

NONVERBAL LEARNING DISABILITIES: CLINICAL SUBTYPES

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TYPE	Usual Presenting Problems	Academic Concerns	Strengths	Psychological Process Deficits
Perceptual	Organizational skills (time management; research projects; forest/trees issues)	Mathematics (especially geometry, graphs, measurement); geography, maps; visual aspects of language arts (letter reversals, spelling, organization on page)	Verbal abilities (vocabulary, verbal reasoning, general knowledge); oral presentation; listening skills	Pattern recognition; visual attention; visual analysis and synthesis; visualization; nonverbal problem-solving; part/whole integration
Social ✓	Social skills issues; communication skills; behaviour; personal space; difficulty making and/or keeping friends; unaware of needs of others	Lack of participation in class; weak listening and reading comprehension; difficulty following instructions; problems working with others	Verbal abilities (vocabulary, general knowledge, grammar); oral language; auditory learning	Attention to socially-relevant cues: visual (body language, facial expression); auditory (tone, pitch, amplitude, timing, pacing); humour, innuendo, metaphor, analogy; Social knowledge – absence/access
Written Expressive	Behaviour; anger management; low frustration tolerance; low self-esteem; "mouthy"	Quality and quantity of written work; task completion; homework issues; penmanship; spelling	Verbal abilities (vocabulary, verbal reasoning, general knowledge); oral presentation; listening skills	Visual-motor integration; fine motor control; speed versus accuracy; visual memory; other psychomotor factors (laterality, self in space, directionality)
Attentional	Poor attention span; distractibility (internal and/or external); off-task behaviour; tunes out, daydreams	Problems with accuracy in math, written work; difficulty with written instructions; "careless" errors; incomplete work	Verbal abilities (vocabulary, verbal reasoning, general knowledge); oral presentation; listening skills; auditory memory	Visual attention and distractibility; tactile attention and distractibility; part-whole integration; speed/accuracy; self-regulation

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT SUBTYPES OF NONVERBAL LEARNING DISABILITIES

TYPE	KEY STRATEGIES
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>find alternative input channel for pattern recognition</i> • <i>translate nonverbal into verbal and BRIDGE</i> • <i>connect verbal with nonverbal in context</i> • <i>importance of not over-verbalizing: "knows" but does not do</i> • <i>context for everything – teach and apply</i> • <i>integration of music, art, movement, physical education</i> • <i>organizational skills/order</i>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>verbal labeling of feelings/emotions/behaviours</i> • <i>"scripting"</i> • <i>teaching</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>social language</i> • <i>"feelings" vocabulary</i> • <i>social norms</i> • <i>basic games/activities</i> • <i>in situ practice</i> • <i>body memories</i> • <i>reduce dependency – "what are you supposed to do ..."</i> • <i>importance of good modeling</i>
Written Expressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>compensation/remediation balance</i> • <i>importance of attitude/mindset</i> • <i>avoidance of humiliation</i> • <i>practice, practice, practice => behavioural concerns</i> • <i>time accommodations – start earlier</i> • <i>extra time or speeding up?</i> • <i>keyboarding – beware of similar problems</i> • <i>potential problems with alternative means of expression (e.g., model building, projects, etc.)</i> • <i>dictation/editing – advantages and disadvantages</i>
Attentional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>medication issues</i> • <i>self-talk</i> • <i>read aloud</i> • <i>stop-look/listen-think-plan-go</i> • <i>nonverbal behaviour management</i> • <i>succinct verbalization</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>one word commands</i> • <i>to-the-point instructions</i> • <i>positive job descriptions</i> • <i>lists</i> • <i>watch the picture!</i>