The background of the slide is a green chalkboard. Two pieces of pink chalk are lying on the board, one standing upright and one lying horizontally. There are some faint white chalk markings on the board, including a large 'A' and some curved lines. The title text is centered in the upper half of the board.

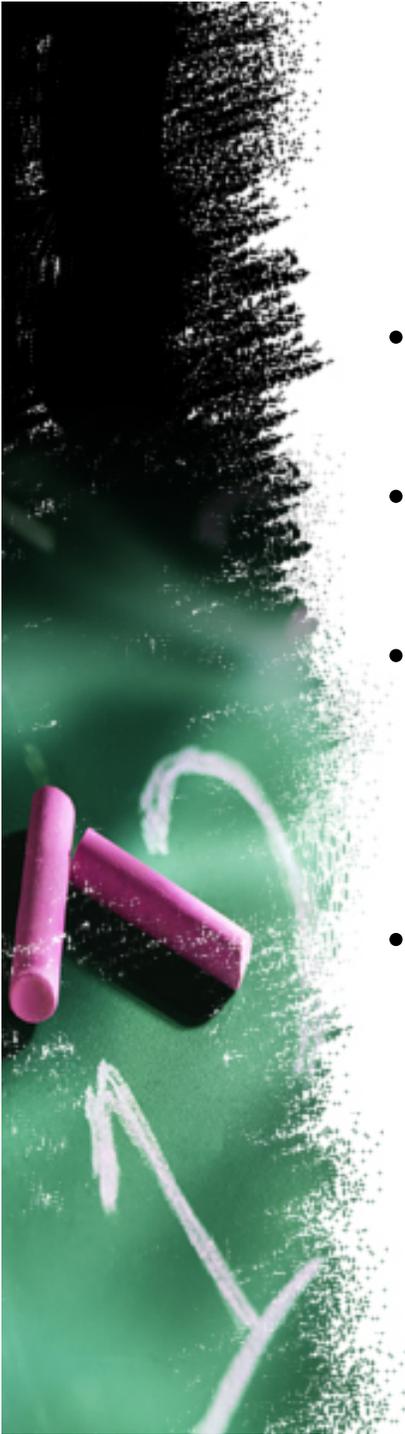
Understanding Learning Difficulties for our Students

**Lori-Jane Dolan
Learning Disabilities Teacher - Consultant**



Lori- Jane Dolan

- Born and raised in West Caldwell; continue to live in this community with my husband and daughter. Married for 14 years and mother for 9. I have been an LDT-C for the Florham Park School District for 10 years. Prior to that I taught Kindergarten and Second Grade for 10 years in New Milford School District.
 - *Bachelors degree in Elementary Education (Susquehanna University);*
 - *Masters degree in Learning Disabilities (Montclair State University);*
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Agenda for today's workshop

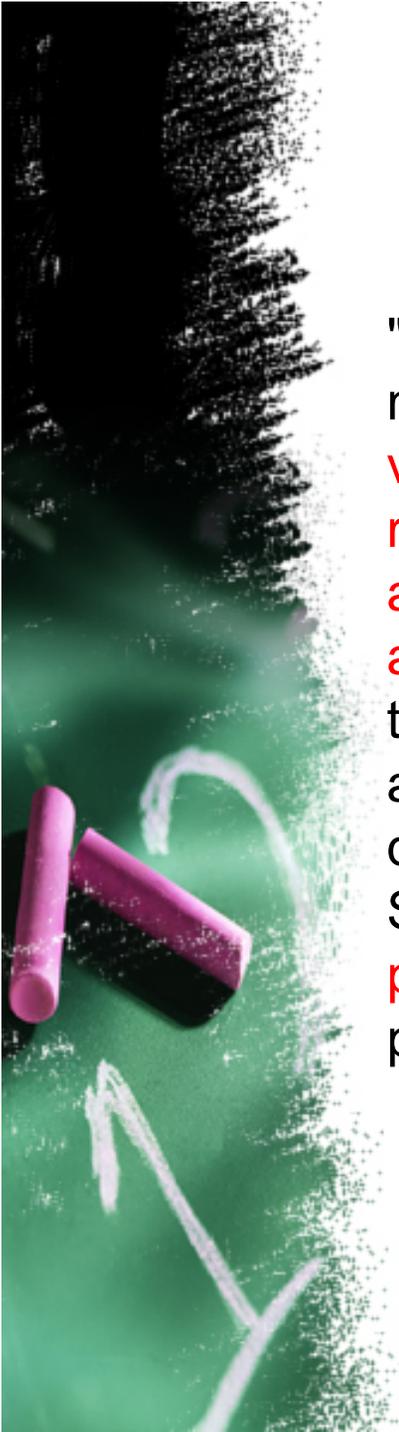
- Basic overview of some of the learning issues our students face.
- Look at how students are viewing themselves as learners and what they see as struggles in the academic world.
- Accommodations and strategies that can be used through instruction,
 - *assessments and remediation of skills to help students better succeed and navigate today's standards.*
- Open forum discussion
 - *Questions and Answers*



