

Adults with Disabilities: Community Resources For Support in Education and Employment

Adults with Learning Disabilities

“Learning disabilities are not a prescription for failure. With the right kind of instruction, guidance, and support, there are no limits to what individuals with LD can achieve.” (Sheldon H. Horwitz, Director of LD Resources, NCLD 2014) The potential for success for individuals with learning disabilities underscores the need for identification of learning disabilities, understanding of the disability, appropriate instruction, and advocacy at every level.

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About Learning Disabilities

More than a “difference” or “difficulty” with learning, a learning disability is a neurological disorder that affects the brain’s ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. Learning disabilities most often fall into three broad categories: reading, language, and math. A range of other related categories include disabilities that affect areas such as memory, visual and auditory processing, and executive functions such as initiating or shifting from one task to another. LD will vary in how it impacts each individual child, adolescent and adult.

Current attention to Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome as well as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has brought much needed focus on how to identify those disorders and help individuals meet the challenges they present. Although they are separate from learning disabilities, they have many shared characteristics; and assessments and strategies for accommodation address the distinct and sometimes overlapping features of each.

Learning disabilities are lifelong issues even though those affected can learn to maximize their strengths and accommodate the difficulties. Stephen Spielberg, who was diagnosed with dyslexia in adulthood, reflected, **“You are not alone, and while you will have dyslexia for the rest of your life, you can dart between the raindrops to get where you want to go. It will not hold you back.”** (retrieved from <http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/9809.html>)

Testing for Learning Disabilities

What is the purpose of testing? Testing provides a diagnosis of a specific learning disability and/ or related disorders. It also establishes the functional limitation(s) that must be present for accommodations on testing to be granted.

What is an accommodation?

An accommodation such as extra time, a private room, a reader, etc., is a formally granted provision for what is needed for access to success on a high-stakes test or employment task. It is based on the need identified by the evaluation and must be current (usually within three years). The accommodation does not make the test or task easier; it simply allows **access** to success.

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What is the first step in the process of requesting accommodations?

Most agencies that grant accommodations have a specific policy on the documentation needed to attest to the presence of a learning disability. It is important to check with an agency before requesting accommodations to assure that you have the needed documentation. See the links below.

Who can provide the testing? Cost?

- Licensed psychiatrist or psychologist (Fee-based)
- A testing resource center such as **The Learning Center of North Texas** (currently funded to provide no-cost testing for a limited number of adults enrolled in a Tarrant County Adult Education and Literacy Consortium program) For information, contact **your program administrator**.
- DARS **may** be able to help adults whose goals include employment.

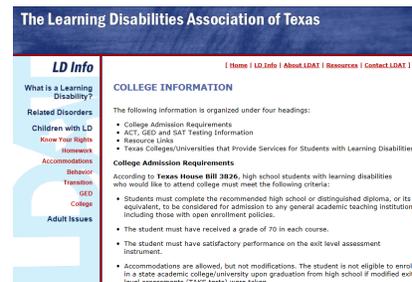
Links to High School Equivalency Test Agencies - Requirements for Accommodations

GED: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>

HiSet: <https://hiset.ets.org/take/disabilities/>

TASC: http://www.tasctest.com/assets/1_overview_of_tasc_accommodations_051016.pdf

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities



Rights and Responsibilities

How the [Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#) Applies to Accommodations in College and Employment

http://www.ldat.org/ld_info/college.html

Documentation and Identification for Education

- **Disclosure**—Students must self-identify (disclose) as having a disability in order to receive accommodations. By law, after high school graduation, parents are no longer allowed to advocate on a student's behalf, nor is the college required to be proactive in offering accommodations.
- **Documentation**—Students must present documentation of their disability. Requirements differ among schools, but are likely to include a recent evaluation (no older than 3 years), a current IEP or Section 504 plan, and a Summary of Performance (SOP), sometimes called "History of Use."
- **Evaluation**- If the college requires a more updated evaluation, a qualified professional can do the right kind of testing. Every college has different requirements, so ask them lots of questions and start gathering this information as soon as you can.

Read more on the website of the **National Center for Learning Disabilities** (<http://nclld.org/adults-learning-disabilities/post-high-school/getting-access-assistive-technology-college>)

Adult Education Programs

For adults who need to complete a **high school equivalency certificate**.....

Tarrant Literacy Coalition (817-870-0082)
<http://www.tarrantliteracycoalition.org>



The **Tarrant Literacy Coalition** is the community resource for adults who need to locate an instructional program that fits their schedule and needs. The coalition also works with community and faith-based literacy programs by offering training and technical support to build quality adult education classes at every level including High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation.

