



Custom Research North America

Measuring Progress in Public & Parental Understanding of Learning Disabilities

Prepared For:



Tremaine Foundation

September 2010



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Research Design & Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted with a nationwide cross-section of 1000 adults ages 18 and older, and an over-sample of approximately 700 parents of children under 18 currently living in their household. Utilizing a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) sampling methodology to locate respondents, interviews were conducted May 11th through June 2nd, 2010.

A cell phone component was added to the 2010 study to address the growing percentage of the population who does not have a landline phone. Seven hundred of the 1,000 general population interviews were conducted via landline. The remaining 300 were completed on cell phones. The same landline to cell phone balance was followed among the parents over sample (490 landline vs. 210 cell phone).

Respondents without children under 18 currently living in their household completed a shorter 9-minute survey. Respondents with children under 18 currently living in their household (or parents) completed a longer 22 minute survey.

In addition to interviews among the general public and parents, 700 interviews were also conducted among educators. Half of those interviews were among teachers while the balance was among administrators. Interviewing for the educator study took place at the same time as the general population/parents study.

Replicating as much as possible the research design used in 1995, 1999 and in 2004, the current study (both for parents and other people) followed a “pre-test/post-test” structure. Interviews began with a “blind” discussion of attitudes towards and knowledge about learning disabilities prior to providing respondents with an actual definition of what learning disabilities are. The remaining questions were then answered in light of the definition that had been provided.

The findings in this report based upon the general public sample are projectable to the universe of the adults 18 and older in the United States within a sampling error of +/- 3%. The margin of sampling error is larger on sub-groups. A minimum amount of weighting was applied to bring the sample in line with current census data on age within sex, education, region of the country, and parents vs. non-parents. The weighted sample, then, is representative of the U.S. adult population on these characteristics.

Findings in this report based upon the educator sample are weighted to bring the sample in line with current data on region of the country, grade level (for teachers only), and teachers vs. administrators. The weighted sample, then, is representative of teachers and administrators in American schools on those characteristics.

Highlights

This 2010 report on American's and Educator's understanding and attitudes about learning disabilities represents the fourth in a series of studies commissioned by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation since 1995. These periodic measurements are an important tool for understanding the progress – or lack of progress – that is being made in how both Parents and the United States educational system are addressing the needs of children who learn differently.

In this new study, we see increasing improvement on critical issues, such as support for tailoring the educational process to match children's differing learning styles. But that support is often contrasted against a lack of basic knowledge about learning disabilities or a lack of urgency about how early detection of learning differences must be addressed. And very importantly, these challenges exist not only in the attitudes and actions of the General Public, but among Parents and Educators as well.

What follows are highlights from the 2010 study. Though there have been gratifying trends and advances in people's understanding about learning disabilities, the poll also highlighted troubling and persistent misperceptions that present barriers for anyone interested in ensuring that children with learning differences are helped to achieve their full potential.

Eight in ten Americans agree that kids learn in different ways.

Virtually all Educators agree.

Gratifying Trends

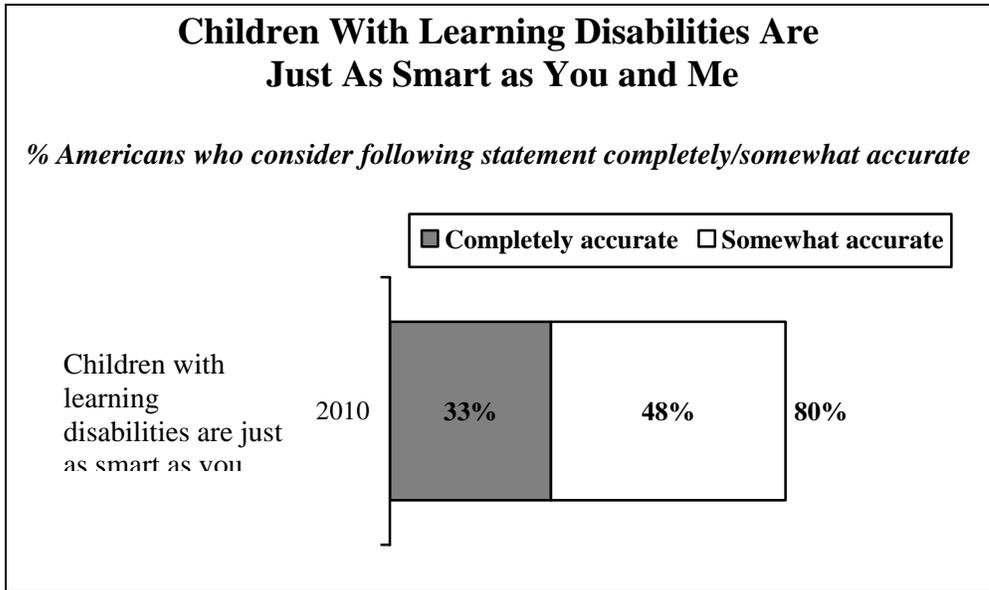
Since 1995, when this research initiative began, the issue of learning disabilities has gained some traction. Both the General Public and Parents, as well as Educators, increasingly embrace the foundational notion that individuals have differences that lead them to learn most effectively in different ways – and that children with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence.

- Americans and Educators agree that children learn in different ways. Up 9 points from 2004, eight in ten Americans (79%) agree (strongly/somewhat) that kids learn in different ways. Virtually all educators (99%) say the same.
- The number of Americans who say they are familiar with learning disabilities is on the rise. In 2010, the General Public is much more

likely to say they have heard or read “a lot” about learning disabilities now than in both 2004 and 1999.

Eight in ten Americans agree “children with learning disabilities are just as smart as you and me”

- The General Public is now more likely to recognize the fact that children with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence. Eight in ten Americans (80%) consider the statement “children with learning disabilities are just as smart as you and me” to be accurate.
- Almost all parents today agree children can learn to compensate for a learning disability with proper instruction.

