

# Influence of Psychological Intervention on Children with Learning Disability

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**Abstract.** At present, Children with learning disability are increasingly exposed to the social landscape. Their situation has caused widespread public concern, as a treatment for learning disability, psychological intervention for children with learning disability has become one of the hot issues of social debate. To examine the influence of psychological intervention on children with learning disability, researchers have done relevant studies and thrown out different opinions. Therefore, by collecting research reports from different researchers and analyzing the data, this paper explores the influence of psychological intervention on children with learning disability. Through statistics, studies have found that psychological intervention can improve the academic performance of children with learning disability at school, their grades have improved a lot and they are more active in class. It can also reduce the unhealthy emotions of children with learning disability, so that children with learning disability can become more confident and more positive, as well as better integrate into society. Based on the conclusion, it is suggested that different individuals should raise their awareness, increase attention for children with learning disability that still exist and then bring to bear on some psychological interventions.

**Keywords:** Learning disability; psychological intervention; children.

## 1. Introduction

Learning disability (LD) is a persistent difficulty in one or more of the basic processes involving understanding or use of language, persistent difficulties in academic performance or achievement, such as reading, written expression, or mathematical ability [1]. This disorder is not caused by intellectual retardation and central nervous system diseases, nor are they caused by auditory and visual impairments or emotional disorders. Learning disability will affect children's academic performance at school, but also make children produce many unhealthy emotions, such as anxiety and depression. Nowadays, as more and more children are found to have learning disability, parents' anxiety and the current situation of children with learning disability have aroused widespread concern and heated discussion in society. How to treat learning disability and how to make children with learning disability better integrate into society and live a better life is the most concerned issue in society at present. The intervention methods proposed by researchers to treat learning disability mainly focus on four kinds: psychological intervention, educational intervention, medical intervention and comprehensive intervention. Psychological intervention is the most studied and also the most important one. Psychological intervention is conducted by psychological counseling workers through some psychological counseling and treatment techniques to improve the emotional and behavioral problems and interpersonal relations of children with learning disability, improving their mental health level. It mainly includes: cognitive therapy, behavioral therapy, biofeedback therapy, flotation therapy, family therapy, sand play therapy and music therapy [2]. Researchers generally believe that learning disability are reversible, can be alleviated or even cured through treatment. The main influence of learning disability on children lies in academic performance and children's mental health and to solve these two aspects of the problem is the most researchers concerned. Therefore, this paper expounds the influence of psychological intervention on academic performance and unhealthy emotions of children with learning disability.

## **2. The Influence of Psychological Intervention on Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disability**

The common psychological and behavioral characteristics of children with learning disability are low learning enthusiasm, low learning efficiency, poor learning habits, low self-evaluation, tension with peers and so on. The types of interventions that can be taken for developmental learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder include physical activity training, psychological counseling and therapy, and CBT. The forms of intervention mainly include mental health education or treatment incorporating physical activity, mental health education courses and mental health intervention. CBT is a type of psychotherapy that combines a cognitive component (designed to think differently, for example by identifying and challenging unrealistic negative thoughts) and a behavioral component (designed to do things differently, for example by helping people do more worthwhile activities) [3]. During CBT, practice helps individuals develop appropriate coping skills [3]. CBT includes exercises, education, and advice to help individuals develop appropriate coping skills to apply to challenging situations [3]. Therefore, CBT can be beneficial to the development of learning ability of children with learning disability. Through the active psychological intervention, children with learning disability will become more focused and will do much better in school. According to Shabina, N. and Raj, P, a 12-year-old boy with learning disability gradually changed his original disinterest and motivation in learning through behavioral therapy, and became a good student who performed well in school and gradually improved his academic performance, also he slowly began to take on a leadership role in his classmates and could get along better with people around him after using behavior techniques [1]. This is not just an individual case but a microcosm of many children with learning disability who have received psychological intervention, as many researchers and scholars have carried out research in this field. Ruixue Zhang mentioned that learning disability is not a kind of intellectual disability, children with learning disability usually have no intellectual problems, they are only learning ability or psychological deficits, not no learning ability [4]. With the right help, children with learning disability can also achieve great academic achievement. Psychological intervention can promote the improvement of various abilities by enabling children with learning disability to master metacognitive strategies. Therefore, psychological intervention can improve the psychological state, but also improve the comprehensive ability [2]. There is a definition called learning self-efficacy. Psychologist Albert Bandura believes that learning self-efficacy will affect students' choice of learning tasks, as well as the degree of effort and persistence in the learning process. It is students' judgment on their ability to complete learning tasks. Learning self-efficacy will have a direct impact on students' academic choice, and influence the degree of effort, the use of learning strategies and learning self-monitoring, and have an indirect impact on students' completion of academic tasks, in other words, learning self-efficacy is closely related to the academic performance of children with learning disability. Previous studies have found that the training of attribution, learning strategies and emotional regulation can improve learning self-efficacy. Fangling Yan' s research used these methods to analyze children with learning disability in different groups through the program of group psychological counseling, and found that: (1) Group psychological counseling has a significant effect on improving the learning self-efficacy of children with learning disability. (2) The group psychological counseling program implemented is scientific and effective, and has strong operability in actual teaching. (3) Compared with group activities, group psychological counseling has a better effect on the improvement of learning self-efficacy of children with learning disability [5]. Through the self-statements of all the subjects in the study, we can find that after the group psychological intervention, the learning self-confidence of the children with learning disability is significantly increased, the learning motivation is stimulated, and the academic performance is also significantly improved, and the classmates become more harmonious. What her research shows is the intervention that children with learning disability receive in schools. The importance of school education is understandable, but schools alone are not enough., the cooperation between schools and parents is also a very important factor. According to Lai Jiang and Minghui Li, their research mentioned that the teacher recommended a psychological evaluation to the parents, and the child was diagnosed early in part because the teacher was willing to communicate with the parents and listen to

