

Cognition and Learning – Learning Difficulties (LD)

What it might look like	Strategies to support
<p>A child who presents with greater difficulties than the majority of other children of their age in making progress across all areas of the curriculum despite effective teaching. The extent of learning difficulty can range from mild to severe and profound. These difficulties are not due to factors such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) • Social deprivation (lack of opportunity) • Sensory impairment • Emotional difficulties <p>The child may present with delays in all areas of the EYFS including understanding, thinking, problem solving and retaining information, concepts and skills as well as difficulties in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention and listening • Understanding • Speaking • Self-help skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer increased opportunities for pre-teaching, overlearning, reinforcing and generalising skills e.g. provision of extra adult support to help prepare the child for what is going to happen next or to repeat an activity • Use a small steps approach; rather than expect the child to complete the whole activity, break it down into smaller parts and teach each part of the activity and practice it before moving on to the next part • Take the child into a calmer, quieter environment if necessary so they can focus more for specific activities • Differentiate expectations e.g. of how long child is expected to sit and attend for • Give the child sufficient thinking time before response is expected • Provide breaks in learning for children who have sensory needs and may not be able to attend for longer periods • Give children short achievable tasks to develop attention skills with a clear start and a clear finish e.g. inset puzzles, building a tower with a set amount of bricks, threading with a set number of beads. • Make use of timers so the child knows how long they are expected to remain on task or how long before it is their turn • Use ‘first-then’ boards, e.g. to encourage a child to attempt and/or attend to a new or less preferred activity; motivate them by using the words ‘first x (less preferred activity) ...then y’ (preferred activity). Use objects or photos/symbols to illustrate this. Use the same language every time you use the board. • Have daily opportunities for adult supported paired or shared play and turn-taking activities e.g. joint construction modelling, painting together, taking turns to press a pop-up toy etc. Model how to play together and use clear language to support e.g. ‘my turn...your turn’. • Extend the child’s play, initially by joining them at play and copying their actions (see ‘Communication and Interaction’). Then, model new actions and ways of playing for the child to add • Give support to generalise speech and language skills taught as part of individual/small group programmes- see strategies in communication and interaction section • Use clear and simple instructions breaking down longer instructions and giving one at a time. Use ‘first...then’ boards to reinforce this

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making links between different areas of learning and generalising to everyday experience • Visual, practical and physical learning • Early literacy and writing skills • Early mathematical skills • Sensory processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use individualised multi-sensory cues and prompts, including objects and photos to support understanding and play and learning e.g. a photo 'list' of what equipment is needed for an activity • Use evidence-based programmes and resources e.g. 'See and Learn' approach Down Syndrome Education • Use Social stories to help explain something that is going to happen that the child might become anxious about • Use a structured teaching approach e.g. basket tasks. This should be adapted to the individual child but will include presenting activities one at a time, having a clear start and finish to activities and having a clear order/sequence to the activities • Use individual and small group interventions, such as Fun Time, • Use a backward chaining approach, i.e. rather than expect the child to complete the whole activity, encourage them to complete the last part so that they feel success. When they can do that successfully, teach the next to last part e.g. when taking off trousers, encourage the child to pull them off their toes first, then off their feet, then off the bottom part of their legs... • Ensure that children have easy access to sensory equipment that they require, e.g. wobble cushions, fidget toys, ear defenders, and weighted blankets • Physically support the child using hand over hand/hand under hand support