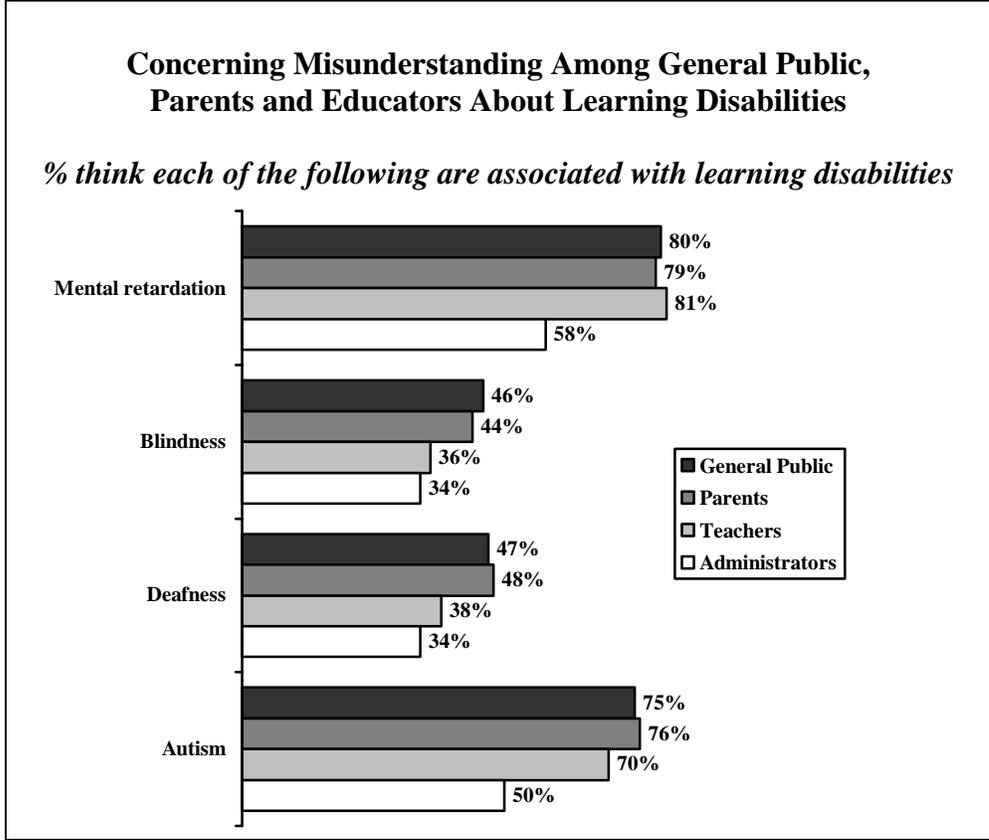


Troubling Trends

Confusion About Learning Disabilities

Despite some gratifying findings, there are some troubling ones as well. The results of this survey, when looked at as a whole, suggest that the understanding of learning disabilities may be somewhat superficial, not only among the General Public and Parents, but among Administrators and Teachers as well. Importantly, this lack of understanding is not limited to what some might consider gray areas in terms of what is labeled a learning disability, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There continues to be a critical lack of understanding among a proportion of both Parents and Educators about a foundational issue: learning disabilities refer specifically to learning differences – not physical, mental or emotional disabilities. A lack of understanding on this key point has profound implications for how learning disabled children are perceived, how their needs are addressed, and expectations about their future potential.

There continues to be a critical lack of understanding among some Parents and Educators about a foundational issue: learning disabilities refer specifically to learning differences – not physical, mental or emotional disabilities.



A large majority of the General Public, Parents and Teachers incorrectly associate mental retardation and autism with learning disabilities.

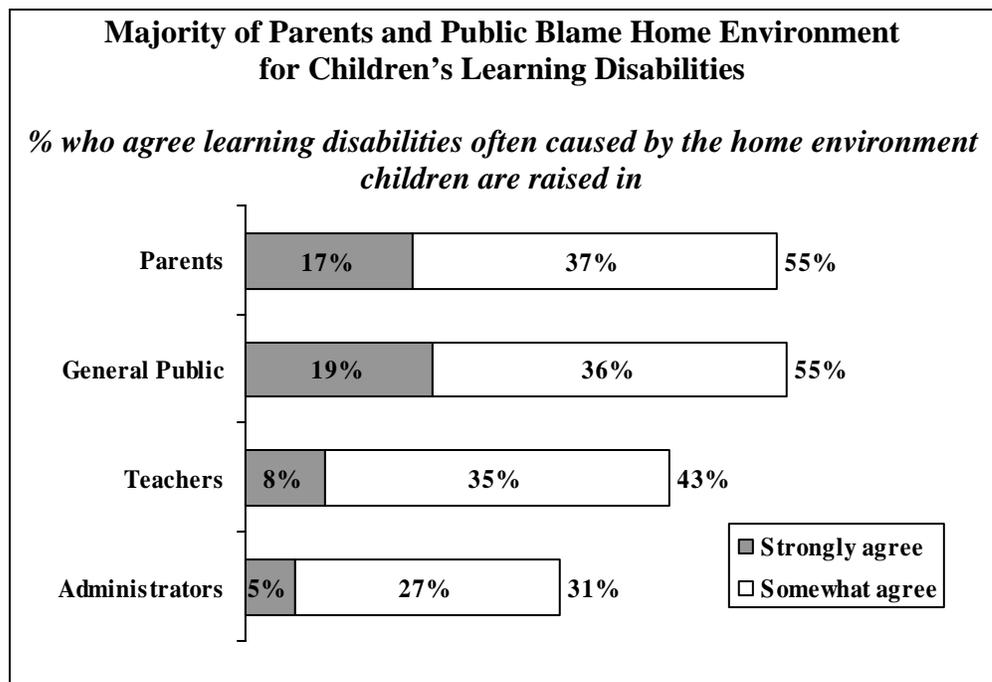
Half or more of school administrators do as well.

- Seven out of ten or more of the General Public, Parents and Teachers incorrectly associate mental retardation and autism with learning disabilities. And half or more of school administrators do as well.
- Approaching half of the General Public and Parents link deafness and blindness with learning disabilities – and about a third of Educators do as well.

Stigma

There continues to be a stigma associated with learning disabilities for many people – perhaps stemming from a lack of understanding about learning disabilities. **Signs of this stigma emerge in both explicit and implicit ways.**

- About half of the General Public and Parents agree that learning disabilities are often just laziness.
- A majority of the General Public and Parents believe that learning disabilities are often a product of the home environment children are raised in. Four in 10 Teachers and three in 10 Administrators also agree.



Misunderstanding about learning disabilities being merely laziness or being caused by a home environment are not conducive to Parents being open to early diagnosis for learning disabilities.

Nor does this misunderstanding bode well for Educators seeing Parents as partners in addressing the issues.

These types of misunderstandings – about learning disabilities being laziness or being caused by a home environment -- are not conducive to Parents being open to early diagnosis and intervention for learning disabilities. Nor does it bode well for Educators seeing Parents as partners in addressing the issues.

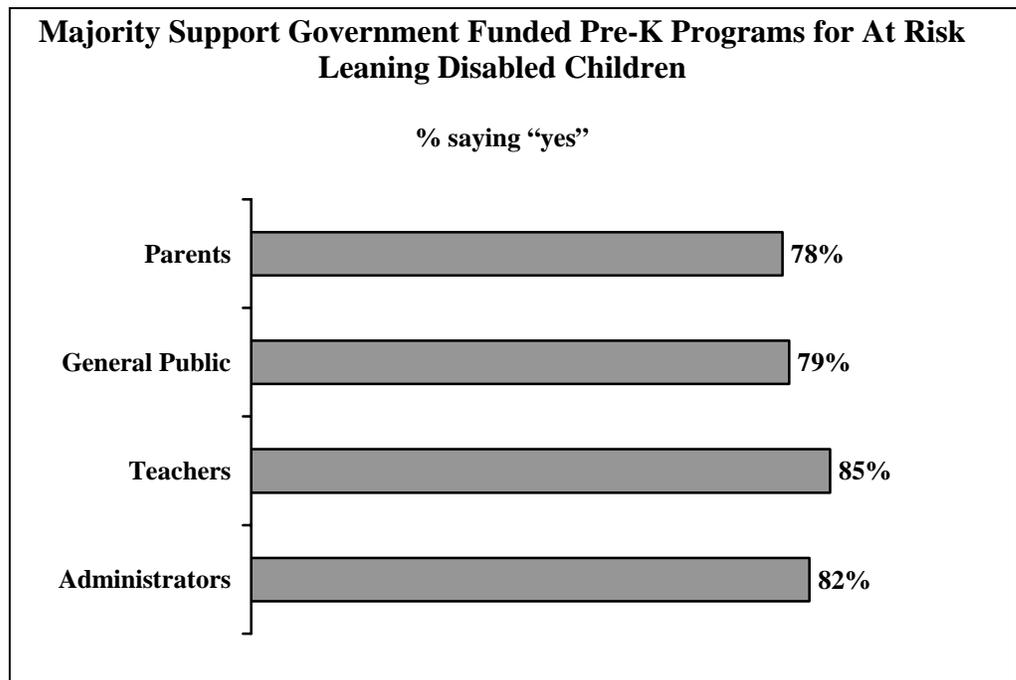
- Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that four in ten Parents believe that “other parents” would opt to address their children’s learning disabilities privately, rather than turning to teachers.

