A Playbook on LEARNING DIFFERENCES

CREED
Center for Racial Equity in Education

Different, but together.

The Center for Racial Equity in Education (**CREED**) is a North Carolina-based nonprofit actively pursuing racial justice by closing the knowing-doing gap in the field and filling an organizational void in the state. We are committed to transforming the educational experiences of Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian students and improving their outcomes from the pre-K through postsecondary levels.

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A Call for Transformative Classrooms

Nationally, **1 in 5 students has a learning difference** (either a learning or attention issue), yet only a subset is formally identified with a disability in school.[1] Of those who are, **1 in 16 have an Individualized Education Plan** while **1 in 50 public school students receive accommodations** under Section 504 of the civil rights law.

Even without the formal diagnosis students who learn differently represent a largely underserved population of public school students. **In North Carolina about 11.8 percent of public school students receive special education placements**.[2]

A closer look at these numbers reveals the clear impact of race on the adverse outcomes of students with learning differences. Low-income children, students of color and English language learners are more likely to be identified as having specific learning disabilities (SLD). Yet many of these students do not receive the same quality of special education services as their white counterparts, despite demonstrating similar levels of academic performance and behavior, even when attending the same schools.[3] In the amount of disciplinary referrals, time to graduation or dropout rates, the outcomes are often less favorable.

Taken as a whole, the system is working as designed: producing disparities in outcomes for our students of color and leaving too many behind, disconnected or disengaged from the learning that can liberate them. We need a transformation in our classrooms.

As educators, we walk into our classrooms at the frontlines of many challenges to creating uplifting and inclusive learning spaces. Some challenges we are prepared for while others require on-the-job and even in-the-moment adjustments. Sometimes we get teaching and learning right, and other times we miss the mark. Our students are the direct beneficiaries of our successes *and* shortcomings, so we must try our best to mitigate when and where we fall short. However, working within a system that overidentified and underserved students of color with learning differences demands more than simply, "trying our best." We need access to proven and practical strategies that can alter the trajectories of all of our students.

This playbook is a tool for educators to help bridge the "knowing-doing" gap that exists for how we improve the educational outcomes of students of color with learning differences. The following "plays" gathered from educators, parents and advocates, address classroom practice, school-based protocols, and wider systemic issues in order to wholly transform how we teach and how our students achieve. ◼

1 National Center for Learning Disabilities. 2017. The state of learning disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5. Executive Summary. https://www.ncld.org/research/state-of-learning-disabilities   **2** National Center for Learning Disabilities. 2017. The State of Learning Disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5: North Carolina State Snapshot. https://www.ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/North-Carolina.Snapshot.10032017.pdf   **3** Barto, Amy. (n.d). Disproportionate Identification of Students of Color in Special Education, Learning Disabilities Association of America. https://ldaamerica.org/lda_today/disproportionate-identification-of-students-of-color-in-special-education/

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK?

This playbook is an invitation to **provocation**, **reflection**, and **redefinition**.

Provocation to challenge yourself to see the unseen and listen to the unheard in the context of your classroom, especially related to students of color.

After each "play," which consists of tools, tips, or activities, you are called toward **reflection** on trying new approaches to students that historically have been mislabeled and excluded.

Each play also provides a set of practical ways to give a **new meaning** to your praxis in the context of students with learning differences. You will be challenged to explore your surroundings and revisit practices looking for inclusive ways to interact, connect with your students, and advocate.

This playbook was intended to be your partner along the way in the process of intentionally questioning biases and limitations within the educational system, and not a one-size-fits-all remedy or recipe.

As a partner, the playbook also has moments to listen to what you have to say. Use the QR codes found in each chapter to access spaces for reflection and to express your intentionalities, doubts – *and yes* – your disagreements.

We at CREED are excited to have you on board. Your action and engagement in the use of the plays can impact the reality of your students and decrease the gap between theory and practice.

