

# Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

---

## EPISODE 00

Welcome to Let's Talk Learning Disabilities with Laurie Peterson and Abbey Weinstein. Laurie & Abbey spend their days talking about dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, ADHD they talk to parents of struggling students and adults who have had a lifetime of academic challenges. They want to share those stories, along with their own insights with you through simple conversation. So, *Let's talk Learning disabilities.*

Laurie: Welcome to our release of "Let's Talk Learning Disabilities." We are so excited that you are here. We'd like to give you a little more information about us and let you learn a little bit more about who we are and then tell you a little bit more about what to expect from us in future blog entries. So I'm going to let Abbey start, Abbey, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Abbey: Well first of all, I'm so happy to be here with you guys and welcome everybody! I am an educational diagnostician, currently it's about my 15th year as a diagnostician however, I've been in education for about 25 years now. I've been in the classroom, in both special education settings and general education settings, so I have experiences to share regarding students that learn differently, typically-developing students and all sorts of challenges that go along with learning difficulties.

Laurie: What grades did you teach?

Abbey: I primarily taught first grade. All of my years were first grade, except one year I taught middle school and that was an experience. I decided to go back to Elementary after that! I don't really do the Middle School years, those are some rough years. I like the young ones, teaching them how to read and really giving them that love of learning.

Laurie: And those little kids, they still like you.

Abbey: Oh they do, they still want to please you.

Laurie: So what made you decide you wanted to be a diagnostician? Let's go ahead and explain what a diagnostician is. Diagnosticians, we are trained in administering

standardized assessments such as intellectual assessments and academic achievement assessments. We're trained in administering those, interpreting the results and diagnosing learning disabilities. We're very similar to psychometrists. In other states that don't have diagnosticians and we do very similar evaluations to psychologists or school psychologists in the school setting. And so what made you decide you wanted to go down that road?

Abbey: Actually when I moved from special education to general education I was feeling a little run down and burnt out and feeling like I wasn't making enough progress with my students so I thought I'm going to go work with typical students in a regular classroom and come to find out that even in a "regular classroom" or a general education classroom there are always students that struggle even if they're not diagnosed with any type of learning disability there are struggling students or students that learn differently and that made me want to learn more and dive into "Why are students struggling?" That drove me to want to become a diagnostician and start my master's degree program and went through my Master's in education and my got my certification as a diagnostician. I then wanted to learn even more and really equip myself with more Knowledge and skills in special education and learning disabilities and so I went on and got my PhD in special education.

Laurie: That's a lot of school.

Abbey: It is a lot of school!

Laurie: Yeah, and I have a similar story. I was always special education and interestingly no one would ever believe this if you knew me but I really knew what I wanted to do when I was in high school, I really loved working with kids and I really love the kids that just needed that extra help. I volunteered through my high school that had this program where I could go to an elementary school in their special education classroom as a high school student. So I always knew that I wanted to work with these kids and so my undergrad is in special ed as well and I taught for about seven or eight years and loved it. I worked with all ages, all different learning differences, all different disabilities but I was like you in asking, "But why? Why is it hard for you? Why don't you get this?" I just wanted to be able to crack open their head and and get inside and so that's what motivated me to go back to. So I got my my certification as well interestingly though I worked in the schools for five or six years as a diagnostician but it quickly frustrated because there's so much red tape and there's so many things that you're allowed to say and not allowed to say and even allowed to test for or how you do the testing. I'm a very common sense kind of

person and so much of what we were doing just didn't make good common sense and so that is when I started a private practice and I went on my own.

Abbey: And that was how many years ago?

Laurie: That was 16 years ago. And I love what I do! I love helping families understand why their student struggles. I love helping adults understand why something is hard for them and know that and it is the hope. It's giving them help right? And that's how Abbey and I met you know she came to work for us part-time and then we sucked her in and we stole her away and now she's been with us full-time. We love what we do and I think that kind of leads us into the whole reason why we're doing this podcast is that you know, we spend day in and day out talking to adults with learning differences or challenges, parents of students with learning struggles and we find that we're hearing the same things or a lot of the same things over and over again. We find that when we're meeting with families to go over those testing results that were explaining and having the same kinds of conversations and I feel like we are able to give that hope. I would love to know that if there's someone that's listening to this that has a child with a learning difference or is an adult who's always struggled with reading or struggle with math, that there's hope. I think our goal with this podcast is to inform and to educate, but to give hope and to let you know that you're not alone. There's nothing better than knowing that you're not alone but also knowing that there's there's an answer there's help there's hope. And that's kind of why we're here, so Abbey tell us a little bit about what we're going to be talking about in the future.