their observations and suggestions [6]. Once parents are aware of the challenges their children are facing, most of them will act quickly to determine what the problem is and how to help them [6]. As a result, all four study subjects were tested and diagnosed with LD before third grade [6]. As a result of this early diagnosis, all four received dedicated support from the school's special education teachers, and individual education plans were put in place to ensure they received the psychological treatment and school support they needed [6]. Over time, students have gradually developed their self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-advocacy [6]. Through different psychological intervention methods, researchers have reached the same goal, and the academic performance of children with learning disability has undeniably changed in their studies.

### **3. The Influence of Psychological Intervention on Unhealthy Emotions of Children with Learning Disability**

#### **3.1. Emotional Problems in Children with Learning Disability and the Impact**

Weiner published a systematic review article, reported that children with learning disability would develop anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. These children internalize their problems, which may lead to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem and Gallegos, Langley, and Villegas also reported that children with learning disability were more vulnerable to anxiety and depression compared to their typical peer [7]. Anxiety, depression and other unhealthy emotions caused by learning disability can be effectively alleviated through regular psychological intervention, and the mood of children with learning disability will gradually improve. Mentioned by Guoliang Yu and Yan He, it is believed that learning difficulties could be reversed, given targeted educational interventions based on the individual's age and development needs [8]. This approach could enhance understanding of learning difficulties and provide effective support, significantly impacting the education of students with such challenges [8]. Children with learning difficulty in primary school have more emotional disorders than ordinary children and children of other ages, and will experience more psychological crises such as school maladjustment [8]. These emotional disturbances or disorders are the key factors affecting their learning status and academic achievement.

#### **3.2. Positive Impact of Eliminating Emotional Distress**

Many educational intervention studies in this field have been verifying the effect of emotions on their academic performance. For example, by improving the attribution of children's success or failure, reading inspirational stories and cooperating with tutoring learning strategies, children with learning difficulties can significantly improve their academic self and non-academic self. Students with learning difficulty in middle school are teenagers, and they continue the characteristics of the previous age stage: low academic performance and achievement, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-regulation efficacy and self-concept are significantly lower than those of ordinary teenagers, and there are psychological maladaptive states.

#### **3.3. Effectiveness of Interventions on Emotion Issues from Children with Learning Disability**

To explore the phenomenon of learning difficulties in this group, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive study from the three aspects of cognition, emotion and behavior, and to investigate them as a complete psychological system. Researchers had also recognized this and developed various educational intervention techniques, including psychological counseling and psychological counseling for students with learning difficulties, such as rational emotional therapy, reading therapy, relaxation training. According to Shabina, N and Raj, P, in their case, the 12-year-old boy came here with his mother, complained about his lack of reading and writing skills, day to day poor performed in academic area, poor calculation, lack of self-confidence, poor attention and destructivity, also poor self-confidence [1]. Therapist did a full psychological evaluation of him and concluded that his IQ was around average, as well as an evaluation of his behavioral problems and specific learning disability to determine interventions [1]. After periodic training, he gradually can complete the

assigned tasks well, and his self-confidence has been significantly improved. Now he is able to manage himself, able to face academic performance and improved self-confidence [1]. Their research makes individuals clearly aware of the importance of psychological intervention for children with learning disability.

