



Seattle Eye M.D.s

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Childhood Reading Problems

When children have difficulty reading, parents often think poor vision is the problem. If a visit to an ophthalmologist rules out any medical or vision problems, it may be a learning disability.

A learning disability is a disparity between a person's ability and performance in a certain area. It has nothing to do with intelligence or IQ. A learning disability can make it difficult to succeed in school and, if untreated, gets worse, causing a child to lose self-confidence and interest in school.

Identifying the learning disability is the first step in treating it. Dyslexia, a reading disability that may involve reversing letters and words, is one of the many learning disorders that can affect reading.

Exercises have been used to improve the coordination or focusing of the eyes. Since poor reading is not usually an eye problem, these exercises rarely prove helpful. Colored lenses, special diets or vitamins, jumping on trampolines, or walking on balance beams have also been prescribed without much success. Over time, these methods have tended to fall out of favor.

Children with learning disabilities benefit from various educational programs, in or out of school. Parents also play a vital role. They can support their children by reading with them at home. Children with learning disabilities need to be encouraged to develop strengths and interests so they can fully develop their unique talents and abilities.