

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with a Learning Disability

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AskJAN.org



ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

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Updated 01/24/2019.

JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://askjan.org/soar>.

Information about Learning Disability

Learning disabilities refer to a number of disorders that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of oral language, reading, written language, and mathematics. Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills and social interaction.

Although learning disabilities occur in very young children, the disorders are usually not recognized until the child reaches school age. Learning disabilities are lifelong and are not outgrown or cured, though many people develop coping techniques through special education, tutoring, medication, therapy, personal development, or adaptation of learning skills. Learning disabilities arise from neurological differences in brain structure and function and affect a person's ability to receive, store, process, retrieve or communicate information.

JAN's [Effective Accommodation Practices \(EAP\) Series: Executive Functioning Deficits](#) is a publication detailing accommodations for individuals with limitations related to executive functioning. These ideas may be helpful in determining accommodations.

What types of learning disabilities are there?

Learning disabilities can be divided into three broad categories:

Specific Learning Disability: A disorder in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. Included in this category are expressive writing and expressive language disorders.

- **Dyslexia** is the term associated with specific learning disabilities in reading. Although features of a learning disability in reading vary from person to person, common characteristics include the difficulty with individual sounds in words, and difficulties with word decoding, fluency, rate of reading, rhyming, spelling, vocabulary, comprehension and written expression. Dyslexia is the most prevalent and well-recognized of the subtypes of specific learning disabilities.
- **Dyscalculia** is the term associated with specific learning disabilities in math. Although features of a learning disability in math vary from person to person, common characteristics include difficulty with counting, learning number facts and doing math calculations, difficulty with measurement, telling time, counting money, estimating number quantities, mental math and problem-solving strategies.
- **Dysgraphia** is the term associated with specific learning disabilities in writing. This term is used to capture both the physical act of writing and the quality of written expression. Dysgraphia can manifest in difficulties with spelling, putting thoughts on paper, and poor handwriting, including difficulty in forming letters or writing within a defined space, organizing thoughts on paper, keeping track of thoughts already written down, and difficulty with syntax, structure, and grammar.

Associated Deficits and Disorders

While not designated as specific subtypes of learning disabilities, there are a number of areas of information processing that are commonly associated with learning disabilities:

- **Auditory Processing Disorder** is the term used to describe a weakness in the ability to understand and use auditory information. Individuals may have difficulties with noticing, comparing and distinguishing the distinct and separate sounds in words, picking out important sounds from a noisy background, recalling information presented orally, understanding and recalling the order of sounds and words, and difficulty with spelling, reading and written expression.
- **Visual Processing Disorder** is the term used to describe a weakness in the ability to understand and use visual information. Individuals often have difficulty noticing and comparing features of different items and distinguishing one item from another, distinguishing a shape or printed character from its background, distinguishing the order of symbols, words or images, difficulty engaging in short-term and long-term recall of visual information, and understanding how objects are positioned in space.

- **Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities** is the term used to describe the characteristics of individuals who have unique learning and behavioral profiles that may overlap with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia but that differ in significant ways. Most notably, these individuals often have strengths in the areas of verbal expression, vocabulary, reading, comprehension, auditory memory and attention to detail, yet have difficulty with math computation and problem solving, visual-spatial tasks and motor coordination, reading body language and social cues, as well as seeing the “big picture” in social and academic contexts.
- **Executive Functioning Deficits** is the term used to describe weaknesses in the ability to plan, organize, strategize, remember details and manage time and space efficiently. Executive functioning deficits are often seen in individuals who have a learning disability.

Learning Disability and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

Accommodating Employees with Learning Disability

People with learning disabilities may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with learning disabilities will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

Questions to Consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee’s job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?

5. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Executive Functioning Deficits

- Apps for Concentration
- Checklists
- Color Coded System
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Form Generating Software
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Speech Recognition Software
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

Managing Time

- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Organization/ Time Management
- Checklists

- Color Coded System
- Electronic Organizers
- Marginal Functions
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Reminders
- Task Separation
- Timers and Watches
- Wall Calendars and Planners
- Written Instructions

Mathematics

- Construction Calculators
- Counting/Measuring Aids
- Fractional, Decimal, Statistical, or Scientific Calculators
- Large Display Calculators or Adding Machines
- Large Display Thermometers
- Mathematics Software
- Talking Calculators
- Talking Scales
- Talking Tape Measures
- Talking Thermometers
- Talking Watches

