

How to Refer a Suspected LD Student to DSPS

This can be tricky. Many students do not have a clear understanding of the definition of a learning disability. They may equate it with being stupid, or unable to learn. Because of the general lack of disability awareness, there are still many stigmas attached to the word. No one wants to be viewed as different, much less disabled.

Some students may think you are suggesting they belong in a Special Education class, like in high school. Some may even have been in those classes, had a bad experience, and are attempting to 'pass' as non-disabled.

The key lies in your understanding of, and attitude towards learning disabilities. As it is estimated that 12% of the college population has a learning disability, it is very likely you will have at least one LD student in your class.

When speaking privately with an individual student who you suspect of having a learning disability, try the following:

- Give specific examples of the reason for your suspicions.
- Ask the student to describe their educational history.
- Listen to determine if their difficulties are long-standing or situational.
- Ask what they are doing, or would be willing to do, to improve their academic performance.
- Ask what they know about learning disabilities.
- Inform the student that there are services available that address learning difficulties, helping students to be more successful (specialized tutoring, learning strategies and techniques, etc.)
- Refer the student to the LD Checklist on the DSPS Student web page.
- Offer to assist the student in completing the checklist.
- Accompany the student to DSPS in Student Services to schedule LD Testing.
- If you would like, you and the student can meet with a DSPS Coordinator together.

This is a great way to transition the student to our services and to allow us to make a determination if our services would be appropriate and beneficial. It also allows the instructor to explain identified difficulties and for the Coordinator to make suggestions for ways we can work collaboratively to increase the student's success.

If you trust that the student will make it over to DSPS independently, you could call the DSPS office at 5861 and alert our staff.