

Solving Learning Disorders in Children



For some people learning seems easy. They are able to pay attention, readily absorb new information by listening or reading, and they are also able to retain and use their new knowledge.

Other people experience mental blocks that make it difficult for them to pay attention, to understand, and remember the things they read or hear, and to express themselves verbally or in writing. They may also have problems mastering specific tasks such as math, reading, and writing. Some may struggle with learning motor tasks, such as sports, and have difficulties with balance or hand-eye coordination. All these challenges are connected to various forms of learning disabilities.

A common form of learning disability is dyslexia, which is a problem with the communication between the two hemispheres of the brain. Learning disabilities may be related to an inability to pay attention, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Some are simply caused by a child falling behind in certain core skills, such as reading, writing, or math. Learning difficulties can cause behavioral problems such as being restless or impulsive, being disorganized, acting out in a classroom, and finding it difficult to change.

Many of the problems associated with learning disabilities have a physical cause. A lack of proper nutrition and rapid swings in blood sugar levels may interfere with the ability of the brain to function properly. The brain may have been injured due to alcohol use or drugs during pregnancy, exposure to heavy metals, or a traumatic brain injury. It may also involve difficult experiences (trauma or abuse) in childhood. A lack of normal early childhood experiences such as crawling and interacting with the environment can also be factors in the development of learning disabilities.

Looking for Root Causes

Although there are no quick and easy answers to solving learning disabilities, in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* we'll cover the general principles that will help you get started. There are three main root causes to look at when overcoming learning disabilities.

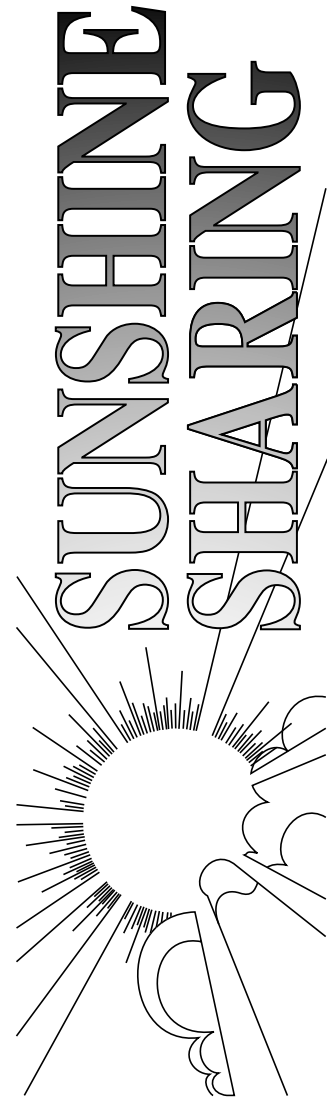
The first is nutrition. The brain needs nutrients to function properly and many children don't get the nutrients they need for proper brain development and function. The excess consumption of empty calories, like refined carbohydrates, can cause swings in blood sugar levels which affect both mood and focus. So, it is important to look at both dietary improvements and nutritional supplements that can help to improve brain function. This should be foundational to working with any learning disability.

The second root problem is environmental toxins. It has long been known that multiple chemicals, including heavy metals like mercury and lead, can interfere with mental function. The number of children suffering from problems like Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD, depression, anxiety, and various learning disabilities exploded in the 1990s and has continued to grow. At the same time, test scores reflecting comprehension of basic skills such as reading and math have dramatically declined.

This increase in learning problems can be attributed in part to a rise in environmental toxins, which is why working to reduce exposure to toxins and detoxifying is an important principle for solving learning disabilities and improving brain function.

In addition to these root causes, physical activity is very important for healthy brain development. There are exercises that can help correct dyslexia and other learning problems. There

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Your guide to better health the natural way

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Steven Horne Creations, LLC

P.O. Box 1868, Cedar City, UT 84721

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Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
Editor: David Horne
Associate Editors: Carolyn Hughes, Katie Horne

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are also herbal remedies and flower essences that you can use to support brain health.

Nutrition for Better Brain Function



Good nutrition is a foundation for a healthy body and a healthy brain. So, the first step to enhancing the ability to learn is to make sure the brain is getting the nutrients it needs to function properly.