REFLECTION ON CURRENT PRACTICE

I would say that my professional awareness of the following is:

Family Empowerment
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Cultural Humility
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Knowledge of Personal Biases
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Recognition of Students' Individuality & Abilities
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Use of my own voice to advocate
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

When I think of my students with learning differences:

What stands out about my instruction is:

What stands out about my students is:

#1 INCLUDE PARENTS

"We fight for our children. We care. We are interested."

— Parent Focus Group participant

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) outlines that parents and guardians must be ensured "meaningful" opportunities to participate in the education of their children. This includes the identification, intervention, and implementation of the educational options.[4]

Parents can be strong allies in their children's education. They have a wealth of information about their children's experiences, strengths, needs, and personalities. As you seek to improve the outcomes of students with learning differences, find ways to bring parents into the conversation. Listen, learn, and *collaborate*.

Wondering how to start? Consider the following tips. ◼

Use this QR code to *Reflect* after each play.

Learn More

A Playbook on Learning Differences

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INCLUDE PARENTS

Parents are expected to be "meaningfully involved" in the identification, intervention, and implementation of the educational options for their children.
Here are some ways to include them.

Ask & Offer
- Ask parents what they would like to see for their child or what their child has needed in the past.
- Engage in a conversation where you listen as much as you talk about what has worked best in the past.
- If necessary, provide examples of some things you can offer or have offered other students.

Communicate
- Reach out early and often with parents about issues you see and ideas you may have for helping their child
- Communicate in the way that parents best respond to and not in ways that are best for you (i.e., consider the time of day, email versus a phone call, etc.)

Partner
- Partner together with parents to begin to understand what their student needs.
- Walk parents through the IEP process (if you are familiar) and other key steps in testing or instruction, so they can be informed and empowered.

Connect
- Connect parents to resources like the Exceptional Children's Advocacy Center (or other resources at the end of this playbook) so they are empowered to help their student and can partner better with you.
- It is OK if you don't have all of the answers. Let parents know there are other resources in your building, the district, or beyond.

Listen Intentionally
- Listen to learn, not just to go through the motions or to dominate the conversation.
- Be open to what you hear; it's essential to creating two-way communication.
- As you listen, be on the lookout for important clues and additional knowledge parents or legal guardians can provide.

Craft an Alliance
- Look for intersections where both you and the parents goals and ideas for the student match.
- Be transparent and ethical so that you are able to build trust and true collaboration.
- Work through issues with an understanding that the outcome will be better if you do it together.

01. 02. 03. 04. 05. 06.

#2 EMBED SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

"Skills for life, not just learning."

— Educator one-on-one interview

For students with learning and attention issues, social-emotional learning (SEL) can help them to understand their personal strengths and needs. The more students are given access to strategies and supports that help them with social and emotional skills, like self-reflection, empathy, and problem-solving, the greater the odds they will be able to make the most of the opportunities and time they have in the classroom.

Read on for how you can embed social-emotional support for children with learning differences in your classroom. ■

Reflection #2

Learn More

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Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning is a process to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

SEL frameworks and strategies have been linked to long-term improvements on skills, attitudes, prosocial behavior, and academic performance as well as lessen students' anxiety, behavior problems, and substance use. When employed in ways that don't center whiteness, but instead affirm cultural/racial identities and customs, the 5 Core Competencies of SEL can improve student outcomes.

1. Self-Awareness

> Encourage students to reflect on their actions or how concepts apply to their lives or their family.

> Provide real feedback on tasks performed or on classroom norms and expectations.

2. Self-Management

> Have students brainstorm ways they can find motivation, handle stress, or manage conflict.

> Incorporate regular self-management into your class (e.g., deep breathing, journaling)

3. Social Awareness

> Activate small groups in your classroom; express the norms of group work and thoughtfully assign group members.

> Provide opportunities for students to share how they feel in situations and about current events so they can learn from one another / work through responses to inequities.

> Model acceptance of difference and respect

4. Relationships

> Teach lessons on giving and receiving constructive feedback.