Delay in Diagnosis

- Perhaps in part because of the stigma that exists around learning disabilities, **many Parents continue to ignore “potential signs of trouble” – instead choosing to wait and see if their child will “grow out of it.”** A sizable number of parents believe a 5-to-8 year old child will grow out of such warning signs as trouble using a pen or pencil, matching letters with their sounds and making friends. Parents are even more forgiving of these traits in 3-to-4 year old children, which makes early diagnoses and intervention more difficult.

Early Intervention

- Americans overwhelmingly support the idea of government-funded Pre-K Education programs designed to get a head start on helping children at risk for learning disabilities. Teachers and Administrators are also in agreement as to the merits of such a program.



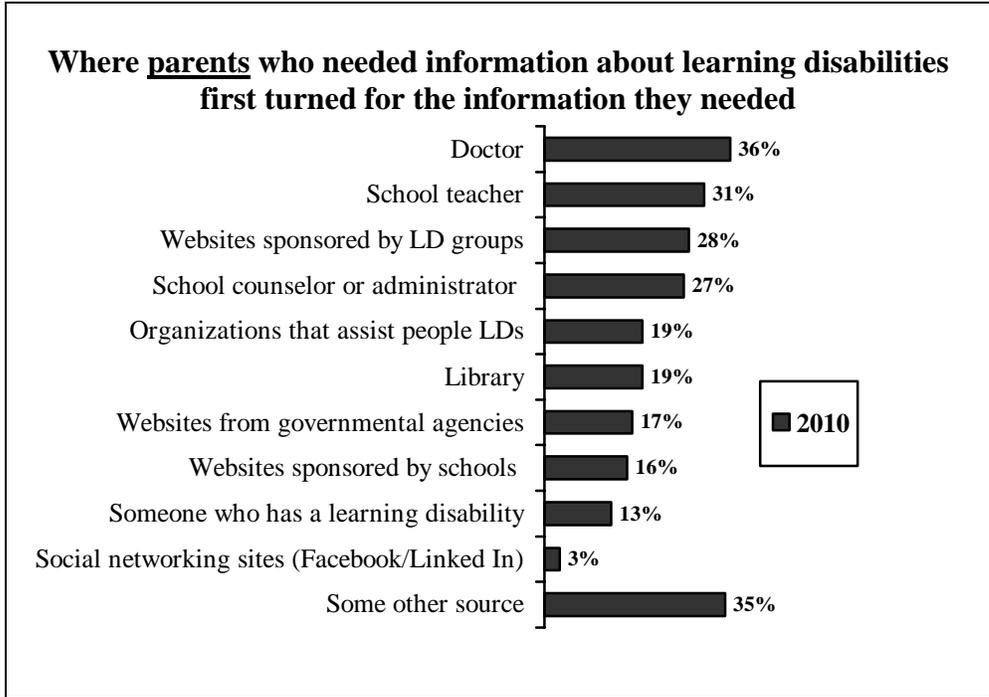
Parent/Educator Disconnect

- The vast majority of Educators continue to consider that a lack of support from parents in helping their children learn is a major challenge confronting schools working with learning disabled children.
- **Many Educators believe parents are often not willing to face the fact that their child may have learning disabilities.**

Information Sources for Information on Learning Disabilities

- **When looking at where Parents have actually turned for information about learning disabilities, we see another type of disconnect.** Although seven in ten Parents say that if they had concerns about their child having learning disabilities, they would reach out to the child’s teacher – far fewer apparently actually do. Among Parents who have needed information on learning disabilities, just over a third or fewer reported looking to doctors, teachers or any of the possible sources listed, including various types of online sources.
- **Interestingly, in a new finding for 2010, a mere 3% said they turned to social networking sites like Facebook.**

A mere 3% of parents who needed information about learning disabilities said they first turned to social networks sites like Facebook.



There is some confusion among even Educators about the basic definition of learning disabilities and what causes them.

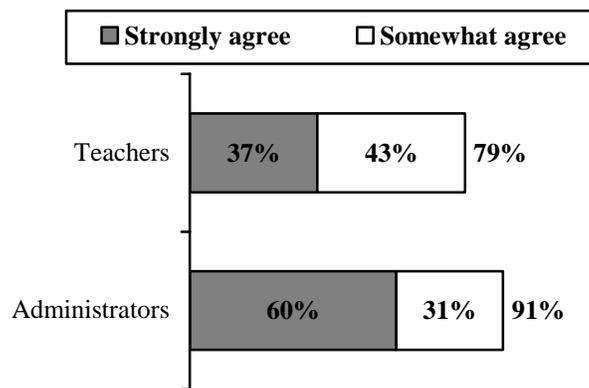
Educators Assessing Their Effectiveness Teaching Children With Learning Disabilities

Educators generally rate themselves highly for their own training and skills in meeting the needs of learning disabled children – despite the fact that, as discussed earlier, there is some confusion among even Educators about the basic definition of learning disabilities and what causes them. **In addition, Administrators rate their own training and the offerings of their school districts more highly than Teachers do – again reflecting another disconnect on issues surrounding the education of students with learning differences.**

- Eight in ten Educators say they feel confident teaching children with learning disabilities. Nine in ten Administrators agree overall that their training has prepared them for teaching LD children – and 60% agree strongly. Eight in 10 Teachers feel their training has prepared them – however only 37% feel strongly, showing a lower degree of underlying confidence on these issues.

Teachers and Administrators Feel Prepared to Deal With Students Who Have Learning Disabilities

% who agree “my training and education has prepared me to deal with students with learning disabilities”

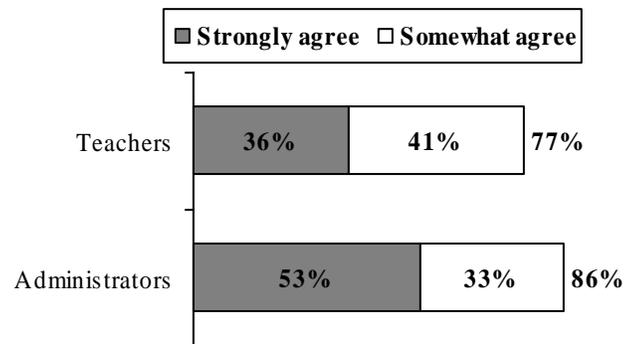


Only about one third of Teachers agree strongly that their schools offer them training to help children who have learning disabilities.