Junk Food Diets Create Junk Food Brains

It's no secret that many Americans have a very poor diet and so do their children. There is ample evidence that a junk food diet contributes to reduced mental function, difficulty concentrating, and behavioral problems. Many of today's kids are practically weaned on foods loaded with simple sugars, refined grains, and processed vegetable oils.

Increases in hyperactivity, juvenile delinquency, and even criminal behavior have been associated with diets high in refined carbohydrates. Simple carbohydrates cause a rapid rise in blood sugar, which overstimulates the brain, causing nervousness and agitation. Many parents would be shocked to discover how much calmer kids can be when they aren't fed refined sugars. If they did, they'd probably want to take their children off these foods immediately (assuming they could manage to give them up themselves).

The best way to help children reduce their intake of refined carbohydrates is to give them healthier versions of the treats they enjoy. Give them whole grain bread instead of white bread. Serve brown rice instead of polished white rice. Use natural sugars like freeze-dried sugar cane juice or honey instead of refined sugar. This helps them transition away from refined foods and learn to enjoy healthier options.

Another problem is that many kids are becoming addicted to caffeine at a very early age. Caffeine dehydrates the brain and depletes energy reserves in the nervous system. This also contributes to restlessness, irritability and difficulty concentrating.

Supplements for Sugar and Caffeine Cravings

Licorice root and an *Algae Blend* (containing spirulina, blue-green algae, and chlorella) are great supplements to help kill sugar cravings and create energy without caffeine. They balance blood sugar levels when taken in the morning, again at lunch and once more when kids come home from school.

One problem with refined carbohydrates is that they lack the vitamins and minerals necessary to process the calories they contain into energy. This causes the body to rob its stores of certain nutrients, resulting in reduced levels of vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, magnesium, and other nutrients necessary for proper brain function.

So, consider a multiple vitamin and mineral supplement to help offset these nutrient deficiencies. B-complex vitamins are especially important because they are needed to form the neurotransmitters

the brain needs to communicate. So, an *Anti-Stress B-Complex Formula* that contains B-vitamins, vitamin C, schisandra, and nervines like hops and passion flower can help, especially if children are nervous or anxious.

Good Fats for Healthy Brains

Modern diets are high in processed vegetable oils. These oils are high in omega-6 essential fatty acids, which can contribute to inflammation and other problems when not properly balanced with omega-3 essential fatty acids. Most of the fats found in the brain (which is 50% fat by dry weight) are omega-3 essential fatty acids, with DHA being the most common. Fat soluble vitamins, like A, D₃, E, and K are also lacking in modern diets and contribute to poor brain function as well as a lack of proper development of bones and teeth.

Many parents find that giving their children healthy fats like omega-3 essential fatty acids or DHA help them learn better. Young children typically love naturally fatty foods. So, make sure to give them natural foods that are high in fats, such as walnuts, macadamia nuts, avocados, butter and cream from grass-fed animals, and coconut oil to help them avoid processed fats. It can also be beneficial to give them vitamins A and D₃.



Brain Building Protein

The neurotransmitters that allow nerve cells to talk to each other are made from amino acids, the building blocks of protein. Many children with learning problems aren't getting enough protein, particularly for breakfast. Research shows that children who have protein foods for breakfast perform better in school than kids who skip breakfast. Children who eat sugar sweetened breakfast cereals (especially with low fat milk) do the worst.

If you're in too much of a hurry to prepare a traditional breakfast for your children, try making them a protein powder smoothie. You can add fresh or frozen fruit, organic, whole milk or whole milk yogurt to add more flavor and nutrition. The *Algae Blend*, mentioned earlier, is a good source of amino acids and helps balance brain function as well as blood sugar.

Other Supplements to Enhance Learning

There are also some specific supplements that can be used for children with specific learning problems. A *Brain Calming Formula* containing GABA, passion flower, l-glutamine, and l-taurine may also be helpful. GABA is a calming neurotransmitter that inhibits the brain from over-firing, calming down mental chatter and aiding relaxation and sleep.



