

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Following is a list of thirty challenges that typically confront a child with either a left brain or a right brain deficiency. Consider them carefully and check off those that you feel describe your child. Discuss some of them with your child's teacher if you are not sure.

You should not expect to check off only left or only right brain issues. Nothing is ever that pure. But if your child has a brain imbalance, the results will definitely lean toward one side. Add this to the other evidence you have already collected in the other assessments.

► *Right Hemisphere Deficiency*

- Poor math reasoning (math word problems).
- Poor reading comprehension and pragmatic skills (misses the main idea or what a story character was thinking).
- Misses the big picture.
- Very analytical—processes ideas sequentially, step by step.
- Doesn't understand jokes.
- Very good at finding mistakes, such as spelling errors.
- Very literal.
- Speaks without reaching a conclusion.
- Early speech precociousness (talked well early).
- Was an early word reader.
- Has a fascination with letters and numbers.
- High IQ but with a noticeable disparity in skills.
- Interested in unusual topics.
- Learns in a rote (memorization) manner.
- Knows extraordinary amounts of specific facts about a subject, such as train schedules, TV schedules, baseball stats, world capitals.
- Excessively impatient.
- Displays poor voice inflection (speaks in a monotone with little or no expression).
- Poor sound levels in speech (speaks too loudly or too softly).
- Poor nonverbal communication (can't read facial expressions or body posture).
- Speaks out loud regarding what he or she is thinking.

- Talks “in your face” (space invader).
- Good reader but does not enjoy reading.
- Thinks analytically. Makes logical deductions from information.
- Academic difficulties were picked up late because decoding and spelling were very strong.
- Likes to make lists and plan.
- Follows rules without questioning them.
- Easily memorizes spelling and mathematical formulas.
- Enjoys observing rather than participating.
- More likely to read an instruction manual before trying something new.
- Math was the first subject that was problematic.

TOTAL _____

► *Left Hemisphere Deficiency*

- Very good at big picture skills.
- Intuitive thinker—led by feelings.
- Good at abstract “free” association.
- Poor analytical skills (has difficulty breaking things into smaller parts).
- Inquisitive about what others are doing or why rules exist.
- Difficulty with prioritizing.
- Unlikely to read instruction manual before trying something new.
- Naturally creative, but needs to apply self to develop potential.
- Would rather do than observe.
- Misreads or omits common small words.
- Had difficulty naming colors, objects, and letters as a small child.
- Needs to hear or see concepts many times in order to learn them.
- Is exhibiting downward scores in achievement tests and/or school performance.
- Schoolwork is inconsistent.
- Was late in learning to talk.
- Has difficulty pronouncing words (poor with phonics).
- Had difficulty learning the alphabet, nursery rhymes, or songs as a small child.

- Acts before thinking.
- Makes careless mistakes.
- Reads slowly. Tends to misread, omit, or repeat words.
- Sometimes writes letters backward.
- Poor at math operations—has difficulty counting or calculating, such as long division.
- Had above-average number of ear infections.
- Has a poor memory for facts and figures.
- Has poor academic ability.
- Performs poorly on verbal tests.
- Needs to be told something several times.
- Spells poorly.
- Poor test performer—doesn't read directions well and misinterprets questions.
- Has poor memorization skills.

TOTAL _____

ACADEMIC MILESTONES ASSESSMENT

Because signs of a brain deficiency often show up early—in some children even before they are born—many clues can be found when looking back.

These milestones pertain exclusively to language and verbal development. Read through them and recall the age at which your child achieved these specific skills. You don't have to write anything down or keep a tally, but it is good to mark them off, so you have a record for your own use. It is just one more assessment that will help you determine if your child has FDS and if it is due to a left or a right brain delay. Consider them as best you can remember.

At the age of six months, a child should be:

- Making many different sounds, including laughing, gurgling, and cooing.
- Reacting to tone of voice, especially if loud or angry.
- Turning in the direction of new sounds, such as toys that rattle and squeak or a song being sung.
- Babbling to get attention, using sounds that include *p*, *b*, and *in*.
- Smiling when spoken to.
- Indicating a need for something through sound or gesture.

At eight months, a child should be:

- Responding to his or her name.
- Saying at least four or more different, distinct sounds.
- Using syllables such as *da*, *ba*, and *ka*.
- Listening to his or her own voice and others' voices.
- Trying to imitate some sounds.
- Responding to the word "no."
- Participating in games such as peekaboo.

At ten months, a child should be:

- Making utterances that sound like *mama* or *dada*, but not necessarily labeled to the person.
- Making noncrying sounds to attract attention, such as squealing or raising the voice.

- Connecting syllables that sound like real speech, including both long and short groups of sounds.
- Repeating certain syllables or sequences of sounds over and over.

At one year, a child should be:

- Recognizing her name and turning to look when she hears her name.
- Saying “mama” and “dada” and maybe two or three additional words.
- Imitating familiar words and animal sounds.
- Understanding simple commands and instructions, such as “come here.”
- Able to wave and understand “bye-bye.”
- Able to make appropriate eye contact and show affection for familiar people.
- Responding to sounds such as the doorbell ringing or the dog barking.
- Understanding that words are symbols for objects.
- Understanding the meaning of the word “no,” even if she doesn’t agree.