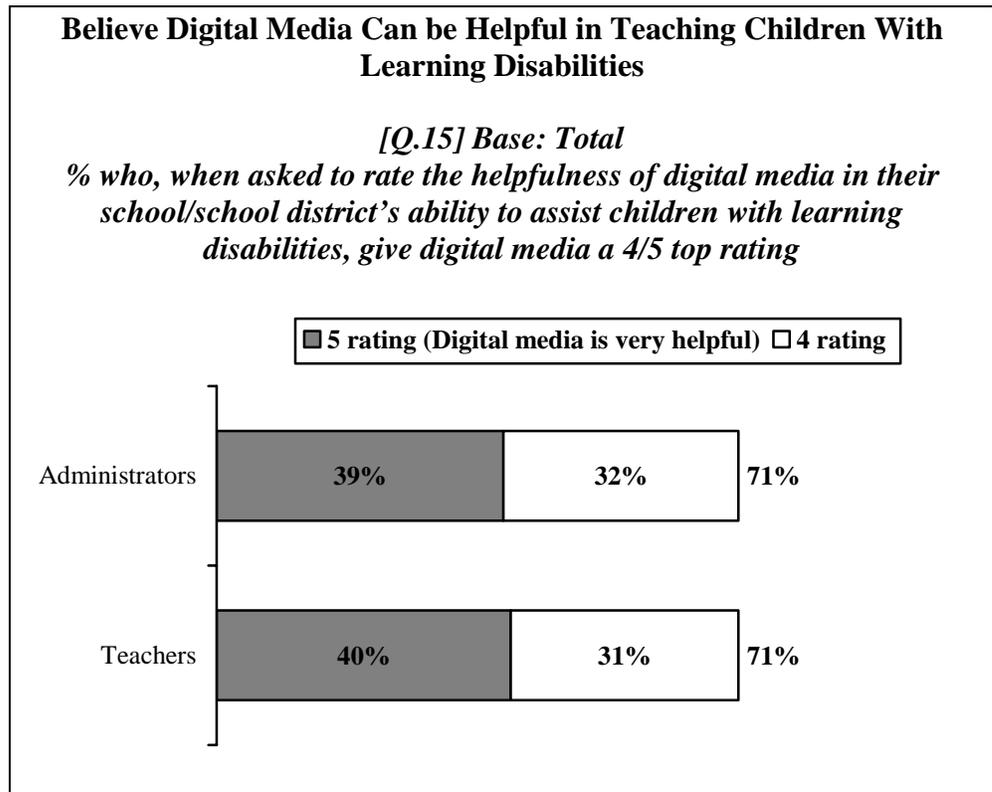
- Both the Administrators and Teachers give their schools or school districts high marks for offering training to help teach children with learning disabilities. However, Administrators again feel more strongly about it, with the majority -- 53% -- agreeing strongly that their school districts offer such training. For comparison, only 36% of Teachers agree strongly that their schools offer them training to help with children who have learning disabilities.

Educators Say Schools Offer Training for Teaching Children With Learning Disabilities

% who agree "my school/school district offers training to help me with children who have learning disabilities"



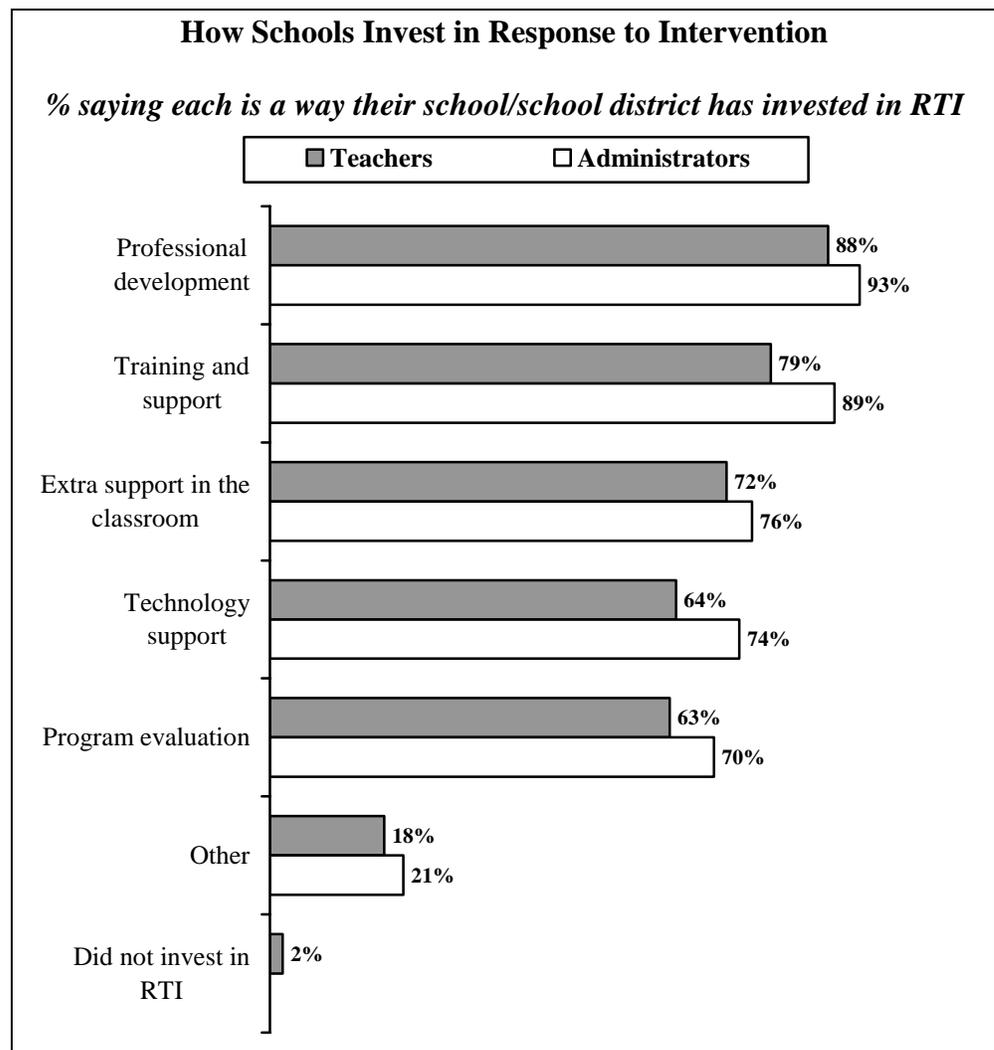
- Teachers and Administrators are in agreement as to the benefits of digital media. Overall, seven in ten believe digital media can be at least somewhat helpful. Four in ten say it can be “very” helpful.



Commitment to “Response to Intervention”

In general, Administrators are more likely than Teachers to perceive that schools are investing in key elements of “Response to Intervention.”

- When it comes to early testing children for learning disabilities, six in ten Educators say they are familiar with the terms RTI or Response to Intervention.
- Eight in 10 Administrators and seven in 10 Teachers report that their school district is committed to RTI. Professional development, training and support are the key ways schools invest in RTI, followed by a lesser degree to support in the classroom, technology and program evaluation. In general, Administrators are more likely to perceive that schools are investing in these areas than Teachers are.



