



# fact sheet literacy & essential skills

## Learning Disabilities

**Learning and literacy difficulties limit participation in all aspects of society.**

**Learning disabilities present a major obstacle to literacy.** Learning disabilities affect over 10% of Canadians. More than 80% of people experience difficulty in learning to read. Learning disabilities are recognized as a lifelong neurological disorder that impacts the acquisition of language and literacy skills.

**People with learning disabilities CAN learn with appropriate supports.** Learning disabilities do not reflect a lack of intelligence. They affect an individual's ability to acquire, process and interpret information. The right learning strategies, techniques, supports, and interventions can overcome the challenges of learning disabilities.

**Learning disabilities affect over 30% of the less literate population.** An estimated 30-80% of students in literacy programs have learning disabilities. Without early childhood intervention, learning disabilities can affect literacy for life. By the time a student reaches high school, the dropout rate doubles for students with untreated learning disabilities. Most adult literacy programs are not adequately funded to deal with learning disabilities, and adults with learning disorders are disproportionately represented in the prison and welfare systems.

*Diagnosing and addressing learning disabilities in early childhood is vital in the fight to overcome the myriad problems that learning disabilities present.*

### What can be done?

- Accessible assessment and diagnosis of learning disabilities must be available for people of all ages
- Funding must be provided to develop and maintain effective teaching methods, resources and programs
- Federal and provincial governments must facilitate the provision of services and programs in the educational, health, legal and financial environments
- We all must recognize, understand and support the unique learning challenges and needs of people in our communities, workplaces and families