Definition of Specific Learning Disability (NJ State Code 6A:14-3.5)

“Specific learning disability” corresponds to “perceptually impaired” and means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in **understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an 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.

- A specific learning disability can be determined when a severe discrepancy is found between the student’s **current achievement and intellectual ability** in one or more of the following areas:
 - Basic reading skills*
 - Reading comprehension*
 - Oral expression*
 - Listening comprehension*
 - Mathematic calculation*
 - Mathematical problem solving*
 - Written expression*
 - Reading fluency*

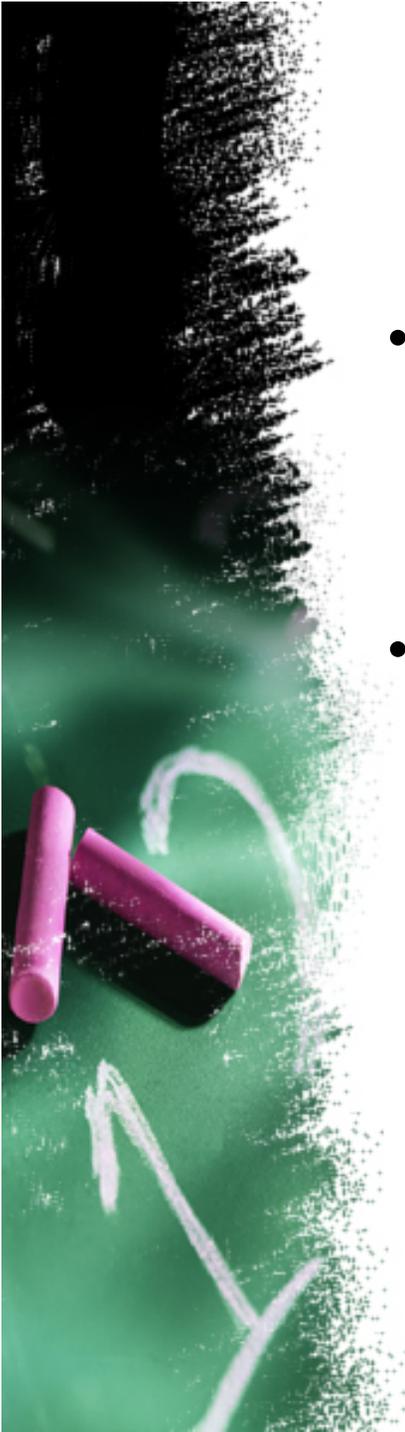


Definition of Other Health Impaired (NJ State Code 6A:14-3.5)

"Other health impaired" corresponds to "chronically ill" and means a **disability characterized by having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness with respect to the educational environment, due to chronic or acute health problems, such as attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**, a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes or any other medical condition, such as Tourette Syndrome, **that adversely affects a student's educational performance**. A medical assessment documenting the health problem is required.