Reading

- Color Contrast Overlays
- Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
- Modified Written Materials
- On-Screen "Ruler" / Strip
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Systems - Scan
- Portable or Handheld Readers
- Qualified Reader
- Reading / Highlighting Products

- Reading Pen
- Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
- Screen Magnification Software
- Screen Reading Software and Training
- Text Reader
- Word Processing Software

Writing/Spelling

- Electronic Dictionaries
- Form Generating Software
- Line Guides
- PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
- Proofreading/ Copyediting Assistance
- Reference Books
- Screen Reading Software and Training
- Speech Recognition Software
- Verbal Responses
- Word Prediction/Completion and Macro Software
- Word Processing Software
- Writing Aids
- Writing/Editing Software
- Written Forms and Prompts

Work-Related Functions

Communicate

- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant

Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Flexible Schedule

- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Monitor Mirrors
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Use Cognitive Function

- Learning Job Tasks
 - Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
 - Aide/Assistant/Attendant
 - Extra Time
 - Job Coaches
 - On-site Mentoring
 - Reminders
 - Training Modifications
- Meeting Productivity Standards
 - Color Coded System
 - Counting/Measuring Aids
 - Electronic Dictionaries
 - Electronic Organizers
 - Job Coaches
 - Line Guides
 - Marginal Functions
 - On-site Mentoring
 - Support Person

- Reassignment
- Reminders
- Uninterrupted Work Time
- Other Solutions
 - Modified Break Schedule
 - Service Animal

Situations and Solutions:

A building contractor with dyscalculia was inefficient when creating job quotes.

To ensure the mathematical calculations were accurate, the employee spent extra time “figuring” and “double-checking” the numbers. The site supervisor purchased a contractor’s calculator to help the employee “figure” fractions, triangles, circles, area (and more) efficiently and accurately.

A stockperson with poor visual acuity due to a visual processing disorder could not see in dimly lit areas, such as the back storeroom where many supplies were kept.

She had difficulty filling out charts and paperwork by hand. The employer provided a lighted pen, which enabled the employee to illuminate the writing surface, allowing her to complete paperwork and checklists quickly and easily.

A clerical worker with auditory processing disorder worked for a large employer where different work assignments were handed out daily.

To ensure the job assignment was accurate, the employee used a voice recorder to capture information about the work assignment, such as the job location, the supervisor’s name, and tasks to be completed. To refresh his memory, the employee was able to listen to this recorded information whenever necessary, sometimes several times each day.

A researcher in a technology company had expressive writing disorder.

The employee’s job tasks included gathering information for written reports. To accommodate this employee, software was provided to help the employee organize, prioritize, and then outline the information for reports. The employer also provided a hard copy dictionary and thesaurus.

A new-hire telemarketer had deficits in reading comprehension.

He participated in CBT (computer-based training), which included watching a customer service tutorial, then completing timed quizzes on the computer. To accommodate this employee, the employer adjusted the color scheme, resolution, and font size of the computer screen, making the appearance of material easier to view. The employee held a ruler to the computer screen to “stay on the line” when reading test questions. The employee was allowed to watch the tutorial over again, and was given extra time to complete quizzes.

A teacher with a learning disability had difficulty spelling words correctly on the board.

The employer provided a laptop computer and a PC projection system that projected the written information onto a screen or wall, negating the need to write on the board. With the help of word prediction software, the teacher was able to display correctly spelled information to her students. A researcher in a technology company had expressive writing disorder. The employee’s job tasks included gathering information for

written reports. To accommodate this employee, Inspiration software was provided to help organize, prioritize, and then outline the information for reports. The employer also provided a hard copy dictionary and thesaurus.

An employee who had expressive language disorder had difficulty communicating with the supervisor.

This employee preferred to read communication, then respond in writing. The supervisor adjusted the method of supervision, whereby communication with this employee occurred through email instead of face to face.

An employee who works in a manufacturing environment had a learning disability.

The employee had difficulty remembering task sequences of the job. The supervisor provided written instructions, whereby each major task was broken down into smaller, sequential sub-parts. Each subpart was color-coded for easy reference (green means start, red means stop).

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://askjan.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

Resources

Job Accommodation Network

West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234
TTY: (304) 293-7186
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
<http://AskJAN.org>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

Office of Disability Employment Policy

200 Constitution Avenue,
NW, Room S-1303
Washington, DC 20210
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365
odep@dol.gov
<http://dol.gov/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

American Academy of Audiology

11480 Commerce Park Drive

Suite 220

Reston, VA 20191

Toll Free: (800) 222-2336

Fax: (703) 476-5157

infoaud@audiology.org

<http://www.audiology.org>

The American Academy of Audiology promotes quality hearing and balance care by advancing the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy, education, public awareness, and support of research.