I. Americans' Knowledge About Learning Disabilities

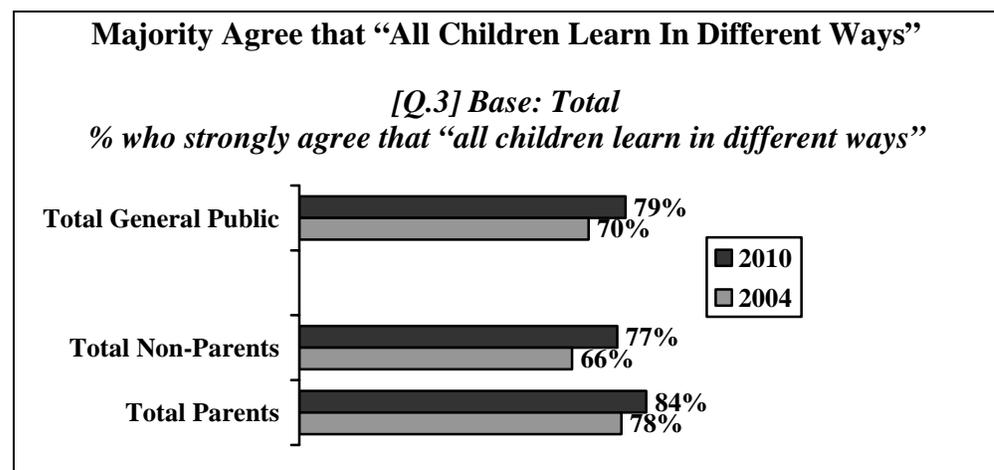
Majority Believe That Individuals Learn In Different Ways

- **The general public increasingly believes the needs of individual children are unique.**

Eight in 10 adults (79%) strongly agree that all children learn in different ways. This is an increase of 9 points from the 2004 study (70%).

Women and parents are particularly likely to believe that all children learn in different ways. Women are more likely than men to strongly agree with this statement by a 10 point margin (84% vs. 74%, respectively).

More than eight in 10 parents¹ strongly agree that all children learn in different ways (84%), higher than three-quarters of those without a children (77%). Nevertheless, belief in this statement has increased since 2004 among both parents and non-parents. Well over eight in 10 parents (86%) with personal experience with a learning disability² find this statement to be true compared to 81% of parents without a learning disability connection.



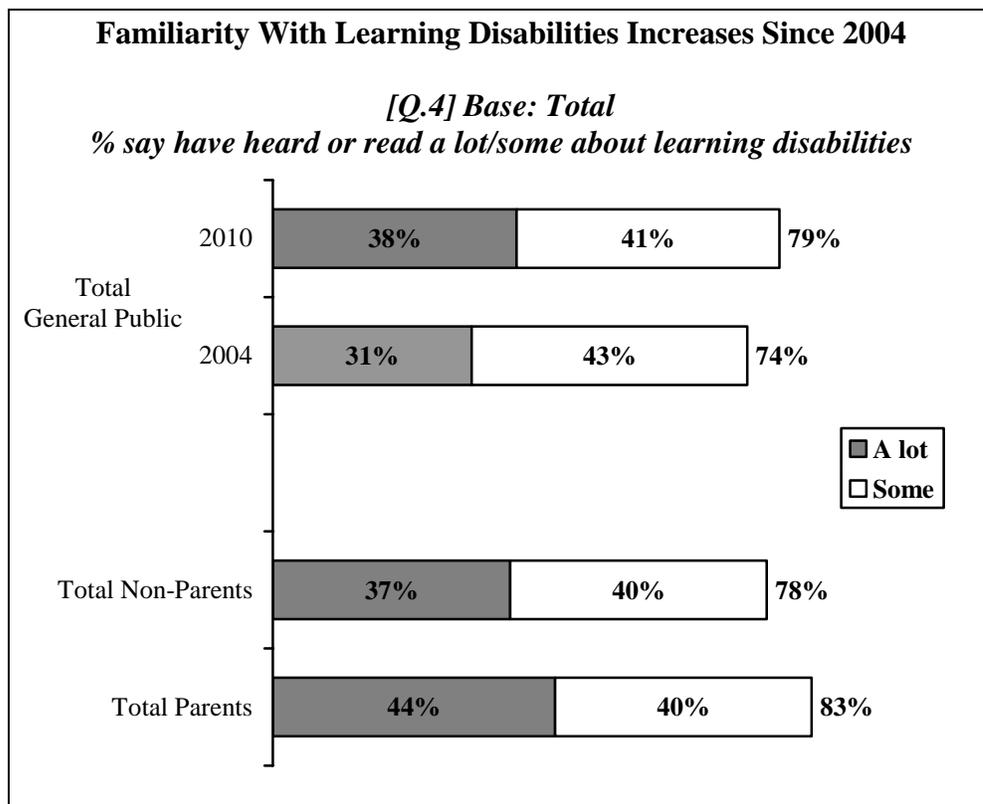
¹ In this study, the term “parents” refers to those with children under 18 currently living in their household.

² They personally have a learning disability, a child of theirs does or someone else close to them does.

- **The number of Americans saying they have at least some familiarity with learning disabilities is slowly on the rise.**

Fueled by a 7-point increase in the number of American's saying they have heard or read a lot about learning disabilities (38%, up from 31%), the 2010 study finds eight in 10 adults (79%) aware of learning disabilities (up from 74% in 2004 and 75% in 1999).

Parents are more likely to say they have heard about learning disabilities compared to non-parents (83% vs.78%), although the number of non-parents who have familiarity continues to be substantial.



- Women, in general, report having heard more about learning disabilities than men.**

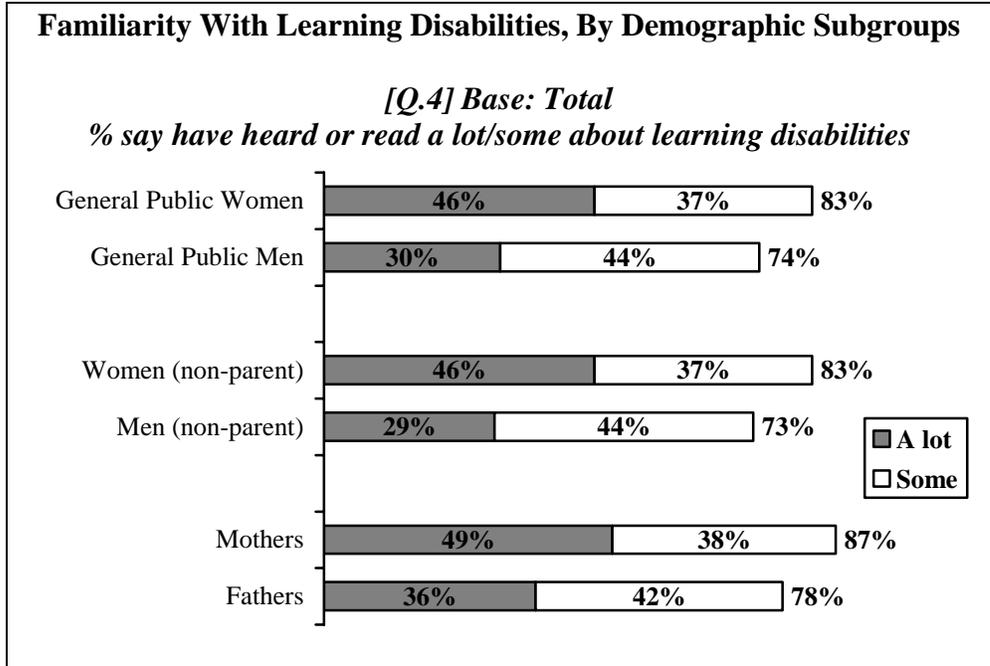
More than eight in 10 women (83%) have heard or read either some or a lot about learning disabilities compared to 74% of men.