Learning Disabilities

- Learning disabilities are usually not diagnosed until students have been in school for about 2 years, but there are early signs that parents may notice:
- Developmental delays (developmental milestones) in any of the following can suggest the potential for learning disabilities:
 - *Gross Motor*
 - *Fine Motor*
 - *Communication*
 - *Cognitive Skills*
 - *Social and Emotional*





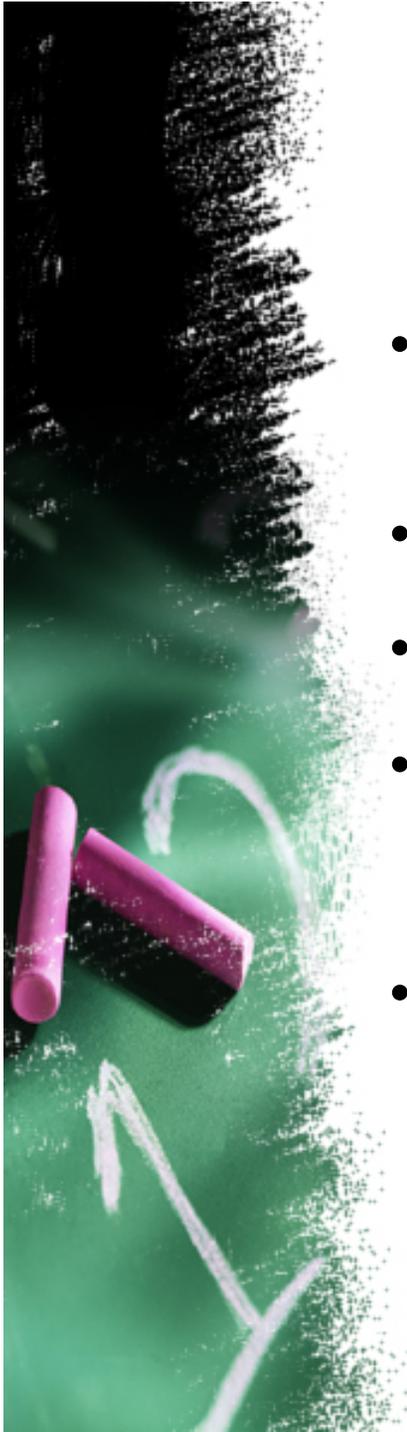
Learning Disabilities (continued)

- Pediatricians will examine to check vital signs in children's response to various stimuli. They will check :
 - *Physical development*
 - *Cognitive Functioning*
 - *Vision*
 - *Speech and Language*
- After the first few months of preschool, schedule a meeting – ask if child is on track with development compared to other children.



Signs that a 3rd Grader may have learning difficulties

- Does not connect letters and sounds;
- Cannot read grade-level text;
- Cannot understand what he reads;
- Cannot understand number concepts;
- Does not understand that numerals represent quantities;
- Cannot form letters or remember which letters stand for which sounds;
- Has difficulty following directions; even with help
- Has poor memory

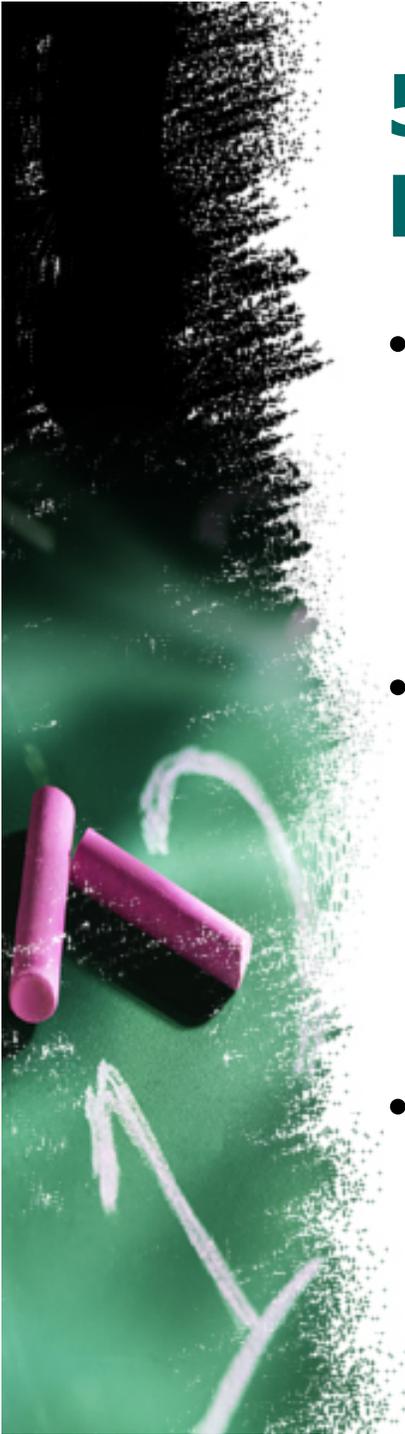


- Has difficulty communicating with peers and adults;
 - Cannot repeat information or copy items;
 - Has difficulty following lines when cutting; and
 - Has difficulty with attention and behavior
-
- Keep notes of each of these areas and document if interventions are helping or the student is still struggling and not demonstrating progress

