

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 16

In this Episode, Laurie and Abbey discuss standardized tests, applying for accommodations on those tests, and even what to do when those requests have been denied. They share several stories of past students who have been both approved and denied for accommodations on standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT or MCAT.

Why Would Someone with a Proven Diagnosis be Denied Accommodations? (3 min)

When the test board receives a request for accommodations on an exam, they are looking for evidence that shows the student needs those specific accommodations to perform at an average level of function. If a student with dyslexia is able to accomplish an average score without the requested accommodations, it may be denied because the board is looking to level the playing field, not allow students a way to perform their best. Also, if the student is applying for accommodations on a standardized test, and has not previously used those accommodations in a learning setting, it may be denied on the same basis of the disability not affecting a major life function, even though the student may clearly have a learning disability.

Applying for Accommodations (13 min)

Starting early in your requests for accommodations on any standardized tests is so important. One of the biggest factors in getting approved can be the fact that the student has a history of needing and using accommodations. Laurie & Abbey recommend thinking about those higher level tests now, and if you think you may need to apply for accommodations, start the process in high school. Get evaluated by a private practice, and start building your history of accommodations to show that it is necessary when you need it most.

Appealing a Denied Request for Accommodations (15 min)

When a request gets denied, you can appeal the denial so long as there is still time before you have to test, which is another reason to leave yourself plenty of time to go through this process. Laurie & Abbey speak specifically in this episode about a student who came to them because she was denied the requested accommodations and realized her testing submitted as a part of the request was not extensive enough. As a part of the appeal, they did more testing and submitted reports and scores to support each accommodation specifically. Sometimes the board just wants to see proof that the accommodation requested is a legitimate need for the student and will be imperative in their completion of the exam. A simple letter from the doctor may not cut it.

Homeschooling with Accommodations (19 min)

Previous episodes of the podcast explain the process of evaluating, applying for and receiving accommodations in public school, which is definitely the precursor to getting any kind of accommodations on standardized testing. However, what would a homeschooled student be able to show as proof of receiving accommodations, since a 504 is not present? Laurie & Abbey discuss homeschooling and how a parent can write a letter and keep documentation showing accommodations used on a regular basis. This might include extra time is allowed on each exam, or that 50% of the tests are given orally, etc. This type of documentation, along with an evaluation and testing done by a private practice may be just what you need to receive those needed accommodations.

Resources

Contact info for the podcast: letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com

E-Diagnostic Learning Website: <https://ediagnosticlearning.com>

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