> Model conflict resolution and good communication skills

5. Responsible Decision-Making

> Discuss and model the steps of good decision-making on a regular basis

> Support and give regular, authentic feedback on good decision-making when you see it in your students.

6. Control Bias/Affirm Cultural Differences

> Cultural and racial identity influence behavior. Don't ignore these factors; give students a chance to reflect on and embrace how their individual backgrounds affect them.

> Incorporate a variety of culturally relevant and affirming SEL activities.

#3 BUILD A "VILLAGE"

"Intentionally involve external resources to support internal needs."

— Educator one-on-one interview

The saying, "it takes a village to raise a child" can be seen as trite but true, particularly as we can feel isolated in our classrooms. Collaboration with other teachers, staff, and families, as well as thoughtfully involving community members can provide a strong wraparound support team for students with learning differences. Building a village allows students to engage with individuals of different strengths, experiences, and approaches. These interactions can be invaluable for students who might be able to connect on a personal or professional level.

Who might you be able to include in a village for your students with learning differences? ■

Learn More

Reflection #3

BUILD A VILLAGE

Create a community of stakeholders who can help nurture your students and support your efforts

Other Faculty & Staff

01

Who is on your hallway (or in your school) that shares high expectations and great ideas to help your students? Join forces with other teachers, the librarian, the school social worker, support staff or more. Search across disciplines when possible.

02

Administrators

Find the person in your building who can not only help you understand policy but will help you push for the best outcomes for your students.

Community Liaisons

03

While some people in your village will be within the school building, many may not be. Who can connect you to community resources and community members who are safe and can provide support to your students?

04

Families

There is no getting around the fact that involving parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings can help your students. Involve families to learn more about student strengths, needs and approaches.

Advocates

05

Be it a coach, a community member, mentor, or even a volunteer, include people who can connect your students to opportunities or who know their interests and can show them things beyond the class assignments.

06

Think Outside the Box

Listen to your students and see who they may need to complete a circle of support. Realize where your gaps are and find a trusted and credible person or group who can help both you and your students achieve better outcomes.

#4 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

"All children are diverse learners."

— Educator Focus Group participant

Learning is a two-way street, and you can always stand to learn more from your students, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Culturally responsive teaching weaves the cultures, languages, and experiences of diverse students into learning, celebrating their strengths and making learning more relevant. Successful implementation of culturally responsive practices has been shown to foster academic progress for students, lead teachers towards dismantling harmful implicit biases and deficit beliefs about students and their families and strengthen the personal relationships between students and their teachers—all important factors in supporting students with learning differences.

In what ways can you add culturally responsive practices into your classroom? ■

Reflection #4

Learn More

4 Tips to Becoming a Culturally Responsive Educator

01

Interrogate Race and Privilege

Seek out and share knowledge around different academic and disciplinary processes and outcomes related to students' race, ethnicity, and linguistic difference. Implement changes in your classroom and advocate for change on a school-wide level, too.

02

Develop Meaningful Connections with Students and Their Families

Engaging with students and their families bridges the gap between school and home and can open your eyes to how students bring their culture and identities into the classroom.

03

Incorporate Diverse Curriculum and Learning Materials

Teaching with materials that encompass diverse cultural values and situations creates a more inclusive environment for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

04

Students Can Teach You, Too

We don't know everything—especially when it comes to our cultural blind spots or implicit biases. Listen and learn from students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

#5 EMPLOY A "STRENGTHS-BASED" APPROACH

"I wish there was a class called empathy."

— Advocate one-on-one interview

S tudents with learning differences face stigma in the classroom from many different sources, which can lead to decreased competence and performance in class. As the leader in your classroom, you have the chance to not look at your students for what they may lack but what they innately possess that can help them on the road to academic or personal success. Employing a strengths-based approach can take a variety of forms.

Read on for what to keep in mind as you create a classroom environment that values everything your students bring and how to build on the strengths of your students. ■

Learn More

Reflection #5

WHAT IS A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH IN THE CLASSROOM?

