

WHAT ARE SPLDs?

SpLDs, or Specific Learning Difficulties, refer to a group of learning disorders or difficulties where learners struggle with particular aspects of learning. Students with SpLDs are likely to find certain, but not all areas of learning challenging.

Some common SpLDs are Specific Learning Disorders (SLDs) in areas such as Reading (aka Dyslexia), Written Expression, and Mathematics (aka Dyscalculia). Neurodevelopmental difficulties such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also fall under the umbrella of SpLDs. Signs and symptoms that are common to individual SpLDs are summarised below:



Dyslexia

- Reads words incorrectly
- Frequently makes guesses at words while reading
- Reads slowly or haltingly
- Difficulty sounding out parts of words
- May fear or refuse to read aloud

Specific Learning Disorder in Written Expression

- Performs poorly on spelling tests
- Spells words in many different ways
- Difficulty with applying grammar and punctuation rules in writing
- Difficulty with organising writing

*List is non-exhaustive

Dyscalculia

- Has poor number sense
- Difficulty with math reasoning
- Struggles with fluency in computing math problems
- Poor memory of math facts

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- Makes careless mistakes
- Difficulty maintaining attention
- Poor time management
- Fails to complete work on time
- Often fidgets with hands or feet
- Frequently leaves seat when required to remain seated
- Talks excessively

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Having an SpLD does not mean that a student will never be able to achieve their academic potential.

With additional effort on the students' part, support from parents and teachers, as well as intervention programmes (where appropriate), these students will be in a better position to perform at a level that better reflects their potential.

No two children are alike, and this certainly holds true for students with SpLDs. Every child has their unique learning strengths and weaknesses. It is important that adults working with students with SpLDs are aware of each child's learning profile. Parents and teachers play a vital role in encouraging students to explore and capitalise on their strengths, as well as to target support to their specific weaknesses.

While two students can be struggling with learning, their underlying learning profile may be different. As such, undergoing an assessment is key for struggling learners to determine if they have a learning difficulty, as well as to obtain their learning profile, in order for them to be better supported in their learning.

At the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, our team of experienced psychologists conduct assessments for a range of SpLDs for school-going children. To find out more, do visit our website at <https://das.org.sg/services/assessments.html#psycho-educational-assessment>

Let's understand the signs and symptoms of SpLD and avoid labelling underachievement as a result of laziness or apathy.

A psycho-educational assessment is vital to unlock the support strategies needed for individuals with SpLD.

**Find out more about DAS
Psycho-Educational Assessments
www.das.org.sg**