For those who have difficulty paying attention, an *Attention-Focus Formula* that contains l-glutamine, DMAE, lemon balm, and ginkgo may be helpful. This formula can also help children who suffer from ADHD.

Protecting the Brain from Chemicals

Exposure to chemicals may be responsible for a rise in neurological problems like autism in young people as well as a decline in learning ability. So, it is important to limit exposure to pesticides and food additives of all kinds by eating natural foods (especially organically-grown). It's also a good idea to use natural cleaning products, pest control products, and personal care products.

When it comes to learning disabilities, here are two primary suspects that may be causes of the recent decline in mental ability. So pay attention to these factors in particular.

Glyphosate and GMO Foods

Monsanto introduced the herbicide, glyphosate, for agricultural use in 1974 under the trade name Roundup. But because it kills most plants it wasn't until the 1990s, when genetically modified crops (GMOs) that could resist heavy spraying, that the use of it become increasingly widespread. Currently, glyphosate resistant soy, corn, canola, alfalfa, sugar beets, and cotton are available and over 90% of all corn, soybeans, and cotton grown in the United States are GMO strains.



Glyphosate is also used on grains like wheat, barley, and oats for crop desiccation. It is sprayed so all the grain dies at the same time for more uniform harvesting. This means this chemical is present in all of the most commonly used foods in America.

Glyphosate appears to disrupt gut microflora and may be causing widespread gluten intolerance, leaky gut, and other GI tract problems. Because of the connection between the brain and the gut, it may also be causing increasing problems with anxiety, depression, and brain fog, all of which reduce learning ability.



Excessive Vaccinations

Since the 1980s the number of vaccines being given to children has risen dramatically. In 1986 Congress passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury act which shielded vaccine manufacturers from liability, transferring the liability to the government. Before that children were given about eleven doses of three vaccines. Currently the schedule calls for 73 doses of 16 different vaccines, nearly 7 times as many doses.

During that time the incidence of chronic disease has skyrocketed and there has been a dramatic increase in neurological problems, mood disorders, and autoimmune disease which may be at least partially caused by this increase in vaccinations.

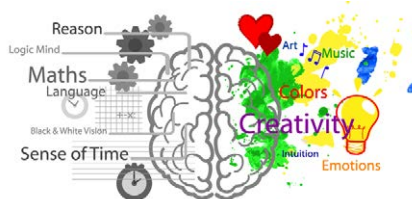
So, educate yourself about vaccines and make educated, informed choices about what vaccines you allow for yourself and your children, and when they should be given. If you do vaccinate, detoxify with cleansing herbs afterwards to help the body clear out the chemicals they contain.

Detoxifying to Improve Mental Health

Children or adults who are struggling with learning problems may benefit from herbs that help the body detoxify. Red clover, burdock, dandelion, and cleavers are four gentle cleansing herbs that even young children can use. Try a **Liquid Lymph formula** or a **Blood Purifier Formula** that contains some, or all, of these. Older children can take a **Hepatoprotective Formula** with milk thistle, dandelion, and N-acetyl cysteine, which will help the body detoxify from chemicals and heavy metals.

Other Aids for Learning Disabilities

Modern children are spending a great deal of time working on computers and cell phones and less time doing physical activities, such as playing outdoors, riding bicycles, or engaging in sports. This lack of physical activity contributes to learning disabilities, including dyslexia. This excessive time spent on cell phones, computers, and TV (collectively known as screen time) shortens attention spans and contributes to various learning problems.



Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a condition where a person with normal vision cannot decode written communication, which is often accompanied by other visual, physical and auditory problems. The condition occurs when the communication between the right and left hemispheres of the brain is poor, creating a type of split brain syndrome. The corpus callosum, which connects the hemispheres and allows them to coordinate their activities is not adequately developed.