However, to date, the definition and identification criteria of learning disability are still controversial, and there is a lack of uniform, effective and reliable diagnostic tools, a paucity of interventions that specifically target the satisfaction of psychological needs for these students, which is not conducive to the intervention and treatment of learning disability [9]. Among other potential interventions that have been proposed, the intervention Mission Méditation, which targets mindfulness, has shown promise. Mindfulness can be defined as the process by which people pay attention in a specific way: purposefully, in the present moment, without judgment. Mindfulness can lead to optimal self-regulation by putting individuals in touch with their basic psychological needs for competence (to feel effective in actions with the environment), autonomy (to feel volition, will, and choice in our actions), and relevance (to feel connected to others and loved). Research indicates that the high satisfaction of basic psychological needs in children is correlated with their thriving in their daily environment (including at home and in school), while the frustration of these needs may result in mental health issues. For instance, in a school-based context, a child might perceive an obligation to conform to a specific way of thinking, thereby experiencing a sense of frustration regarding their need for autonomy. Alternatively, they might neglect to report on significant relationships, leading to a feeling of frustration regarding their need for affiliation. The child may also report feeling like a failure and therefore feeling his/her abilities are frustrated, which is common in children with severe LD. Therefore, interventions aimed at reducing the symptoms of psychological disorders, while also aiming to improve the satisfaction of basic needs, have special significance for children with severe LD. A total of 23 elementary school students aged 9-12 with severe LD participated in the study of Malboeuf-Hurtubise, C., Taylor, G. and Mageau, G. A. and participants in the experimental group participated in an eight-week Mindfulness-Based Intervention (MBI) called Mission Meditation that was tailored and customized specifically to the developmental needs and attention spans of elementary school students [10]. MBI appears to help increase the basic psychological need for competence and reduce anxiety in students with severe LD [10]. Children with ADHD are often accompanied by learning disability. Tong Long, Yuying Tang and Yan Huang and Jinhong Feng mentioned that after entering school age, children with special needs are often unpopular with parents, teachers and classmates due to personality impulses, challenges to authority, poor self-control and poor academic performance, and are easy to derive psychological problems [11,12]. And because parents and teachers lack understanding of professional knowledge, or intervention methods are too aggressive, making their mental health state more unstable [11,12]. People may usually have a wrong understanding of ADHD, and when some children have learning disability caused by ADHD, they only think that it is just a behavior of failure in lessons [11,12]. In fact, the care and love from others can play a positive role in treating the psychological problems of children with ADHD. In the study of Jinhong Feng, 30 children with ADHD admitted to a hospital from October 2018 to October 2019 were selected for regression analysis of their clinical data [12]. Compared with the clinical behavior changes before and after psychological intervention, the results showed that the behavior of ADHD was significantly improved. The results showed that the total effective rate was 93.33%, the effect was remarkable [12]. In the survey of the satisfaction degree of the parents of the children with the treatment, the total satisfaction was 90.00%, obviously the evaluation of psychological treatment is relatively high [12]. Researchers also conducted a 3-month intervention on 34 children with ADHD at a frequency of 90 minutes, 2-3 times in each group. The results showed that cognitive behavioral training could significantly and permanently improve the visual and auditory attention level of children with ADHD, reduce hyperactivity and impulsive behavior, improve their academic performance, and alleviate their inner anxiety. This is true of ADHD children with learning disability, and it is true of many other children with learning disability. Researchers' studies on psychological intervention for children with learning disability all point to helping children with learning disability increase self-confidence, inhibit their depression, suicidal tendencies, reduce their anxiety, and so on,

but the research on these psychological interventions is still improving, and still faces many difficulties and severe challenges.

#### 4. Conclusion

Children with learning disability have a series of problems in their mental health and even physical functions due to a long time in the learning disability problem, this is what children with learning disability and their families have always been troubled by, and it is also what the current society is always concerned about and hopes to solve. This paper finds that with the help of schools, families and even society, under the treatment of psychological intervention, the reversibility of learning disability has emerged, and children have become more confident and can better integrate into the group. Mainly through individual or group intervention, regularly carry out a variety of planned psychological intervention training for children with learning disability, so that children can receive psychological intervention in class, play and even in daily life. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is used more in clinical practice, which is the first choice for researchers to do related research at present. In view of the results of this paper, psychological intervention can have a positive influence on the academic performance and mental health of children with learning disability. Therefore, in the treatment of children with learning disability, a personalized psychological intervention plan can be formulated based on the child's own situation and teaching modules of psychological intervention can also be put into daily teaching, so as to better help the rehabilitation of children with learning disability. But at present, there is a lack of research data on other psychological intervention therapies, only a small number of scholars have conducted detailed research and elaboration on them, this may be related to the fact that the rehabilitation of children with learning disability has not been studied long enough by researchers. However, it is believed that in the future, with the in-depth study of researchers step by step, psychological intervention methods for children with learning disability will be more abundant, more perfect and even form a complete system. At the same time, the number of children with learning disability will gradually decrease under the attention of society, and more children with learning disability can completely enter a normal life through psychological intervention and other rehabilitation.

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