In addition, women without children under 18 years old in the household are much more likely than their male counterparts to say they have heard a lot or some about learning disabilities (83% vs. 73%, respectively). Well over four in 10 (46%) say they have read *a lot*, compared to only three in 10 of these men (29%).

- Fathers, however, are somewhat more likely than other men to have familiarity with learning disabilities.**

Three in four fathers (78%) say they have read or heard at least some about learning disabilities (vs. 73% of other men).

Specifically, while 36% of fathers say they have a lot of familiarity with the topic, only 29% of men without children say the same.



Majority Recognize that Those with Learning Disabilities Have Average or Above Average Intelligence

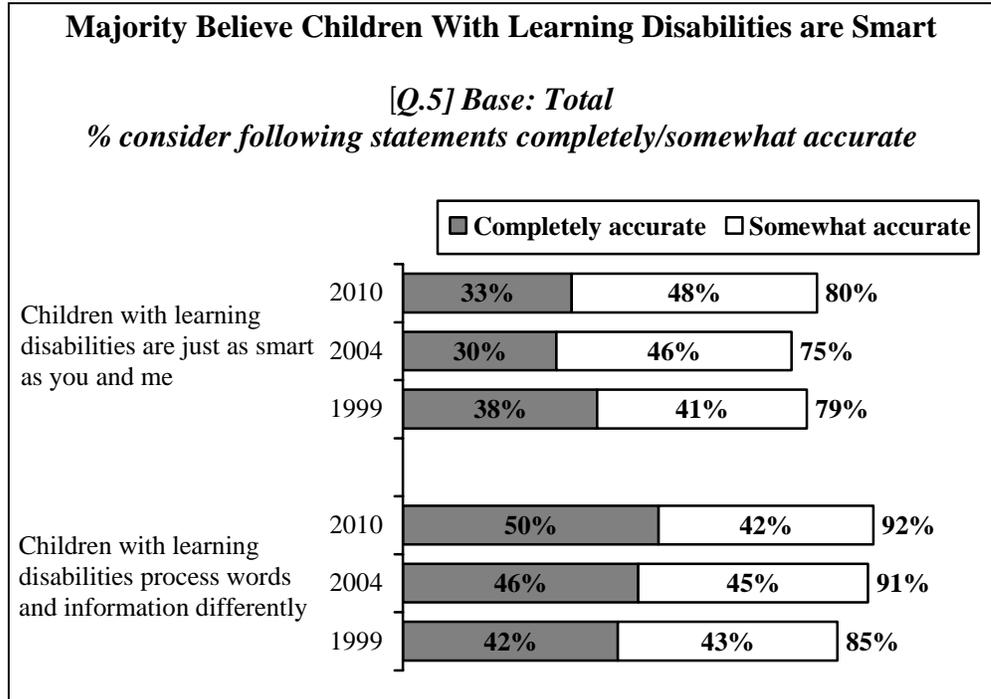
- **Most Americans' recognize that children with learning disabilities are "just as smart as you and me" – and that they "process words and information differently."**

Eight in 10 people (80%) view the statement "*children with learning disabilities are just as smart as you and me*" as accurate. However, only one in three (33%) believe this statement is completely accurate, with just under half (48%) describing it as somewhat accurate.

People 55 years of age or older are much less likely than younger adults to say this is completely accurate (26% versus 36% of those 18 to 54).

Parents of children under 18 are more likely than other adults to say it is *completely* accurate that children with learning disabilities are just as smart (39% vs. 29%). Mothers are more likely than fathers to say this statement is completely accurate (45% vs. 32%).

Nine in 10 adults (92%) view the statement "*children with learning disabilities process words and information differently*" as accurate (vs. 91% in 2004 and 85% in 1999). Among those who feel this way, exactly half believe it is completely accurate (50% of the public) while just over four in 10 say it is somewhat accurate (42% of the public).



Understanding of Conditions Related to Learning Disabilities Unchanged Since 2004

- **The general public's understanding of conditions related to learning disabilities, both right and wrong, is for the most part unchanged since 2004**

People are as likely today as in 2004 to mistakenly associate learning disabilities with *emotional disorders* (64%) and *Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (69%). Also unchanged from 2004, eight in 10 people (80%) erroneously link learning disabilities with *mental retardation*.

The association of physical disabilities such as blindness is relatively unchanged from 2004 (46% currently vs. 49% in 2004). While the proportion of people who erroneously associate learning disabilities with deafness (47%) has decreased (from 54%) since 2004, those who equate deafness with a learning disability has made little improvement since 1999.

Three in four Americans (75%) also incorrectly associate autism with learning disabilities. This is much more likely to be true among both the general public (82%) and parents with a minimum of a college degree (81%). Age also plays a role in the belief that autism is linked to learning disabilities (78% of those 18 to 54 vs. 69% of those 55+). Women, in general, both moms and non-moms, also see a strong relationship between the two.

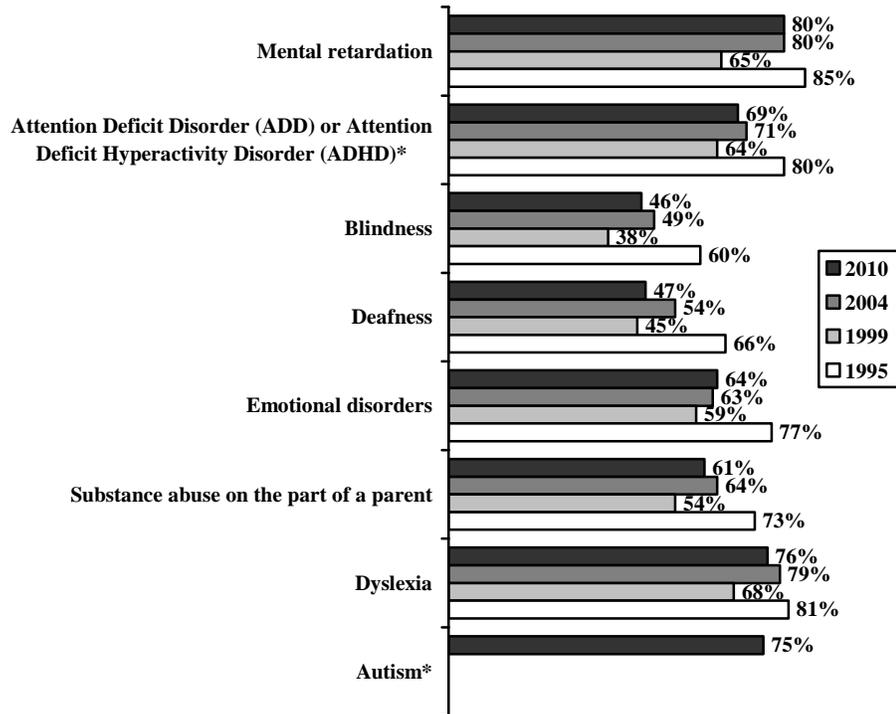
People 55 or older are significantly more likely than their younger counterparts to link *emotional disorders* with learning disabilities (72% vs. 60% among adults under 55). More than seven in 10 parents (71%) of a child with a learning disability associate it with emotional disorders compared to only 60% with no connection at all.