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A strengths-based approach is student-centered. Instead of being deficit-based (i.e., the learning difference is a problem), it affirms that all students have talents that they bring to the classroom. Below are some ways to employ strength-based approaches in your class:

01

Remember
Learning is dynamic, complex, and holistic and can be demonstrated in different ways. Multiple intelligences exist and can be utilized in a variety of ways.

02

Investigate
Through conversations with the students, parents, previous educators and approved strengths-quizzes, identify what activities and approaches work for students in your class. Also consider how and why these activities work as a way to discover similar ones to incorporate.

03

Build
What can your student already do? What can they do with support? What would you like them to be able to do? These questions serve to assess where your student is and how this can be leveraged to take them from where they are to other goals.

04

Embed Choice
Give options for students to show what they know; this allows them to draw on their strengths while allowing you to assess what they know.

05

Listen to your Students
Consult with, and listen to, your students about how they like to learn and how they learn best in particular situations. Being listened to increases buy-in.

06

Limit Labels
All students possess strengths, even if at different levels. Don't restrict students' ability to grow, to use, or to develop other strengths in different situations.

#6 SEEK ADDITIONAL TRAINING

> " There's a disconnect to what's being taught [to teachers] and what's practical day-to-day."

— Educator Focus Group participant

Whether you are a beginning teacher or a veteran educator, there will always be more to learn, as policies, best practices, and research related to learning differences are constantly expanding and changing. That's not to mention all of the acronyms and jargon that can make it tough to stay up-to-date with it all.

Traditional teacher preparation programs and one-time professional development sessions often do not entirely prepare you for how to adapt and adjust to what is most practical for your students on a daily basis. Seek out additional training where you can to build up your knowledge so that you can better show up for your students.

Read on for tips to keep in mind as you look for additional training. You can also connect to some organizations that offer regular training about learning differences using the QR code below and the Resources page at the end of this Playbook. ◼

Reflection #6

Learn More

SEEK ADDITIONAL TRAINING

There are some things we all should know: Every student is unique. Everyone learns differently. Every teacher has a different set of talents and skills. There are also many things we don't know, which is why seeking additional training and information can improve student outcomes. Here are few tips as you look for ways to sharpen your practice.

01 Notice Your Gaps and Your Strengths

When it comes to training, sometimes it can be more attractive to learn about things we are already familiar with versus trying to learn something new. Your training should help you build on your strengths and support the gaps in your repertoire.

02 Think Continuous Improvement

There are so many ways to be trained, but a single "sit and get" session is probably not the best. Look for multiple opportunities and revisit what you've learned regularly to find new ways to incorporate what you've learned. Keep investing in yourself.

03 Get Connected

Whether it is a district liaison, a specialized group, or an organization that creates training, there are many places and ways to be connected to the information and strategies you need. To find additional resources by type and topic use the QR codes in the Learning Difference Playbook.

04 Apply, Reflect, and Share

As you learn, think of ways you can implement the new ideas into your current lesson plans as well as new ones. If something works, reflect on why and be willing to share any new learnings.

#7

BONUS:
ADVOCATE

" This is not universal."

— Educator Focus Group participant

As a teacher, you possess a unique position in the learning ecosystem where you interact with students, parents, school staff, and policy. Your perspective is critical to educational equity work, and by leveraging your voice, you have the opportunity to effect great change that you and your students stand to benefit from.

Advocacy can take many shapes and forms. Consider the next 5 steps for building your advocacy skills. ■

Reflection #7

Learn More

5 Steps | To Build Your Advocacy Skills

1. Recognize the "What if...?"
Every day as an educator you see issues, challenges or strengths in your students and classrooms that can lead you to ask questions like "What if we did things differently?"

2. Research the Possibilities
Learn more about the issues you care about and see how many new solutions or innovative ways to address them might exist already. If you can't find any, it might be a great time to imagine new possibilities.

3. Reflect and Apply
Based on what you've learned, see what might work best for your situation.

4. Get Connected
An advocacy group or teachers collective may be the perfect way to gather with like minds and practice using your voice.