Understood.org

- About the website: <http://www.understood.org>
Parents want the best for their children. We do, too. For the first time ever, 15 nonprofit organizations have joined forces to support parents of the one in five children with learning and attention issues throughout their journey.
With the right support, parents can help children unlock their strengths and reach their full potential. With state-of-the-art technology, personalized resources, free daily access to experts, a secure online community, practical tips and more, Understood aims to be that support.





5 Common Techniques for Helping Struggling Students

- Differentiated Instruction – Teachers change and switch around what students need to learn, how they'll learn it and how to get the material across to them
- Scaffolding – This is a method that breaks learning into chunks. Teacher form a bridge between what students already know and what they cannot do on their own. These bridges are referred to as “scaffolds”
- Graphic organization – A teacher draws a picture to map out thoughts and ideas.



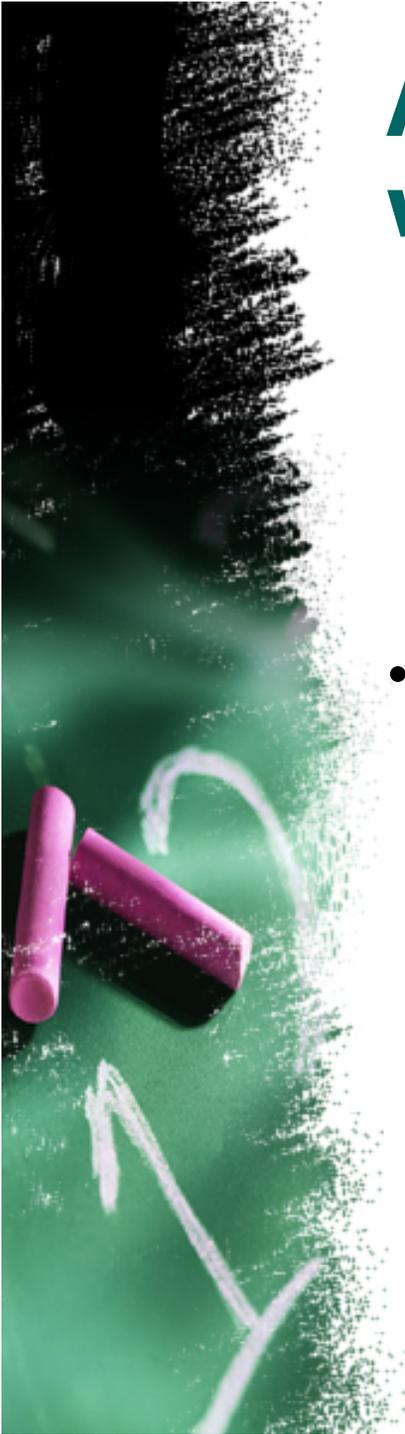
5 Common Techniques for Helping Struggling Students (cont.)

- Mnemonics – Students use special phrases to help them remember information. **Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally** is used to remember operations in math: Parentheses; Exponents; Multiply; Divide; Add and Subtract.
 - *Fantastic site or resource – Learning Toolbox*
 - <http://coe.jmu.edu/Learningtoolbox/>



