

Four Tips for Parents Whose Children Learn Differently

One in five students struggle with learning and attention issues. So, if you suspect your child has a learning difference—such as difficulty focusing or reading, writing, or doing math—you are not alone. [A national survey](#) of parents who know or suspect their child has learning challenges, conducted by Learning Heroes with support from Oak Foundation, offers some guidance. Here are four tips for parents who are on an educational journey with their child who have learning differences:

#1: Don't wait for your child to “outgrow” their challenges. Seek help early. Having a formal evaluation is a critical step in getting and feeling supported. The younger children are diagnosed, the more likely they are to receive services.

#2: Ask your pediatrician. Parents cited pediatricians as the most trusted partner in helping them support their child with developmental or learning differences. The research found that parents are more likely to accept a diagnosis and pursue an evaluation if their pediatrician was the first to identify their child's learning challenges.

#3: Be in the know about the services your school can provide. Most parents reported their child receives some type of service from school—such as a teacher's aide, counseling, or classroom or testing accommodations. The more services their child received, the happier parents reported being with the school.

#4: Advocate for supports at home. Parents cite a range of supports at home that helped equip them to team up in support of their child's academic, social, and emotional skills, including guides on age-appropriate milestones, training on how to help and advocate for their child, and parent support groups.

“My biggest advice to parents is if you see anything that you may feel is a difference with your child, it's okay. Ask the question. Say something,” says Texas parent Onia Wallace. “It's not a reflection of you. It's not even a reflection of your child. I have two very special little ones who have proven time and time again that despite their diagnosis, they have not only continued to reach milestones but [go] so far beyond that. You just have to take a different road sometimes.”

To help schools and parents partner up to support students with learning differences, Learning Heroes launched a Communications Playbook. You can find the Playbook, more information about Learning Heroes' national survey, Cracking the Code for Families of Children with Learning Differences, and videos of parents describing their own journeys [here](#).