5. Make the Ask
Whether it is an email, a formal proposal, or a public post, ask for what you feel you might need as a teacher or what your students may need.

MY TOOL BOX

This playbook is based on the experiences and insights of educators and parents. We value your feedback. Is there anything you would like to share with us? Email *info@creed-nc.org*

After reading the Playbook, these are the 5 most useful skills or reflections that I can use in my classroom.

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

#4 _____

#5 _____

This is something I will do differently to better serve my students with learning differences:

After a self-reflection, I would say that my professional awareness about the topics below are:

Family Empowerment
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Cultural Humility
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Knowledge of Personal Biases
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

**Recognition of Students'
Individuality & Abilities**
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

Use of my own voice to advocate
☐ Insufficient
☐ In development
☐ Good

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2020, as part of the LENS-NC project of 9 organizations across North Carolina, the Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED) embarked upon a year of learning and listening to educators, parents, students and advocates about how to improve the educational outcomes of students of color with learning differences in North Carolina.

The goal was to create a playbook for educators that would touch on policy, protocol and practice – surveying the classroom, school and policy levels – to serve as a classroom guide.

Our book of plays also comes with an accompanying digital component that can tell you more about the plays for transforming our classroom approach.

ABOUT THE LENS-NC NETWORK

"Learning for Equity: A Network for Solutions" (LENS-NC) is a partnership between the Oak Foundation and MDC alongside North Carolina organizations working at the intersection of equity and learning differences. The original selected organizations engaged for an 18-month learning network to advance their work to reduce race and income disparities in educational outcomes among students with learning differences and create learning environments where marginalized students with learning differences will thrive.

Today, 20 organizations meet regularly to learn, address common challenges, and explore opportunities to amplify effective strategies for change at classroom, school, community, district, and state levels. Each produces a project that aims to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- Build knowledge and understanding of ways to combat structural racism within the education system, with a focus on the identification and support systems for students with learning differences

- Provide supports to marginalized students with learning differences and their families that increase confidence, self-esteem, and agency

- Build educator understanding of equitable practices and learning environments that address bias and promote cultural responsiveness in the classroom

- Influence systems to embrace and adopt policies and practices necessary for schools to reduce race and income disparities in educational outcomes among students with learning differences

- Elevate the voices and strengthen the skills of students and families affected by structural racism to advocate for changes to practice, policy, and systems that improve opportunities for marginalized students with learning differences

In 2018, former NC Teacher of the Year James E. Ford began devising a vision for a standalone nonprofit that deals explicitly with race and education issues in North Carolina. From this vision, the Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED) was born, a North Carolina-based nonprofit actively pursuing racial justice by closing the knowing-doing gap in the field and filling an organizational void in the state. CREED launched publicly in 2019, releasing two research documents exposing the role of systemic racism in education.

Since then, CREED has grown to a small but mighty team of dynamic individuals, with varied skill sets and backgrounds, committed to transforming the educational experiences of Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian students in North Carolina.

CREED'S MISSION

Ensuring equitable education opportunities means shifting the policy atmosphere and advocating for changes that are generational in their impact. CREED prioritizes expert, race-conscious research on North Carolina-specific education issues. It raises the collective awareness of the general public while inspiring and elevating the work of educators who are ready to alter practices and protocols to become more equitable.

CREED will continue to execute a rigorous research agenda that informs the call for transformation at the structural level for students in Pre-K, K-12, and post-secondary.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kamille Bostick is the Director of Programming at CREED. Trained as a print journalist and having taught juniors and seniors in public schools of Mecklenburg County before teaching for more than a decade at the community college and private college level,