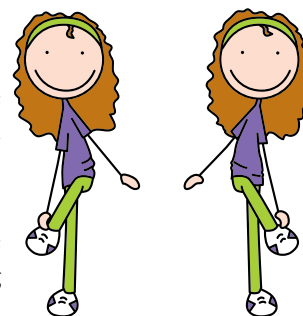
The ability to integrate the hemispheres of the brain begins when a child learns to crawl. Crawling integrates the two sides of the brain because one side of the brain has to instruct the leg to lift up while the other side has to instruct the opposite arm to lift up. Children who do not spend enough time crawling will lack this ability to integrate the hemispheres.

A lack of the ability to coordinate brain activities through the corpus callosum can affect the body on three levels. It can affect the body physically, resulting in a lack of coordination, awkward body movements, confusion between right and left, and difficulty playing sports. It can affect the body on the auditory level causing an inability to concentrate and/or remember verbal instructions. On the visual level it manifests itself in problems with hand-eye coordination, reading, and writing.

Exercises for Dyslexia

There are exercises that can help re-integrate the hemispheres to overcome dyslexia. These exercises have been called brain gym or Educational Kinesiology.

The basic exercises are called cross crawls and involve using an opposite leg and hand, such as alternating



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AskMara.com & Energy Wellness Products

Mara Gerke

9898 N 200 E, Decatur, IN 46733

Phone: 800-728-2425

Website: <http://www.askmara.com/>

Email: askmara@gmail.com



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lifting your right leg and touching the knee or foot with your left hand and lifting your left leg and touching that knee or foot with your right hand, as shown in the illustration. There are many variations of cross crawls, such as touching your foot behind your body instead of in front of it.



Another exercise for aiding integration of the brain in reading is to trace lazy 8s on a whiteboard or chalkboard while following the movement of the hand with the eyes. This exercise helps children who lose track of where they are

on the page or struggle to comprehend what they are reading. This is because the left side of the brain is the part that reads the symbols (letters and words) and the right side of the brain creates images and emotions from the words. Children with dyslexia may read the words, but cannot decipher the meaning of what they are reading. They may also form letters backwards, writing b instead of d or q instead of p.

You can learn more about these and other exercises online or through some of the resources in *Additional Help and Resources*.

Screen Time and Attention Span

When TV was first introduced the shots shown changed slowly. As time went on, producers learned to shift more rapidly to create an almost addictive desire to watch the screen. Today, with the widespread use of cell phones and the ability to shift rapidly from one image to the next, attention spans have become greatly reduced. Many adults and even more children struggle to watch an educational video or presentation that lasts more than five minutes.

While it may be a challenge, parents should try to limit screen time for themselves and their children and encourage more physical activity and amusements that favor social interaction, such as working on a hobby, solving puzzles, or playing board games together. This can help increase short attention spans and aid social interaction and the ability to learn better.

Herbal Remedies to Aid Learning

There are a number of herbal remedies that can aid learning. The following are just a few examples. There are many other remedies that can help.

Mugwort flower essence or herb can be taken in small doses for intelligent, gifted, and artistic people who struggle with ordinary comprehension and skills. It can be helpful for dyslexia, problems with speaking, and daydreaming. Take the flower essence or one drop of a tincture twice daily.

Clematis flower essence can help children who daydream and have difficulty paying attention.

Madia flower essence can help children focus who are easily distracted. It aids mental focus and concentration.

Shasta Daisy flower essence can help with right-left brain integration. Specifically, it can help children who can read words, but fail to grasp meaning in what they read.

Bacopa is an Ayurvedic herb that may aid learning. It can be given in capsules or tincture form.

Gotu kola is another Ayurvedic herb that aids memory and concentration which can also be taken in capsule or tincture form. Older children can also take a **Memory Enhancing Formula** containing bacopa, gotu kola, ginkgo, and magnesium l-threonate.

Additional Help and Resources

For more information about solving learning problems contact the person who gave you this newsletter. They have access to additional resources to help you with nutrition and detoxification. You can also consult the following resources:

Strategies for Health by Steven Horne

Testing for and Healing Dyslexia: <https://stevenhorne.com/class/Testing-for-and-Healing-Dyslexia>

The Brain Gym Resources: <https://breakthroughsinternational.org/resources/the-brain-gym-resources/>

Vaccine Resources: <https://stevenhorne.com/class/Vaccine-Education-and-Resources>