Abbey: Well what to expect coming up in the future, is we're going to focus on lots of different learning disabilities and other related topics. For example we're going to talk about dyslexia, we're going to talk about dysgraphia, we're gonna spend a lot of time talking about ADHD or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder we're going to talk about a math disability called dyscalculia. We're going to really focus on defining the disability, talking about characteristics and symptoms of those disabilities, what to look for and then how can we go about correcting it and compensating and learning strategies to correct it and what are the causes what are the long-term implications or the prognosis in the future of these different disabilities? We're also going to talk about some other topics. Lori what are some other topics we might talk about?

Laurie: So we're going to talk a lot about the disabilities and I like the long-term prognosis and what to expect at the different age levels because we see kids that are in kindergarten all the way up through we've I think our last adult that we saw was

64 years old so we we've seen it at every age we know that it looks very different at every age. Some of them even look different between boys and girls, and so we want to talk about that. We are going to talk a lot about what the Section 504 law provides for students and how is that different than being in special education? We're going to talk about the types of help you can get while you're in college and how to access that support we're going to talk about how to get support on things like the SAT and the ACT and on different licensing exams and certification exams and how individuals with disabilities can get accommodations or get help with those. We're going to talk a lot about how to help parents be better advocates for their kids, but even more importantly we're going to talk about how to help students become their own best Advocate because one day mom and dad won't be there to help the teacher remember that they need more time on their tests. They need to learn how to advocate for themselves. We're going to talk a lot about what are realistic expectations of the school, both private and public. What can a private school do? What are they expected to do, and then we're going to talk about public schools and what is realistic to ask for? Because you can ask for the moon but you have to be prepared for them to say no. And like Abbey said we will talk a lot about ADHD, simply because we both live it, we both have been diagnosed with ADHD we both have children with ADHD, I have a husband with ADHD. So we have a lot of ADHD in this office and we have some great experiences, not just with the kids that we've worked with, the adults we worked with, but just in day to day stuff. So you'll probably see some of our ADHD coming through like when we aren't very well organized or we haven't planned very well those executive functioning skills you know those are things we struggle with too. We will get off topic easily so we're hoping with all of that information we'll be able to provide some hope and some valuable knowledge that you can take and decide if you need to pursue testing for your child. That's one thing we didn't even talk about private vs public testing the testing you get through the School versus the testing you can get privately and what's different about it.

Abbey: I mean we want to make sure that you leave with some knowledge or some nugget of information that gives you hope but this equips you to make more informed decisions regarding your student or you as far as moving forward and what you can do about it.

Laurie: We're also hoping to have a couple of guests as we come through, we're going to do some interviews. I've got an ADHD coach lined up that we're going to talk to, that's always a good one. We're going to talk to a dyslexia therapist and an occupational therapist we're going to have a special education teacher come in and talk to us, we're going to have a 504 coordinator come in and talk with us. Then we're also maybe gonna have a vision therapist or somebody who deals with vision

therapy because that's something we actually see a lot of. We work pretty closely with those doctors and therapists too. So hopefully that will add just even more to the pot of what we have to offer so we're really excited and we're glad you're here. One thing we did want to also let you know is that if you have something that you would like to hear more about, either you want to suggest a topic for the show or you just have questions or a question or lots of questions. We have an email it's [letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com](mailto:letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com). So just shoot us an email and we're happy to answer any questions that you have, but also we'd love some suggestions about what you guys would like to hear because we want this to be for you we want this to be helpful, so if there's something we can add or do differently or a topic that you feel like would be super helpful, then send it our way and we will definitely add it to our list. So expect our first episode to probably be out about the same time this one comes out. We're so excited, we are gonna start with dyslexia, and talk to you a little bit about that. That's gonna be our first episode, we probably won't be able to cover everything about dyslexia but we're definitely going to do our best to get it started and we may circle back around to it probably several times. It's so common, but again feel free to contact us or email us at [letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com](mailto:letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com). Have a great day, thanks for joining us!

Thank you so much for joining us today. In our show notes you can find information about today's talk, as well as links to the resources and other episodes. If you have questions about today's talk, have ideas for future episodes or just want to stay connected, you can contact us through Diagnostic Learning Services on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. So, Let's Keep Talking Learning Disabilities. This podcast is sponsored by E Diagnostic Learning. You can find more information at [ediagnosticlearning.com](http://ediagnosticlearning.com).

Length of episode 13:01