Research

Engage

Implement
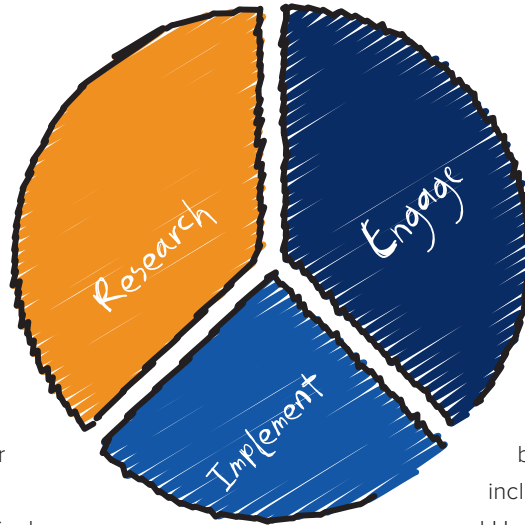
Kamille has experience with students at nearly every level. Every interaction has affirmed her belief that equipped teachers and a sound curriculum can unlock the potential for every student. Kamille was assisted on this project by a research team from UNC Charlotte including Dr. Susan Harden, Dr. Anna Sanczyk and Heddy Patrick Alves Garcia as well as CREED intern Georgia Price.

Dr. Susan B. Harden is an Associate Professor of Education at UNC Charlotte and the Director for the Civic Minor in Urban Youth and Communities. A teacher educator and expert on civic engagement, Dr. Harden teaches students to be community change agents and places them in schools and nonprofits for internships. She received her PhD in Curriculum and Teaching, with a concentration in Cultural Studies, from the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Susan also served the community as a Mecklenburg County Commissioner for District 5 from 2018-2020.

Heddy Patrick Alves Garcia has a master's degree in education and is a graduate student in Counseling at UNC Charlotte. Prior to his advanced studies, he worked as a researcher and professor for the National Department of Education in Brazil.

Dr. Anna Sanczyk is an educator, researcher, and advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She holds a doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her research in the TESOL field focuses on critical pedagogy, teacher identity, and teacher agency.

Georgia Price graduated from Duke University studying Public Policy and Cultural Anthropology with plans to work in education policy after graduation. In her free time, you can find her studying different languages, solving crossword puzzles, or curating new Spotify playlists. ◾

Resources

STATEWIDE

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC). Private, nonprofit parent organization, committed to improving the lives and education of ALL children through a special emphasis on children with disabilities and special healthcare needs. ECAC seeks to make that right a reality by providing information, education, outreach, and support to and for families with children across the state of North Carolina. *https://www.ecac-parentcenter.org/*

Family Support Program, UNC School of Social Work. The mission of the Family Support Program is to promote and provide support for families with children who have special needs. Promotes inclusion, accessibility, diversity, family leadership, self-determination, and the use of People First Language. The Family Support Network™ of North Carolina is comprised of the FSN University Office* and 11 affiliated regional programs providing information and referral, parent-to-parent support, sibling workshops, support groups, and workshops and training for families and service providers statewide. *https://fsp.unc.edu/*

The Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina (LDANC). An organization that promotes awareness of the multifaceted nature of learning disabilities. Supporting equitable opportunities for people with learning disabilities to participate in life's experiences, LDANC seeks to accomplish this through education, support, advocacy, collaboration, and the encouragement of ongoing research. *https://ldanc.org/*

Autism Society of North Carolina. The Autism Society of North Carolina seeks to improve the lives of individuals with autism, supports their families, and educates communities. *https://www.autismsociety-nc.org/*

NATIONAL

Autism in Black aims to provide support to black parents who have a child on the spectrum, through educational and advocacy services. Autism in Black is dedicated to bringing awareness to Autism Spectrum Disorder and reducing the stigma associated with ASD in the black community. *https://www.autisminblack.org/*

BlackSEL is the social-emotional learning HUB, for black people. The HUB aims to highlight the voices of Black SEL practitioners and expand SEL from the classroom to the community, sharing resources to further the field and sustain social-emotional learning practices in Black communities. *https://blacksel.org/*

Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD). Composed of dedicated volunteers from around the country who play an integral part in the association's success by providing support, education and encouragement to parents, educators and professionals on a grassroots level through CHADD chapters. *https://chadd.org/*