American Dyslexia Association

442 S. Tamiami Trail

Osprey, FL 34229

Office@American-Dyslexia-Association.com

<http://www.american-dyslexia-association.com>

The American Dyslexia Association Inc. is a non-profit organization that focuses its efforts on providing help for dyslexic and dyscalculic people with free information and teaching aids.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

2200 Research Blvd

Rockville, MD 20850-3289

Toll Free: (800) 638-8255

Direct: (301) 296-5700

Fax: (301) 296-8580

<http://www.asha.org>

ASHA promotes the interests of, and provide the highest quality services for, professions in audiology, speech-language pathology, and speech and hearing science; and an advocate for people with communication disabilities.

Asperger/ Autism Network (AANE)

51 Water Street

Suite 206

Watertown, MA 02472

Toll Free: (866) 597-2263

Direct: (617) 393-3824

Fax: (617) 393-3827

info@aane.org

<http://www.aane.org/>

The Asperger/Autism Network (AANE) works with individuals, families, and professionals to help people with Asperger Syndrome and similar autism spectrum profiles build meaningful, connected lives. We do this by providing information, education, community, support, and advocacy, all in an atmosphere of validation and respect.

**Attention Deficit Disorder & Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder
Assessment Resources**

<http://www.iser.com/CAADHD.html>

ISER helps parents of LD children / teens find schools, help for attention deficit disorder, educational assessments, therapy, advocacy, teen crisis

Auditory Processing Disorder Foundation, Inc.

contact@theapdfoundation.org

<http://www.theapdfoundation.org/>

It is a fact that there is still much skepticism about Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) in schools, among parents and even in the medical field. Our mission is to create a place of international access where kids, parents and teachers from all over the world can come to find information and helpful resources for APD.

Brain Injury Association of America

1608 Spring Hill Road
Suite 110
Vienna, VA 22182
Toll Free: (800) 444-6443
Direct: (703) 761-0750
Fax: (703) 761-0755
info@biausa.org
<http://www.biausa.org/>

The Brain Injury Association creates a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy.

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder

4601 Presidents Drive,
Suite 300
Lanham, MD 20706
Toll Free: (800) 233-4050
Direct: (301) 306-7070
Fax: (301) 306-7090
<http://www.chadd.org>

CHADD is a membership organization, produces the bi-monthly Attention magazine (for members), and sponsors an annual conference. The National Resource Center on ADHD (NRC) is the CDC-funded national clearinghouse for evidence-based information about ADHD.

Council for Learning Disabilities

11184 Antioch Road
Box 405
Overland Park, KS 66210
Direct: (913) 491-1011
Fax: (913) 491-1011
CLDInfo@cldinternational.org
<http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/>

The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) is an international organization composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines, is committed to enhancing the

education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span. CLD accomplishes this by promoting and disseminating evidence-based research and practices related to the education of individuals with learning disabilities. In addition, CLD fosters (a) collaboration among professionals; (b) development of leaders in the field; and (c) advocacy for policies that support individuals with learning disabilities at local, state, and national levels.

Dyscalculia.org

7420 Calhoun Street
Dearborn, MI 48126

help@dyscalculia.org

<http://www.dyscalculia.org>

Dyscalculia.org is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to advancing understanding and treatment of specific learning disabilities in mathematics, AKA dyscalculia. Dyscalculia.org aims to provide free public information about math learning disability: history, terminology, science, research, treatment, causes of innumeracy; best practices for diagnosis, treatment, teaching and learning; relevant laws, rules and protections; school, self and organizational advocacy; and access and accommodations across the academic lifespan.

Dyslexic Advantage

<https://www.dyslexicadvantage.org/>

Dyslexic Advantage is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to promote positive identity, community, and achievement focusing on dyslexic strengths.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

31 Center Drive

Building 31, Room 2A32

Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

Toll Free: (800) 370-2943

Fax: (866) 760-5947

NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

The mission of the NICHD is to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

P.O. Box 3006

Rockville, MD 20847

Toll Free: (800) 370-2943

Fax: (866) 760-5947

NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

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International Dyslexia Association

40 York Rd., 4th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21204
Direct: (410) 296-0232
Fax: (410) 321-5069
info@interdys.org
<http://eida.org/>

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals with dyslexia, their families, and the communities that support them. IDA is the oldest learning disabilities organization in the nation. The mission is to provide the most comprehensive forum for parents, educators, and researchers to share their experiences, methods, and knowledge.

