

Matan

**Common
Disabilities in the
Religious School
Classroom**

A Brief History of Special Education Law

- **1965** – President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the first piece of legislation that addressed the inequality of students (specifically those from low-income families).
- **1966** – ESEA amended to include 2 parts aimed specifically at children with disabilities.



A Brief History of Special Education Law

1975 – Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), passed into law by President Ford:

- Free and appropriate education
- Non-discriminatory identification & evaluation
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

A Brief History of Special Education Law

1990 - Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA):

- Changed “handicapped children”
 - to “children with disabilities”
- Extended laws to offer services starting with toddlers through adult stable employment
- Included requirements for parent/student participation in educational decisions
- Added safeguards to ensure honest communication and protect rights

15-20%



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGES 3-21 HAVE
A DIAGNOSED LEARNING DISABILITY**



1 IN 54

**CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES HAS
AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

200,000

**STUDENTS IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**



Implications

What are the implications of these statistics – and these evolving laws - for the Jewish community?



The Jewish Context

Educate each child according to their way. (Proverbs 22:6)

Ben Azzai taught: Do not disdain any person; do not underestimate the importance of anything – for there is no person who does not have his hour and there is no thing without its place in the sun. (*Pirkei Avot* 4:3)

Congregational Schools

- For children with and without learning issues, the times that most religious schools meet often present added difficulty.
- Parents may or may not share relevant learning information with you.
- The more you can demonstrate your ability and desire to meet the needs of **all** students, the more likely parents are to be forthcoming with you.

What Does A Disability Look Like?



A Disability Can Impact:

- **Physical development:** The ability to move, see, and hear.
- **Cognitive development:** The ability to think and learn.
- **Self help:** The ability to eat, dress, and take care of oneself.
- **Speech and Language:** The ability to talk and express needs.
- **Social emotional development:** The ability to relate to others


ADHD



The Three Major Characteristics are:

- inattention (problems paying attention)
- hyperactivity (being very active)
- impulsivity (acting before thinking)

Children who are hyperactive and impulsive may fidget & squirm, get out of their chairs when they are not supposed to, run around or climb constantly, have trouble playing quietly, talk too much, blurt out answers, have trouble waiting their turn, interrupt others when they're talking.



Learning Disability is a general term that describes specific kinds of learning problems. Skills most often affected: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning and doing math. Learning disabilities vary from person to person. Researchers believe that learning disabilities are caused by differences in how a person's brain works and how it processes information. People with learning disabilities often have average or above average intelligence, but their brains process information differently.

Learning Disabilities

ASD is the name for a group of developmental disorders and includes a wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of disability. The areas most commonly affected are communication, social interaction & behavior.

Autism Spectrum Disorders



Autism Spectrum Disorders

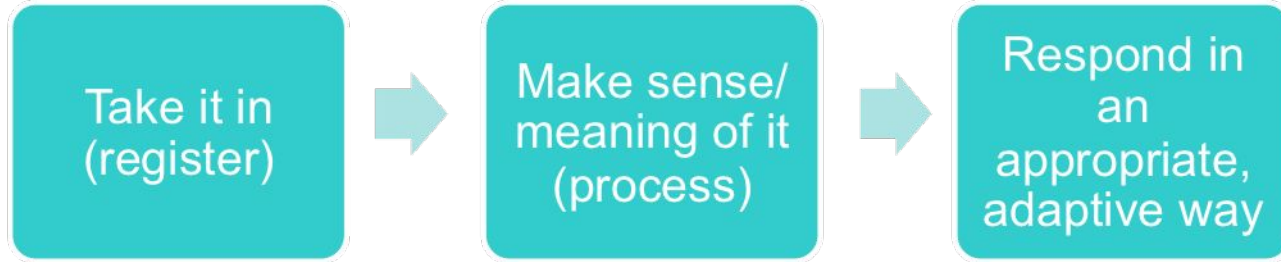
- Ongoing social challenges that include difficulty communicating and interacting with others (eye contact, difficulty with two-way conversations, echolalia, theory of mind)
- Repetitive behaviors as well as limited interests or activities
- Sensitivity or insensitivity to sensory inputs such as bright lights, noises, the feel of clothing, temperature, or touch.
- 46% of children with ASD have above-average intelligence. They may be strong visual and auditory learners, and can excel in math, science, music, or art.

Formerly known as "sensory integration dysfunction" – Sensory Processing Disorder or SPD is a condition that exists when sensory signals *don't* get organized into appropriate responses.

Sensory Processing Disorder



What do our brains do with sensory information?



We will either seek out more sensory input (if we aren't getting enough in order to register), or we may avoid sensory input (possibly even as a "fight or flight" response)....

Processing Disorder



Visual Processing Disorder:

- Cannot receive, process, sequence, recall or express information in an accurate and timely way, the brain has trouble processing visual information.

Auditory Processing Disorder:

- Refers to how the central nervous system uses auditory information – a deficit in the neural processing of auditory stimuli.

Anxiety Disorders

- Anxiety is the most common psychiatric illness in children (and adults)
- 1 in 8 children suffer from anxiety

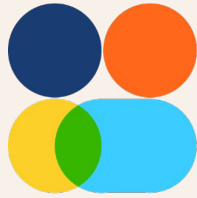
There are several kinds of anxiety disorders:

- Panic disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Specific phobias
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Selective mutism
- Separation anxiety

The Jewish Imperative

- The Jewish community lags behind the secular world when it comes to disability inclusion.
- The way we treat a child with special needs has a drastic effect on how the entire family is included in Jewish life.
- With so much attention on “unaffiliated” Jews, we must recognize that the families of close to 1 million children may have their nose pressed against the window, wanting to be included.





Matan

**Reshaping Jewish
Communities Through
Disability Inclusion**