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NFFCMH). The National Federation is a national family-run organization that serves to provide advocacy at the national level for the rights of children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs and substance use challenges and their families. The Federation provides leadership and technical assistance to a nation-wide network of family-run organizations as well as collaborates with family-run and other child-serving organizations to transform mental and substance use health care in America. *https://www.ffcmh.org/*

National Center for Learning Disabilities. The mission of NCLD is to improve the lives of 1 in 5 children and adults nationwide with learning and attention issues—by empowering parents and young adults, transforming schools and advocating for equal rights and opportunities. NCLD works to create a society in which every individual possesses the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in school, at work, and in life. *https://www.ncld.org/*

Understood. Understood is a non-profit dedicated to serving the millions of families of kids who learn and think differently. With programs for families, educators, and young adults that focus on empowering people who learn and think differently and those who support them, Understood offers customized, accessible resources and a compassionate community. *https://www.understood.org/*

The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity (YCDC). A preeminent source of cutting-edge research, informed advocacy and trustworthy resources to help those with dyslexia reach their full potential. Through research and advocacy work, YCDC conducts studies and builds awareness about dyslexia, mobilizes grassroots efforts to narrow the reading achievement gap for all students, including low-income students of color, through policies that help dyslexic children succeed. *http://dyslexia.yale.edu/*

PODCASTS

10 Minute Teacher Podcast. Episode 618: "Misconceptions About Kids With Learning Differences in the Classroom." As students with learning differences are put into general classroom spaces, many teachers have misconceptions about including these special students in their classrooms. Dr. Rebekah Dyer talks about these misconceptions and how we can work to reach every child. Available wherever you get your podcasts, or directly at *https://www.coolcatteacher.com/misconceptions-about-kids-with-learning-differences-in-the-classroom/*

OTHER RESOURCES

"5 things to know about racial and ethnic disparities in special education." This article explores the disparities in special education and how it affects students. *https://www.childtrends.org/publications/5-things-to-know-about-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-special-education*

"Culturally Competent Approaches to ADHD: Issues in African-American Populations." This article addresses how mental health stigma has been found to be a significant factor in African-American treatment engagement, and the steps to understand cultural considerations is key. *https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/culturally-competent-approaches-adhd-issues-african-american-populations*

"Learning 'Learning' Differences": A TEDxTalk. In this talk entitled, Solebury School alumna Meredith Agran '13 shared her personal challenges in accepting her learning differences to help validate viewers' own experiences with different learning styles. *https://www.ted.com/talks/meredith_agran_learning_learning_differences*

"Study: Black students less likely to be identified as having disabilities." News Report. This article from 2019 addresses the issue of Black and Brown children in the south are less likely to be identified as having a learning disability than white children. *https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/study-black-students-unfairly-labeled-learning-disorders-n1046836*

"What is a Learning Difference?" This resource gives a brief overview of what a learning difference is and gives examples of learning differences. *https://www.oaklandschool.net/what-is-a-learning-difference* ∎

Glossary

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) – an educational term used to define children enrolled in educational programs who are either non-English-proficient (NEP) or limited-English-proficient (LEP).[5]

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) – pedagogy that uses students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as resources to support learning.[6]

English language learners (ELL) – a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.[7]

Knowing-doing gap – a gap that exists between what people in organizations know and what they actually implement in their practice.

Learning difference – any of various conditions that interfere with an individual's ability to learn and so result in impaired functioning in language, reasoning, or academic skills and that are thought to be caused by difficulties in processing and integrating information.

Self-reflection – a reflective examination of one's beliefs or motives.[8]

Social-emotional learning (SEL) – aims to help students - both children and adults - better understand their thoughts and emotions, to become more self-aware, and to develop more empathy for others within their community and the world around them.[9]

Specific learning disabilities (SLD) – a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken, or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.[10]

Strengths-based approach – refers to teaching methods and strategies that identify and draw upon the strengths of children, families, and communities.[11]

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