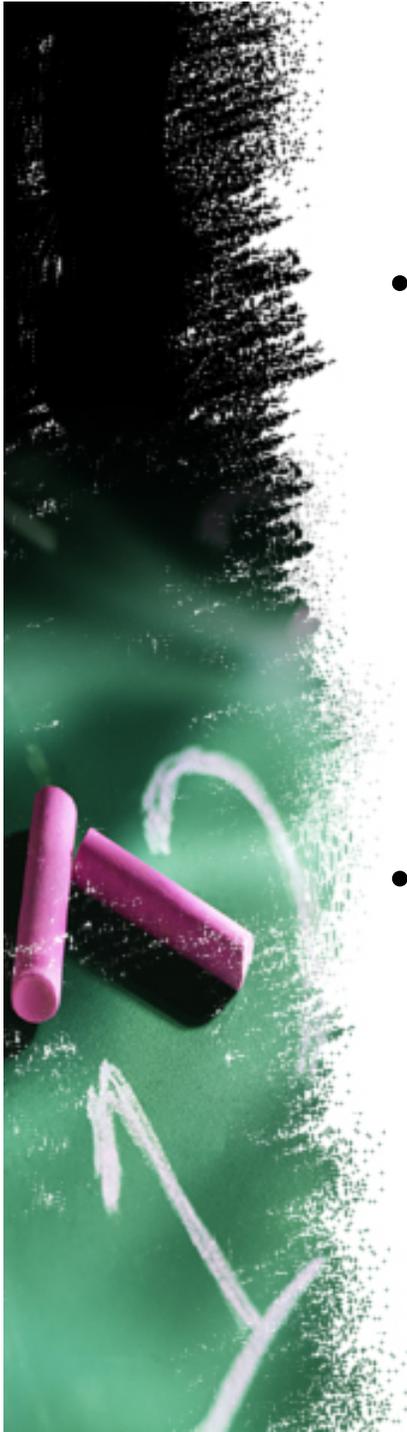
5 Common Techniques for Helping Struggling Students (cont.)

- **Multisensory Instruction** – This method links what students see, what they hear, how they move, and what they feel. When students learn using all of their senses, they remember the material better.
 - *Math teachers might use base ten blocks and two-sided counters so that students learn through touch. Drawing might help students learn new vocabulary by capturing the meaning of a word and sketching it.*
 - *Each child learns differently. Teachers will use many creative methods to teach each child.*

