

## **Learning Disabilities in Boys**

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### **Boarding School for Boys with Learning Disabilities**

It is estimated that at least 10% of the population has a learning disability. Because “learning disabilities” are so wide-ranging in nature, there is no common definition. However, there is a general agreement on a few characteristic elements of these children:

- Difficulties with academic progress
- Uneven pattern of development (speech, physical, academic, and/or perceptual)
- Not a result of environmental disadvantage
- Not a result of mental retardation or emotional disturbance

For students with learning disabilities, the current public school system cannot provide the individualized attention they need to understand the concepts that their peers have more success with in the classroom. The situation is more dire for male students who both have higher rates of learning disabilities as well as lower overall rates of academic achievement in the public school system. While specialty programs designed for students with learning disabilities exist in some school districts, an even better option would be to enroll your son in a private boys school.

### **Benefits of a Private Boarding School**

When students with learning disabilities attend boarding school, they receive personalized attention that facilitates more effective and holistic learning. Each child has a learning preference that leans toward auditory, visual, kinesthetic, or a combination style. Boarding schools assess their students’ learning needs and match the teaching methodology to best suit the child, presenting information in the ways it will be best received. Some parents would argue that this individualized treatment is mollycoddling, and their children won’t receive the same opportunities later in college and the workforce. However, private instruction also teaches students how they can make themselves better lifelong learners, so they won’t *need* preferential treatment to succeed in the future.

### **Seeking Help for Learning Disabilities in Children and Adolescents**

Learning disabilities not only hamper a child’s academic success, they also tarnish a child’s self-esteem. Failure in the classroom and a constant struggle to learn may make children unmotivated, angry, and more likely to act out. These side effects may sometimes distract from or mask the real issue, leading to an unharmonious family life. However, when children are given the support and opportunity to allow them to overcome their difficulties, negative and abusive behaviors can be turned around before they become permanent habits.

If you suspect that your child has a learning disability, you should seek a professional opinion immediately. Some parents avoid addressing the issue by citing academic underperformance as a phase, disinterest in a particular subject, the fault of a teacher, or a number of other reasons. The early education of your child will affect his later development and life choices. Giving him the best start by catching a learning disability early is the best way to address the situation. Child psychologists or school therapists are generally able to identify learning disabilities and recommend ways of handling them. Enrolling your son in a boarding school with programs to support students with learning disabilities will ensure that your child is in one of the best environments to overcome his learning challenges and perform well academically.

*The ABLE Initiative .....*

*For more information on The ABLE Initiative, please contact the director, Melissa Nipper.*