The number of people correctly associating *dyslexia* with learning disabilities is on par with 2004 (76%, vs. 79%, respectively). People with higher education levels (college graduates or higher) are more likely to identify dyslexia as a learning disability (84%) than those with only some college education or less (74%).

Majority Associate Learning Disabilities with Other Conditions

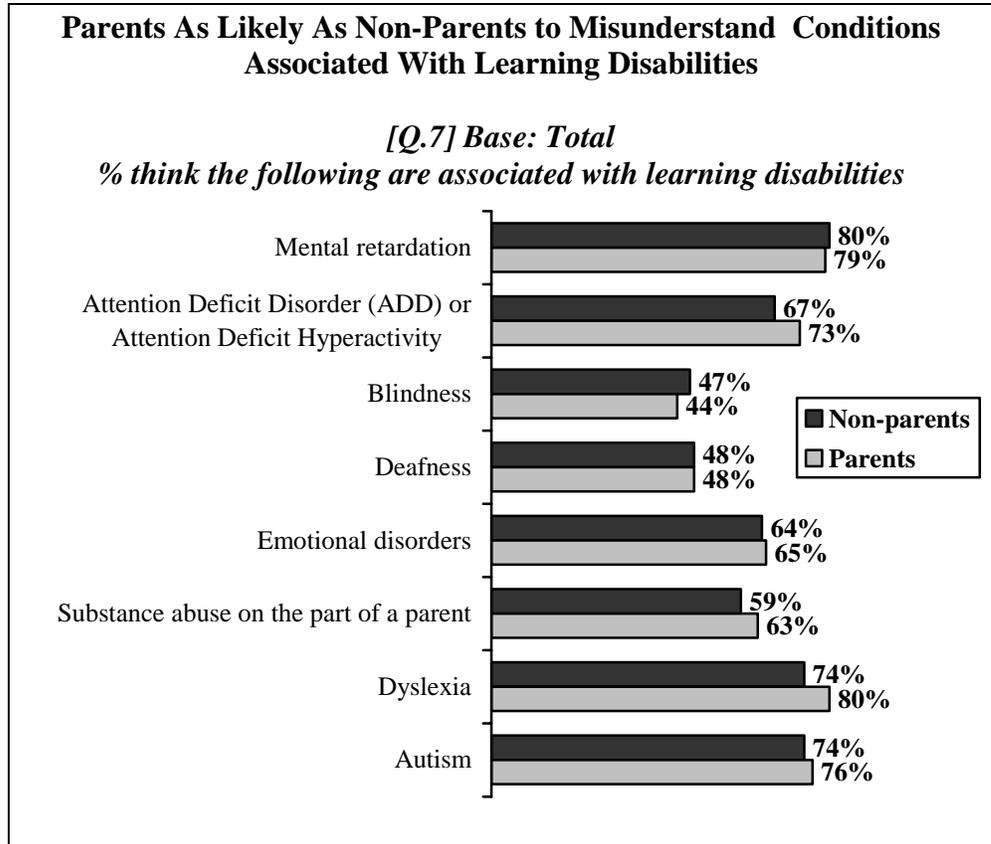
[Q.7] Base: Total

% think the following are associated with learning disabilities



* Note: 2004, 1999 and 1995 not available

- Parents continue to be as likely as non-parents to misunderstand the conditions associated with learning disabilities.**
 In fact, parents in 2010 are significantly more likely than non-parents to incorrectly associate ADD (73% vs. 67%). Equal numbers of parents and non-parents mistakenly associate learning disabilities with other physical or mental conditions (such as mental retardation, blindness, deafness or emotional disorders).



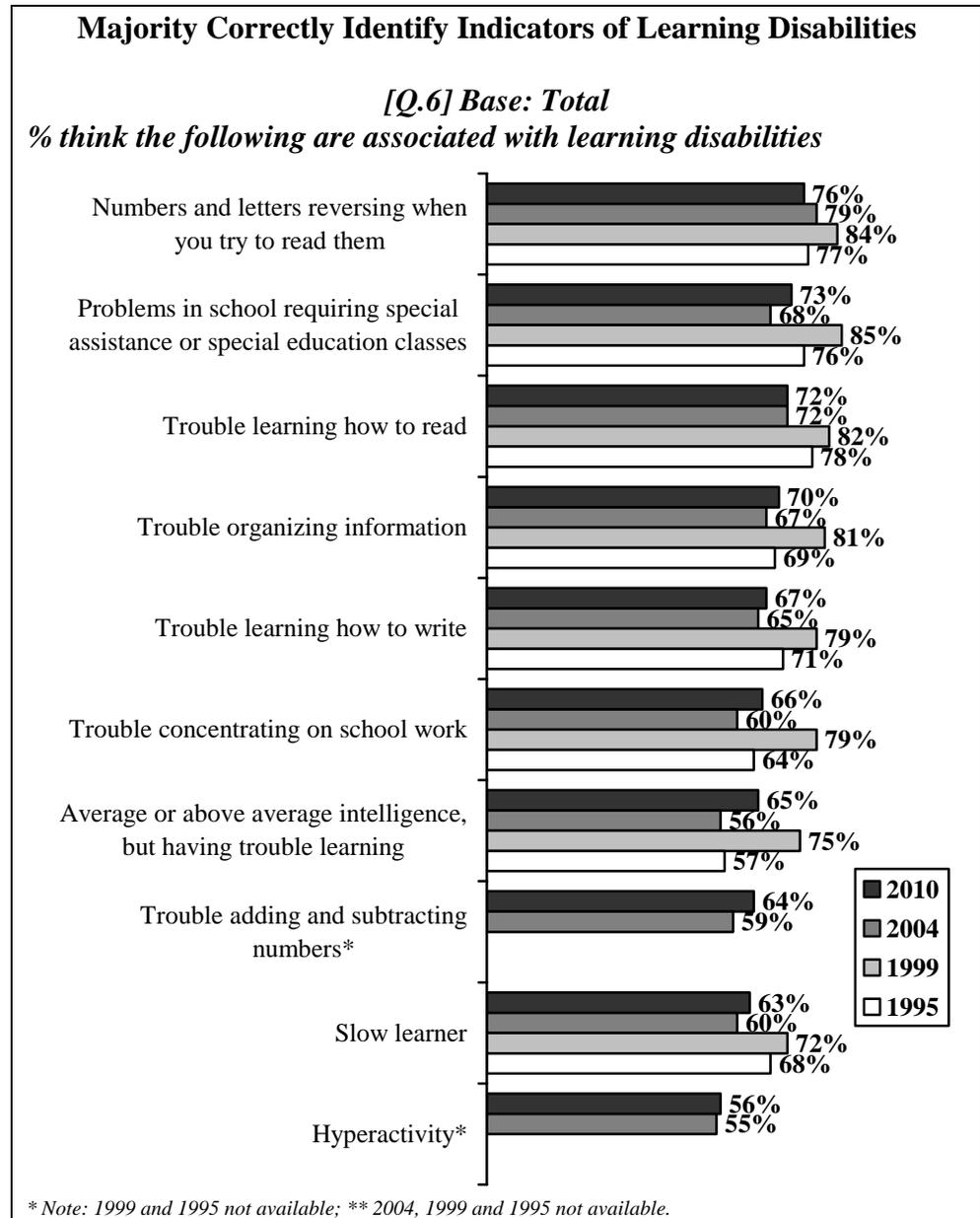
Understanding of Possible Indicators of Learning Disabilities Increases Since 2004

