

Writing can be a way to express your thoughts and emotions, and even plan out your future. But often, some children — and adults — struggle with writing because of a learning disability. Writing can also be a source of anxiety for a lot of people, affecting their self-esteem and motivation and posing obstacles to learning.

There are a variety of learning disabilities that typically begin in childhood, including those that affect attention, graphomotor skills (writing), memory, language formulation, and critical thinking. These difficulties can arise from abuse in early childhood, physical or mental trauma, accidental injuries, genetics, prenatal or neonatal factors, or harmful environmental exposures. Better understanding and identifying these difficulties can help children (and adults) develop strategies to address them.

With attention difficulties, you may notice that a person makes careless mistakes, has poor planning skills, is easily distracted, or becomes mentally fatigued with writing or reading.

A person with graphomotor difficulties has difficulty writing words and letters, may write in short phrases



SEVERAL LEARNING DISABILITIES CAN IMPACT WRITING SKILLS

BY TONISHA MELVIN

rather than long sentences, may have difficulty using a pencil or pen, or is unable to write words in a fluid manner and writes slower than usual.

A person with memory difficulties will have word-finding problems in conversation, have frequent grammar or punctuation errors, and misspell words.

A person with language difficulty may frequently mispronounce words or have difficulty understanding the meaning of words, use words incorrectly, or have a limited vocabulary.

Lastly, a person with prioritization or critical thinking challenges may exhibit difficulty with organization of ideas, generating an authentic thought or elaborating on an idea, being creative, or thinking through a problem.

Many people become discouraged with writing because of insecurities from their previous experiences. After identifying the type of difficulty your child may be experiencing, remember to encourage and be patient. Be interested in what intrigues your child, give suggestions, and be as positive as possible at all times when discussing goals.

It is important to find creative ways to keep children excited about writing so that they develop individual skills. At times, they may need extra help from a professional. Using these interventions can help children develop effective coping skills, gain strength, and understand that the only way to get good at writing is to write.



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