



# Specific Learning Difficulties

**P**eople with specific learning disabilities (SLD) experience difficulties in receiving, remembering, understanding, organizing, and using verbal and/or non-verbal information due to the way their brain is wired. This affects various areas including listening, thinking, speaking, writing, reading, spelling, and mathematical calculation.

There are three main categories of SLD, including:

- **Dyslexia** – impacting reading and writing
- **Dysgraphia** – impacting handwriting
- **Dyscalculia** – impacting mathematics

Many people with an SLD have dyslexia, which makes reading and writing challenging. This is because they have difficulty connecting the sound of a letter to its written symbol (the letter), which is important for reading and writing. This can make most school subjects challenging for them.

Children with SLD are often very bright, good at many things and have average or above average intelligence, but struggle with skills that are central to education (reading, writing and mathematics). This can lead to low self-esteem, frustration and a feeling of failure for the child, and confusion for parents and teachers. Children with SLD may spend many hours trying to do the same schoolwork as their peers. Despite this they are sometimes called 'lazy'

which is unfair and untrue.

Children with SLD often think differently than their peers and have unique perspectives that can lead to creative and innovative ideas. Additionally, they may have qualities such as persistence and strong problem-solving skills that can help them overcome challenges and achieve success.

## Some indicators of SLDs:

Not all children with SLD will show all of these indicators, and some children may have difficulties not listed here.

- Slow speech development
- Difficulty pronouncing words
- Trouble recognising and learning letters and/or numbers
- Poor writing or reading skills despite good verbal abilities
- Difficulty with daily routines and organisation
- Attention and concentration difficulties
- A tendency to learn better through practical activities.

A highly recommended website with information on strategies for children who learn and think differently: [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

**"All schools shall promote fair and equitable access to education for all learners with disabilities regardless of their gender, age, social status, economic background, geographical location, race, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity, or intersections between these factors."**

(MoE, Special and Inclusive Education Policy)

**"Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education."**

(Fiji Constitution)

**Who can help?** Teachers with experience teaching children with learning difficulties and for teaching strategies, reference <https://www.education.gov.fj/special-inclusive-education/>

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Please note that this document is for informational/education purposes only and does not replace medical advice.



Ministry of Education

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