

People with learning disabilities often have auditory or visual deficits that affect their ability to develop and use language effectively. Difficulties with reading, writing, spelling, and math may be apparent, but additional problems with organization, and recalling either visual or auditory directions may also be present.

There is a variety of technology that can be used by people with learning disabilities. Other Tech Connections Quick Reference Guides detail some of the high-tech computer-based accommodations that are available. But low-tech devices and strategies, which are often inexpensive and readily available, should not be overlooked.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What accommodations are available for reading books?

Reading books can be accommodated with books on tapes and cd-rom as well as large print. Another option for reading books is to have a person read into a tape recorder which will allow the person to listen.

Do Irlen Color Filters work?

Irlen Syndrome, or Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, is a visual-perceptual problem related to color and which seems to be present for some people with LD. That is, some people with LD seem to be able to focus on words better when they are looking at a particular color. The question sometimes comes up about the use Irlen lenses, which are a particular type of special color-tinted glasses to help with reading, but which also require an assessment from a specially trained company representative. To just get a quick idea of whether color may be a factor, try placing colored transparency sheets over a page. Of course, a wider range of colors may be available from people affiliated with the Irlen Institute. Once a color is identified that is easier to focus on, printed materials might be copied on to paper of that color. Reading guides that provide a color highlighting bar are also available.

What other accommodations might help with reading?

Highlighters can help with bringing out detail. Reading guides can help the reader not miss or lose his/her place by only showing one line at a time.

A reading pen is a handheld scanning device that allows the user to scan printed words, hear the text and definitions read aloud and see their definitions on the pen's LCD screen.

An electronic dictionary is a small handheld device that will allow the user to type in a word and the device will auto spell correct, display definition, as well as assist in learning a word.

What accommodations are available to help with auditory processing?

Variable Speed Control Tape Recorders (VSC) allow a person to play back recorded information at a faster or slower rate than what was originally recorded. The rate can be slowed down to a more comprehensible rate, or can be sped up to reduce the amount of time it takes to listen to a long presentation.

Videos with captioning

ALD – amplification devices, etc. that amplify speech and block out other noises

What accommodations are available for taking notes or writing?

Audio cassette for note taking (see variable speed control above)

Pen grips (for people who hold pens too tight)

Carbonless notebook paper (for note copies)

?? Word processors?? (stand alone ones like AlphaSmart – or too high tech?)

What types of accommodations might help with math?

Printing calculators

Talking calculators

Graph paper (line up number columns)

Are there accommodations to shut out distractions when working?

Headphones

White noise machines

What accommodations might help with organization and memory?

Color coding for organization

Digital watches with alarm

Digital memo recorders (maybe also voice organizers?)

Caller ID

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Assistivetech.net

Information and links to specific products.

<http://www.assistivetech.net>

Tools for Life Publication

Learning Disabilities and Assistive Technology

<http://www.gatfl.org/ldguide/documents/AT%20Resource%207-00.pdf>

Taking the Mystery Out of Assistive Technology

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/tfl_mystery.html

PRODUCT RESOURCES:

Irlen Institute

<http://www.irlen.com>

Onion Mountain Technology, Inc.

Color filter products and reading guides, writing aids

74 Sexton Hollow Road

Canton, CT 06019

Phone: 860-693-2683

<http://www.onionmountaintech.com>

Wizcom Technologies Inc.

Reading Pen II

257 Great Road

Acton, MA 01720

Phone: 888-777-0552; 978-635-5357

<http://www.wizcomtech.com>