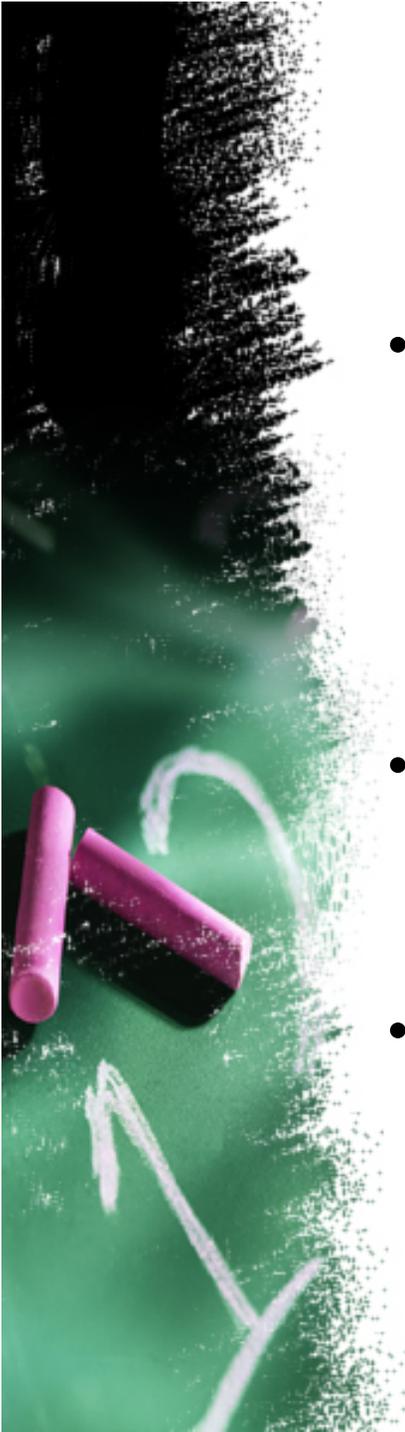


Accommodations for Students with LD

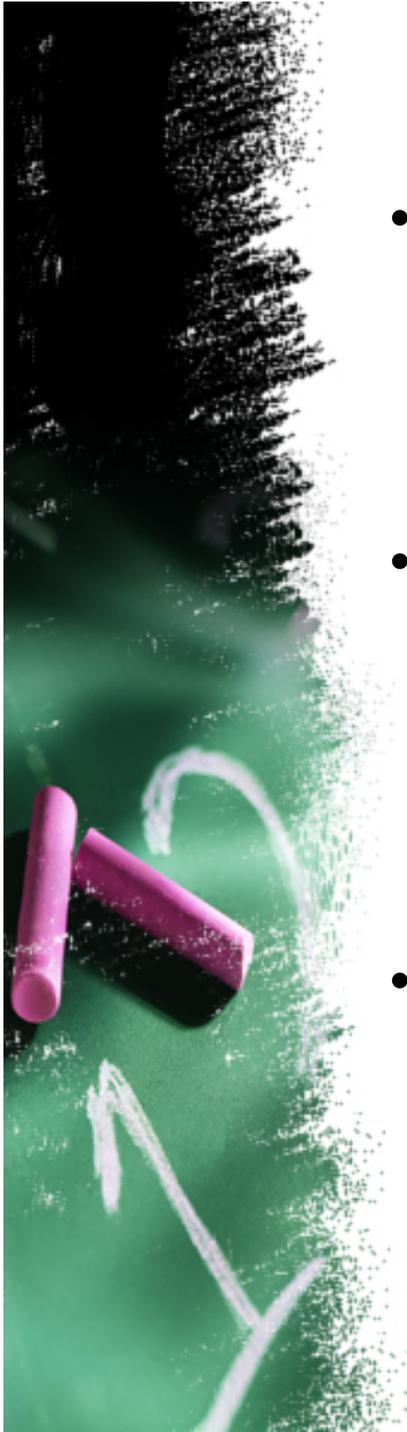
- *Achieving equal access through accommodations and universal design*
- *Functional limitations that may require accommodations:*
 - **Auditory perception & processing** – Difficulty processing information communicated through lectures or class discussions. He/she may have difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in sound or knowing which sounds to attend to



- **Visual perception & processing** – Difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in
 - *shape (e.g., the letters b and d),*
 - *deciding what images to focus on when multiple images are present,*
 - *skip words or repeat sections when reading, or*
 - *misjudge depth or distance.*
- He/she may have difficulty processing information communicated via
 - *overhead projection,*
 - *through video,*
 - *in graphs and charts,*
 - *by email or within web-based distance learning courses.*



- **Information processing speed** – Process auditory and visual information more slowly than the average person. He/she may be a slow reader because of the need for additional time to decode and comprehend written material
- **Abstract reasoning** – Difficulty understanding the context of subjects such as philosophy and logic, which require high level reasoning skills
- **Memory** – Difficulty with the storing or recalling of information during short or long time periods



- **Spoken and written language-** Student may have difficulty with spelling (e.g. mixing up letters) or with speaking (e.g., reversing words or phrases)
- **Mathematical calculation** – Difficulty manipulating numbers, may sometimes invert numbers, and may have difficulty converting problems described in words to mathematical expression
- **Executive functioning** – Difficulty breaking larger projects into small sub-projects, creating and following a timeline, and meeting deadlines.

