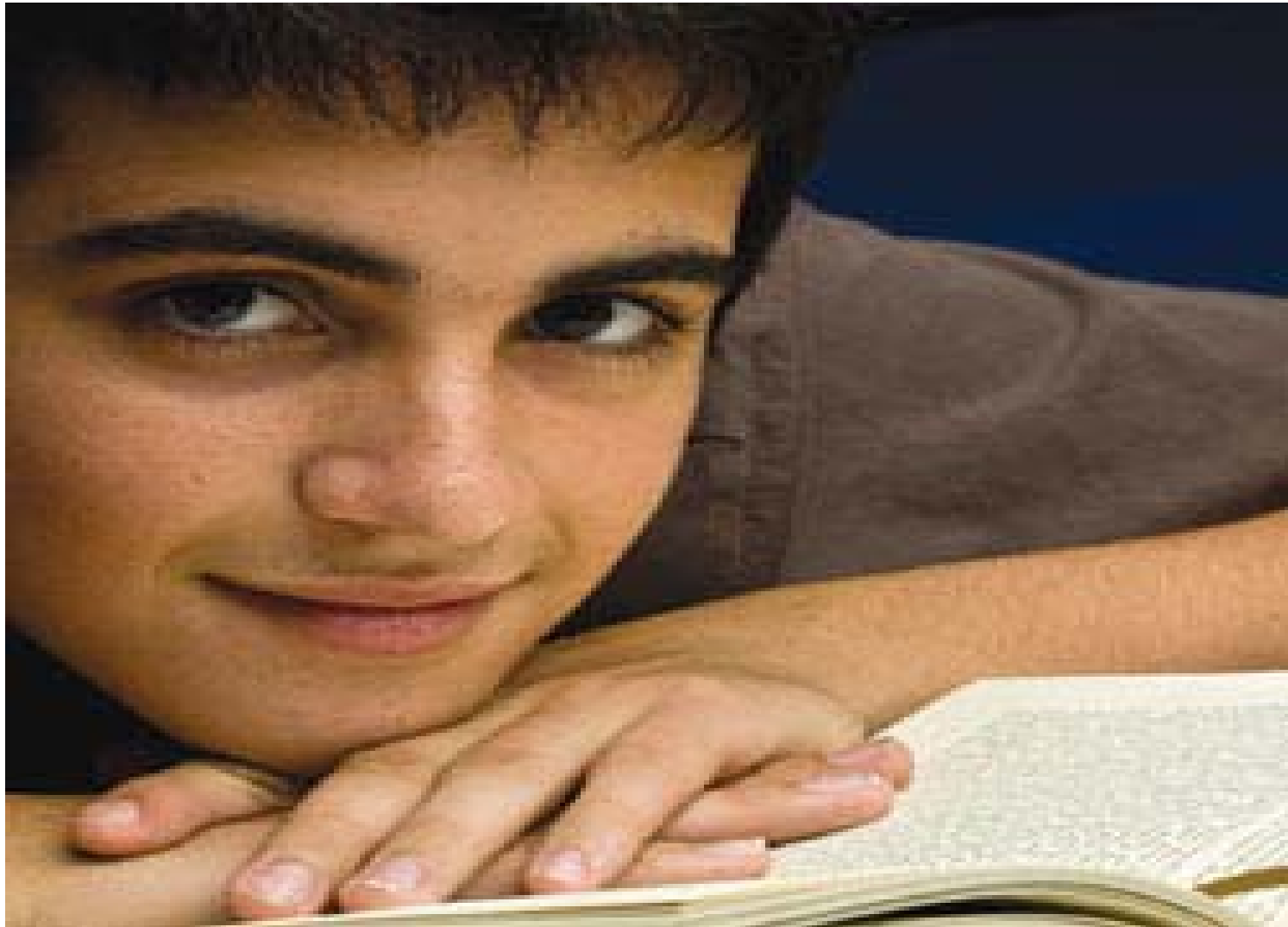
- ▶ An IEP is developed by the multidisciplinary team (general education teacher(s), education specialist (SPED), school administrator, school psychologist, parents, student if mature enough). Everyone is part of the team and communication is essential for the success of the student
- 

What if my child is ineligible for special educational services?

- ▶ Ask why they are not eligible and have the team explain their findings. Even if your child does not qualify, the test results will be beneficial for understanding the way your child learns
 - ▶ Ask what the school can offer to help your student succeed
 - ▶ Inquire about a 504 plan
 - ▶ Inform yourself about the best way(s) for your child to learn
- 

Support your child

- ▶ You know your child best, support their education
 - ▶ If they have a learning disability work with the IEP team to ensure the success of your student
 - ▶ If your child does not have a learning disability, but still struggles, ask for advice on how you can help them succeed
 - ▶ You are your child's best advocate
- 



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Learning Disabilities in Children, Kemp MA, Gina, Smith, M & Segal, J., January 2012.

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