

Dyscalculia: Instructional Considerations for Young Learners




Overview

More than 2 million U.S. students have a Specific Learning Disability, including dyscalculia (www.ncld.org). Early childhood education and elementary school can be very challenging for students with dyscalculia. Time, money, and place value are very hard topics for these students to master, and they may never memorize their basic math facts. However, with explicit instruction, properly designed assessments, and the right accommodations, students with dyscalculia can improve their mathematical thinking and succeed in math class. Multimodal instruction, games, puzzles, and a focus on subitizing (the ability to quickly see how many objects there are without counting) can help. Using manipulatives like a number line, 1 to 100 chart, or a calculator can support students during classwork, homework, and assessments. Visuals, hands-on activities, and verbal explanations are a great help!

Links

 [Dyscalculia](#)
(from the Cleveland Clinic)

 [How to Spot Dyscalculia](#)
(from ChildMind)

Best Practices



Use Support Tools

Students with dyscalculia need more time to understand magnitude and quantity. Consider offering manipulatives through 4th grade, especially during assessments.



Watch for the 'Dyscalculia Trifecta'

Students with dyscalculia may need extra scaffolding to build their understanding of time, money, and place value, known as the 'Dyscalculia Trifecta.' With the right supports, they can develop meaningful connections and confidence in these areas.



Model Steps and Procedures

Using visual aids such as step-by-step guides or checklists helps students with dyscalculia strengthen their retention of math concepts and navigate procedures more independently.

WHY THIS MATTERS IN NEW JERSEY

In New Jersey, 32% of students in special education, roughly 38,000 individuals, have a Specific Learning Disability like dyscalculia, which impacts math learning. (from NJDOE and [LDANJ](#))

- Teachers can use short, simple tools like dot cards, number sense checks, or basic math tasks to regularly screen students. Review results to spot who's struggling, then adjust instruction or provide extra practice to address those needs early.