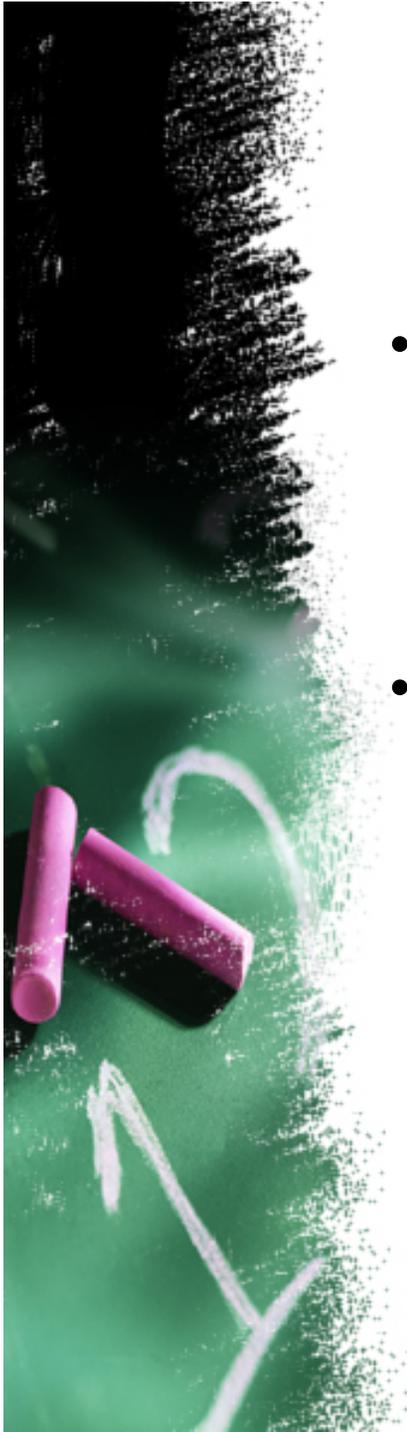


Strategies for Early Childhood Teachers

- **Integrated Technology-** Tapping into student's interest and strengthening their technical skills, all while providing enriching learning opportunities
- **Cooperative Learning Structure** – Use student –centered approach. Cooperative learning sparks engagement in classrooms by encouraging interaction among the students themselves.



- **Differentiated Instruction** - There are three main learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
 - *Teachers can also differentiate by matching assignments to readiness levels,*
 - *Offering appropriate intervention or extension activities as required.*
 - *Allowing children to select activities based on areas of interest is another great way to differentiate.*
 - *Offering choices is an excellent motivator for kids.*
 - *Small-group work is one of the most effective ways to meet the needs of diverse learners in large class settings.*



- **Goal setting** – Involving children in the goal setting process is an excellent way to encourage them to take ownership of their learning.
- **Cross- Curriculum teaching** – In contrast to the traditional teaching of subjects in isolation, teaching multiple subjects simultaneously can help student go much deeper in learning concepts and skills.



Accommodating All Children in Early Childhood Classrooms

- **Instructional grouping or arrangement:**
 - *Large group, small group, cooperative learning groups, peer partners, 1:1 instruction; independent tasks*
- **Lesson Format:**
 - *Whole group discussions, games, role playing, activity-based lessons; experimental lessons; demonstration; thematic lesson organization*
- **Curricular goals and learning outcome:**
 - *Ex. If children are working on a classification concept by sorting blocks, a child with a disability could participate in the same activity but focus of reaching, grasping, and releasing skills.*



Accommodating (continued)

- **Teaching strategies:**
 - *Simplifying directions, addition of visual information, use of concrete materials, sequencing learning tasks from easy to hard, repeating opportunities to practice skills, changes in the schedule of reinforcement, elaboration or shaping of responses, verbal prompts and/or direct physical assistance.*
- **Adaptations to the method of responding:**
 - *Use of augmentative communication system, eye gaze, and demonstrations may better allow a child to demonstrate his/her skills.*



Accommodations (continued)

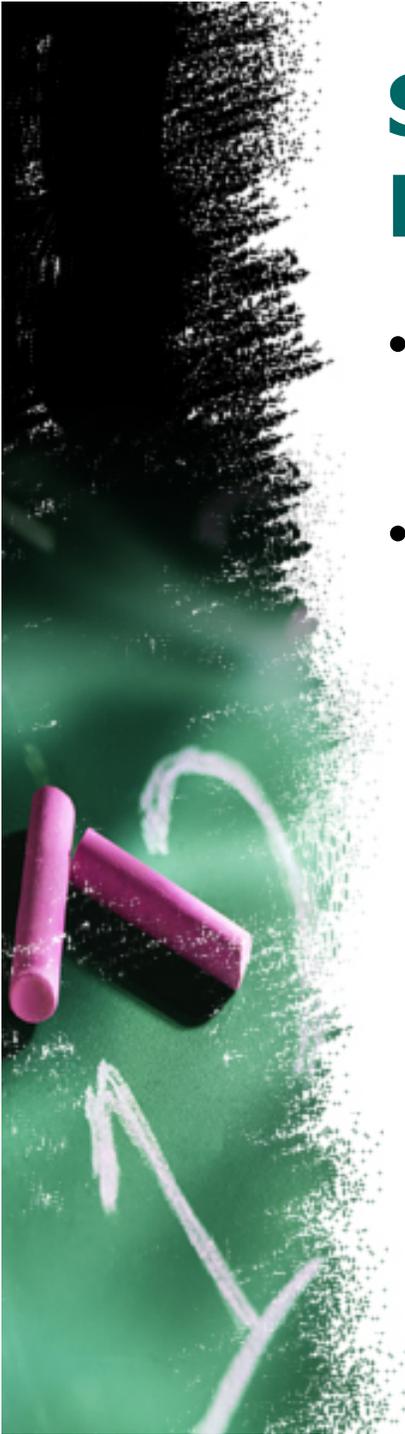
- **Environmental conditions:**
 - *Changes in lighting, noise level, visual and auditory input, physical arrangement of the room or equipment, and accessibility of materials are important considerations.*
- **Level of personal assistance:**
 - *Need for assistance may range from periodic spot checks to close continuous supervision.*
- **Alternative activity:**
 - *This curricular adaptation should be used as a last choice when the above conditions cannot be used to meet a child's needs*