Jewish Association for Developmental Disabilities (J-ADD)

190 Moore Street
Suite 272
Hackensack, NJ 07601-7418
Direct: (201) 457-0058
Fax: (201) 457-0025
info1@j-add.org
<http://www.j-add.org/>

Through Residential, Vocational, and Respite services J-ADD has been on the front lines of improving the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

LD Online

2775 S. Quincy St.
Arlington, VA 22206
Direct: (703) 998-2060
<http://www.ldonline.org/>

LD OnLine seeks to help children and adults reach their full potential by providing accurate and up-to-date information and advice about learning disabilities and ADHD. The site features hundreds of helpful articles, multimedia, monthly columns by noted experts, first person essays, children's writing and artwork, a comprehensive resource guide, very active forums, and a Yellow Pages referral directory of professionals, schools, and products.

Learning Able Kids

P.O.Box 491328

Lawrenceville, GA 30049

dyslexiaparent@learningabledkids.com

<http://learningabledkids.info/>

Learning Disabilities Association of America

4156 Library Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349

Direct: (412) 341-1515

Fax: (412) 344-0224

info@ldaamerica.org

<http://ldaamerica.org/>

LDA is the largest non-profit volunteer organization advocating for individuals with learning disabilities. LDA publishes materials on issues of importance to adults with learning disabilities on adult literacy, parenting, and special populations. A special series of bulletins address civil rights and accommodations in various settings, including college, the workplace and the military.

Learning Disabilities, Special Education Assessment Professionals

<http://www.iser.com/CAassess.html>

Mayo Clinic

13400 E. Shea Blvd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Direct: (480) 301-8000

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

MedlinePlus

8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894

custserv@nlm.nih.gov

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

Created by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

Mental Health America

500 Montgomery Street
Suite 820

Alexandria, VA 22314

Toll Free: (800) 969-6642

Direct: (703) 684-7722

Fax: (703) 684-5968

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>

Mental Health America (MHA) – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, and integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal.

National Center for Biotechnology Information

8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894

pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

MISSION: IMS brings together an international community of health care professionals, researchers, educators, and others to improve care and transform delivery of treatment to those suffering from soft tissue pain through the promotion and exchange of globally recognized research, education, and innovation in patient care.

National Center for Learning Disabilities

32 Laight Street, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10013

Toll Free: (888) 575-7373

Direct: (212) 545-7510

Fax: (212) 545-9665

nclld@nclld.org

<http://www.LD.org>

The NCLD works to ensure that the nation's 15 million children, adolescents and adults with learning disabilities have every opportunity to succeed in school, work, and life. NCLD provides essential information to parents, professionals, and individuals with learning disabilities, promotes research and programs to foster effective learning and advocates for policies to protect and strengthen educational rights and opportunities.

National Institute for Learning Development

801 Greenbrier Parkway

Chesapeake, VA 23320

Toll Free: (877) 661-6453

Direct: (757) 423-8646

Fax: (757) 451-0970

<http://nild.org/>

National Institute for Learning Development builds the competence and confidence of students with learning challenges. Provides accredited training to educators and connects students to NILD-certified and trained educational therapists. NILD is an international non-profit with 40 years of proven success.

National Institute of Mental Health

6001 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852
Toll Free: (866) 615-6464
Direct: (301) 443-4513
Fax: (301) 443-4279
nimhinfo@nih.gov
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

NIMH offers a variety of publications and other educational resources to help people with mental disorders, the general public, mental health and health care practitioners, and researchers gain a better understanding of mental illnesses and the research programs of the NIMH. All publications and educational materials are written by science writers, in collaboration with NIMH scientists and outside reviewers.

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

31 Center Drive
MSC 2320
Bethesda, MD 20892
Toll Free: (800) 241-1044
nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

National Resource center for health information about hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language for health professionals, patients, industry, and the public.

Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association (NLDA)

507 Hopmeadow St.
Simsbury, CT 06070
Direct: (860) 658-5522
Fax: (860) 658-6688
Info@NLDA.org
<http://www.nlda.org/>

A non-profit corporation dedicated to research, education, and advocacy for nonverbal learning disorders.

The Dyslexia Foundation

1 Clinton Place

New Bedford, MA 02740

Direct: (941) 807-0499

<http://dyslexiafoundation.org/>

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