School Districts in Tarrant County

Most of the school districts in Tarrant County offer Adult Education classes. Each district lists services on its website. Among the services provided are the following:

1. Adult Literacy ABE/HSE Classes (Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency)
2. Adult ESL Classes (English as Second Language)
3. EL Civics (English Literacy & Civics)
4. TISESL (Texas Industry Specific English as Second Language)

Fort Worth Independent School District <http://www.fwisd.org/adulted/>

Birdville Independent School District (817-547-5768 or 817-547-2081)

Arlington Independent School District (817- 867-7267) <http://www.aisd.net/aisd/title1/FamilyLiteracy/tabid/10137/Default.aspx>

Tarrant County College Workforce Services (817-515-2585)

http://www.tccd.edu/Continuing_Education/Workforce_Services.html

The TCC Workforce Services Division offers a variety of adult education services at varying levels from beginning to advanced to assist learners in attaining education goals and job training. Among their services are the following:

- English as a second language
- Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics
- High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate
- Job training
- Transition to college or other training

Library Programs

Fort Worth Public Library 817-392-6621 <http://fortworthtexas.gov/library/info/default.aspx?id=5584>

Arlington READS, Arlington Public Library <http://www.arlingtonlibrary.org/literacy-resources>

Employment Services: Getting Started

The **first step** is often the most important. There are “**gatekeeper**” services that offer access to training and employment programs in every county in Texas. **Workforce and DARS** have programs throughout the state



Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County 817-413-4400

Workforce is our primary community employment services provider. It offers training and employment services for eligible adults. Further, it can help adults access services for disabilities. A program of particular interest is the **MAPS Program**, which helps job seekers map their own pathway to success in employment.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Often referred to as Vocational Rehabilitation, this agency serves people who have **disability** (including learning disabilities). For eligible clients, it can be a key to accessing community programs.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/>

1-800-628-5115 (Call this number; give your zip code; ask for the DARS office nearest your home. Call to make an appointment with a career consultant.)

Please see the information at the top of Page 5 for resources that may have been moved to a different agency.

Easter Seals North Texas (817-332-7171)

Programs and services vary, Call for current information. <http://ntx.easterseals.com>

Women’s Center Career Development Employment Program (817-927-4050)

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

The **Women’s Center Career Development Program** is offered in partnership with the United Way Program for Financial Self-Security/ Sustainability. It features **short-term job training** in high-demand occupations. It is open to both men and women. An introductory session is held on Tuesdays. Call for information.

The **Jobs Now Program** at the **Women’s Center** offers interactive workshops that teach the latest job search techniques and self-marketing strategies to women and men with transferable skills who want to begin working immediately. This no-cost program offers tools for employment:

- Ways to concisely and effectively communicate value to potential employers,
- Tips on marketing skills and abilities,
- Weekly job search and networking clinics, as well as exclusive industry specific job fairs, and
- One year of individualized Career Coaching for job retention & advancement .

More Local Services for Disability Related Issues

As of September 2016, services for some disability related issues were moved to Workforce and other agencies while others remained with DARS. Link [here](#) to find the agency that handles each disability service. If any link listed here is incorrect, contact your nearest DARS office to determine current services. If you are in college, link [here](#) to find a comprehensive resource.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/jobseekers/tx-confidence-builder-twc.pdf>

Additional Local Resources



<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/disability-awareness/publications/brochure-dfw-area-services-persons-who-are-blind-and-visually-impaired>

Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/deaf-and-hard-hearing>



HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

DHHS Specialist Program

Hearing Loss Resource Specialists (HLRS) Hearing Loss Resource Specialists (HLRS) provide services to persons with hearing loss, including those who are recently deafened. The Specialists identify solutions based on the needs of the individual and their family and strive to improve quality of life for these persons by providing essential training and information. Training may include: information on communication strategies, assistive technology, hearing loss awareness, cochlear implants and hearing aids. Assistance locating resources in the community and individual assessment of workplace, educational or community challenges are also provided.

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Need low-cost vision services?

Community Eye Clinic comprehensive eye care treatment for glaucoma, diabetic eye conditions, dry eye, injury/infection, glasses prescriptions.

Discounted services for un-insured patients. Medicare and Medicaid accepted.

655 Taylor St. (second story of First Christian Church), Fort Worth, Texas 76102

817-289-6800 communityeyeclinikFW@gmail.com

Other services are listed in the Local Resources brochure (above).

Online Resources

Understood.org - an excellent resource for learning and attention issues <https://www.understood.org/en>

National Council for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) <http://www.nclld.org/>

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) <https://ldaamerica.org/adults/>

CHADD: The National Resource on ADHD <http://www.chadd.org/>

ProLiteracy Education Network (offers resources for students and teachers) <http://www.proliteracyednet.org/>

Goodwill - <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/ComputerBasics/1> (Click on **ALL TOPICS** so you won't miss the extensive resources!)

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/resources/JAN.htm>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.

<http://askjan.org/soar/index.htm>

JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system is designed to let users explore various accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings.

Assistive Technology:

Tools for Life, Georgia Tech <http://www.gatfl.org/assistive.php>

Natural Reader (www.naturalreaders.com/download.php) is a free app that can be adapted to read any article, pdf, etc., on the computer. An upgrade is available, but the free version is a great resource.

Learning Ally <https://www.learningally.org/About-Us>

Learning Ally is a national non-profit dedicated to helping blind, visually impaired and dyslexic students succeed in education. Started as Recording for the Blind, it offers the world's largest collection of human-narrated audio textbooks and literature . (Annual Fee Required)