Types of Accommodations

Accommodations don't lower the expectations for what kids learn. Accommodations can make a difference in how well children perform in school. Accommodations need to be tailored to the student's needs

- » Presentation
- » Response
- » Setting
- » Timing and Scheduling



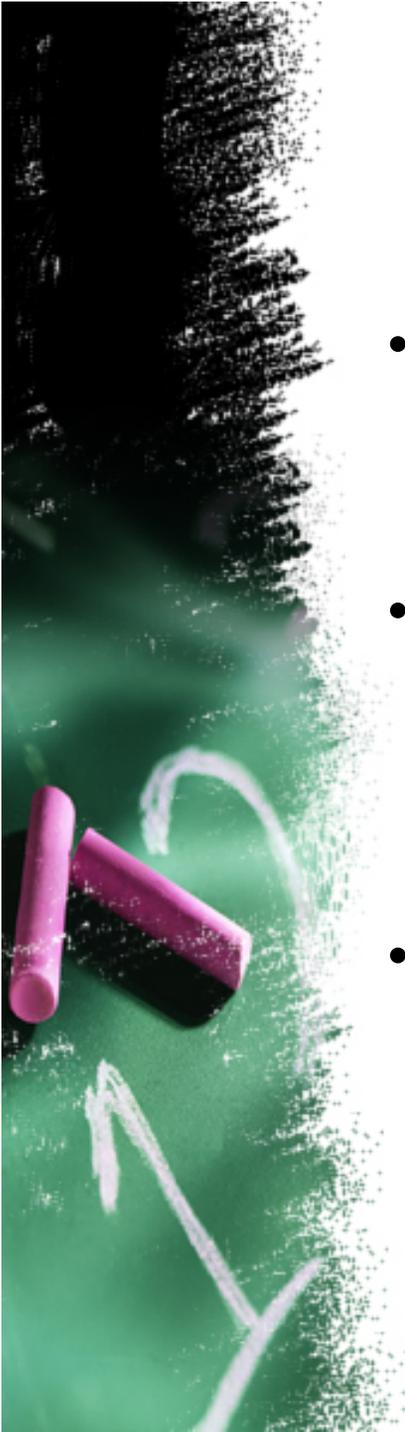
Strategies for students with Learning Difficulties

- See handout (Specific Strategies for Learning Difficulties)
- Graphic Organizers (see handouts)
 - *Graphic organizers are visual devices that depict information in various ways. Most commonly, they employ lines, circles, and boxes to form images which depict 4 common ways information is typically organized:*
 - Hierarchic
 - Cause/Effect
 - Compare/Contrast
 - Cyclic or linear sequences

List of Resources

- <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf>
- <http://learningdisabilities.about.com/od/learningdisabilitybasics/tp/SignsofLD.htm>
- www.understood.org
- <http://coe.jmu.edu/Learningtoolbox/>
- <http://www.washington.edu/doit/academic-accommodations-students-learning-disabilities>
- <http://www.earlychildhoodteacher.org/blog/six-strategies-for-21st-century-early-childhood-teachers/>





- <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/Disabilities/Program%20Planning/Accessibility/AccommodatingALL.htm>
- <http://www.hoover.k12.al.us/hcsnet/rfbms/makessense%207.4/donotopenfolder/implmnt/dontopen/msstrats/stuf/GO%20ALERT%20draft.pdf>
- http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/beh_charts_3-11_other.htm

Questions and Answers

