

## **I SUSPECT MY CHILD HAS A LEARNING DISABILITY. HOW DO I GET HELP?**

### **1. Talk to your child's classroom teacher.**

*Make an appointment to discuss your concerns. Make a list of your concerns. Bring sample work, medical records and any other observations. Ask questions. Is your child keeping up with classmates? Is your child better in some learning skills than others? Explore resources in the school. Are there some that can help? If problems appear to be significant, request a "screening meeting" to look more closely at the issues.*

### **2. Attend the screening meeting.**

*The screening meeting brings together more experts. They look more closely at your child's learning difficulties. Your child's teachers and other specialists, such as the school psychologist and special educators, attend. Your input is also important. Before going to the meeting gather information. Read books on the topic. Go to Internet sites such as LD OnLine to learn more about symptoms and terms. With the team of experts plan the next steps. These may include testing, formal observations, or classroom modifications. Be an advocate. Clarify and ask questions if you do not understand.*

### **3. Assessment**

*If the screening meeting suspects a learning disability, further testing will be recommended. Testing explains more clearly how your child learns by identifying patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Test results determine whether or not your child is eligible for school special education services. You must give written consent before testing can begin. Private assessment by a licensed professional at your own expense is another option.*

### **4. "Your child has a learning disability."**

*The school psychologist will meet with you to discuss the results of testing. Ask questions when you do not understand. If the psychologist says results do indicate a learning disability your child may be eligible for school special education support services. The school will set a meeting time with you to write an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child. It is important that you attend this meeting.*

### **5. Work with the IEP team.**

*You and your child, as members of the IEP team, can contribute to the IEP. The IEP is a written document that you will sign. The IEP identifies resources, teaching strategies, and support staff that are to be used to help your child find more school success. The IEP document is critical and parents can meet to discuss the contents throughout the school year.*

### **6. Enjoy your child's strengths!**

*Children with positive self-esteem do better in school and social situations. How can you continue to build on your child's confidence? Empower your child with knowledge about his or her learning disability. When problems arise, offer your child choices to strengthen his or her ability to solve problems. Find strengths that your child enjoys. Is your child good at drawing, sports, or music? Share those times too.*

Source: [www.idonline.org](http://www.idonline.org)