At eighteen months, a child should be:

- Using at least five to ten words, including names of people and familiar things.
- Using some words to express wants or needs, such as “more.”
- Pointing and gesturing to a desired object.
- Starting to combine two words, such as “all gone.”
- Pointing to familiar body parts.
- Recognizing pictures of familiar things and people.
- Getting familiar objects upon request, even if in another room.
- Getting more accurate at imitating sounds and words.
- Responding when his or her name is called.
- Humming or singing simple tunes.
- Listening and responding to quiet speech.

At age two, a child should:

- Use two- to three-word “sentences,” such as “No want” and “No go.”
- Have a vocabulary of approximately 200 to 300 words and use about 150 regularly.
- Show affection for familiar people.
- Express simple desires or needs for familiar things or actions through speaking rather than pointing.
- Refer to self by name rather than “me” or “I.”
- Ask “why” questions, such as “What that?” and “Where kitty?”
- Understand simple questions and commands.
- Name familiar pictures.

At two and a half years, a child should:

- Know the names of family members and others.
- Have a 400-word vocabulary and be able to name familiar objects and pictures.
- Say his or her first name and hold up fingers to show his or her age.
- Say “no,” though it may mean “yes.”
- Refer to self as “me” rather than by name.
- Answer “where” questions.
- Use short sentences regularly, such as “Me do it.”
- Use past tense and plurals, although not always correctly.
- Be talking to other children and adults.
- Know how to match at least three colors.
- Know the difference between big and little.

At age three years, a child should:

- Speak and be understood by strangers, even though many articulation errors may persist.
- Have a vocabulary of nearly 1,000 words.
- Name at least one color and be able to match all primary colors.
- Know concepts such as night and day, boy and girl, big and little, in and out.

- Follow two-step requests, such as “Get the toy and put it in the box.”
- Sing familiar songs.
- Talk a lot (to self and others).

At age four, a child should:

- Have a vocabulary of 1,500 words.
- Use four- to five-word sentences.
- Begin to use more complex sentences.
- Use plurals, contractions, and past tense.
- Ask many questions, including “why?”
- Understand simple “who,” “what,” and “where” questions.
- Follow commands and directions, even if the target object is not present.
- Identify some basic shapes, such as circle and square. Identify primary colors.
- Talk about concepts in the abstract and imaginary conditions, such as “I hope Santa brings me a scooter.”
- Begin to copy patterns, such as lines and circles on a page.
- Pay attention to a short story and may be able to answer questions about it.
- Hear and understand most of what is said at home and in preschool.
- Relate incidents that happened in school or at home.

At age five, a child should:

- Have a 2,000-word vocabulary.
- Speak in five- to six-word sentences.
- Use different types of sentences, including complex ones that describe cause and effect or temporal relations, such as “I’ll get in trouble if I hit Jimmy” or “I can have a cookie after I eat my lunch.”
- Use past, present, and future tenses.
- Count to 10, including counting objects.
- Understand what objects are used for and made of.

- Know spatial relationships, such as behind, far, near, and on top of.
- Comprehend the concept of opposites, such as hard/soft, long/short.
- Ask questions for the purpose of gaining new information.
- Know right and left on self, but not necessarily on others.
- Express feelings, dreams, wishes, and other abstract thoughts.
- Copy basic capital letters when shown an example.
- Draw rudimentary pictures.
- Perhaps be able to write his name.
- Although some children may be able to spell or read by age five, these skills are not the norm.

COMMON SIGNS OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

Again, think back and see if you recognize any of these traits as they pertain to your child. Mark off those that pertain, though it is not necessary to do a tally.

► *Preschool*

- Does not speak as much as most of the other children.
- Has trouble with pronunciation.
- Has slow vocabulary growth.
- Is often unable to find the right word when communicating.
- Is not very good at rhyming words.
- Has trouble learning numbers, alphabet, days of the week, colors, shapes.
- Is extremely restless and easily distracted.
- Has trouble interacting with peers.
- Has difficulty following directions or routines.
- Has slow development of fine motor skills.

► *Kindergarten Through Grade 4*

- Is slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds.
- Confuses basic words, such as *run*, *eat*, and *want*.
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors, including letter reversals (*b/d*), inversions (*m/w*), transpositions (*felt/left*), and substitutions (*house/home*).
- Transposes number sequences and confuses arithmetic signs (+, -, ×, /, =).
- Is slow to remember facts.
- Is slow to learn new skills and relies heavily on memorization.
- Is impulsive.
- Has difficulty planning.
- Has an unstable pencil grip.
- Has trouble learning about time.
- Has poor coordination.
- Is unaware of physical surroundings.

- Is prone to accidents.

► *Grades 5 Through 8*

- Reverses letter sequences (*soiled/solid, left/felt*).
- Is slow to learn prefixes, suffixes, root words, and other spelling strategies.
- Avoids reading aloud.
- Has trouble with word problems.
- Has difficulty with handwriting.
- Has awkward, fistlike, or tight pencil grip.
- Avoids writing assignments.
- Has slow or poor recall of facts.
- Has difficulty making friends.
- Has trouble understanding body language and facial expressions.

► *Grades 9 Through 12*

- Is a poor speller and frequently spells the same word differently in a single piece of writing.
- Avoids reading and writing tasks.
- Has trouble summarizing.
- Has trouble answering open-ended test questions.
- Has weak memory skills.
- Has difficulty adjusting to new settings.
- Performs tasks slowly.
- Has a poor grasp of abstract concepts.
- Either pays too little attention to details or focuses on them too much.
- Misreads information.