- **People are more likely today than in 2004 to correctly identify possible indicators of learning disabilities, but levels are still lower than 1999. The increases from 2004 worth noting include:**
 - Problems in school requiring special assistance or classes (73% vs. 68%)
 - Trouble organizing information (70% vs. 67%)
 - Trouble concentrating on school work (66% vs. 60%)
 - Having trouble learning (65% vs. 56%)
 - Slow learner (63% vs. 60%)
 - Trouble adding and subtracting numbers (64% vs. 59%)
- **The top three behaviors most likely to be considered indicators of learning disabilities remain identical to 2004:**
 - reversing numbers and letters (76%)
 - problems in school requiring special assistance or classes (73%)
 - trouble learning how to read (72%)
- **A majority continue to misidentify hyperactivity as being an indicator of learning disabilities.**
 - The majority of Americans (56%) still incorrectly make an association between learning disabilities and hyperactivity. Hyperactivity is a separate condition that individuals sometimes have in addition to learning disabilities, but hyperactivity is not, by itself, an indicator of learning disabilities.

In terms of age, the youngest people are less likely to incorrectly associate hyperactivity with learning disabilities: 41% of adults 18 to 24 believe hyperactivity is sometimes an indication of a learning disability, compared to 61% of those 55 years and older. Within gender groups, men are much less likely to link hyperactivity to learning disabilities than women (48% vs. 63%, respectively). This same pattern is also seen when looking specifically at fathers (48%) and mothers (64%).

- More troubling is the fact that well over six in 10 parents (63%) who say they have a personal connection with learning disabilities (either themselves, a child, or someone else they know has a

learning disability) incorrectly believe that hyperactivity is sometimes a sign of a learning disability. This compares to 51% of parents without a learning disability connection.



II. Parents' Assessments of Potential Signs of Learning Disabilities

Assessing Behavior In 3-To-4-Year-Old Children

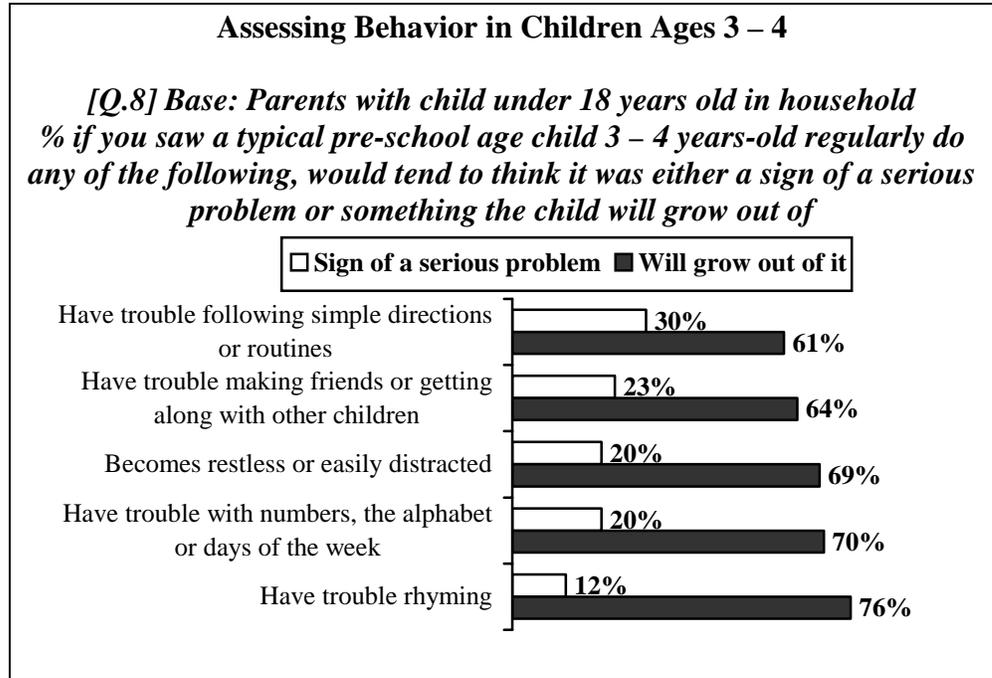
- **When it comes to possibly troubling behavior in children 3-to-4-years-old, parents continue to be slow to act, with most adhering to a “let’s see what happens” attitude.**

More than two in three parents believe the following behaviors – all of which could be signs of a serious learning problem in a child 3-to-4 years old – are something a child this age would grow out of. It is worth noting, however, that fewer parents believe this currently compared to 2004:

- trouble rhyming (76% say they will grow out of it in 2010 vs. 80% in 2004)
- trouble with numbers, the alphabet or days of the week (70% vs. 76%)
- restlessness or being easily distracted (69% vs. 72%)

- **Three in ten parents or fewer see any of the indicators as a sign of a serious problem**

Only a modest number of parents rate items on the list as serious problems: just three in 10 parents say having trouble following simple direction or routines (30%) is a sign of a serious problem in children 3-to-4-years-old; and just under one-quarter say the same about having trouble making friends or getting along with other children (23%). All other items are rated as serious by two in ten parents or fewer.



% saying each is a sign of a serious problem	2010	2004
Have trouble following simple directions or routines	30	29
Becomes restless or easily distracted	20	25
Have trouble rhyming	12	16
Have trouble with numbers, the alphabet or days of the week	20	22
Have trouble making friends or getting along with other children	23	30

Assessing Behavior In 5-To-8-Year-Old Children

- **Expectations change as children age, with parents more likely to view difficulties with reading or writing among 5-to-8-year-old children as signs of a serious problem.**

A majority of parents consider difficulties with reading or writing related tasks – such as trouble holding a pen or pencil (62%), repeated errors with reading or spelling (50%), or trouble matching letters with their sounds (58%) – as signs of a serious problem in children 5-to-8. Other academic difficulties such as trouble learning new skills and relying on memorization instead (54%) or trouble with numbers (42%) are also thought to be signs of a problem among children this age.

Comparing results to 2004, we find parents less likely today to say having trouble holding a pen or pencil (69% in 2004 vs. 62% currently) or making errors with reading or spelling over and over (60% vs. 50%) are signs of a serious problem among 5 to 8 year old children.

- **Less than half of parents consider difficulty with more personal skills to be signs of a problem among children 5-to-8 years old.**

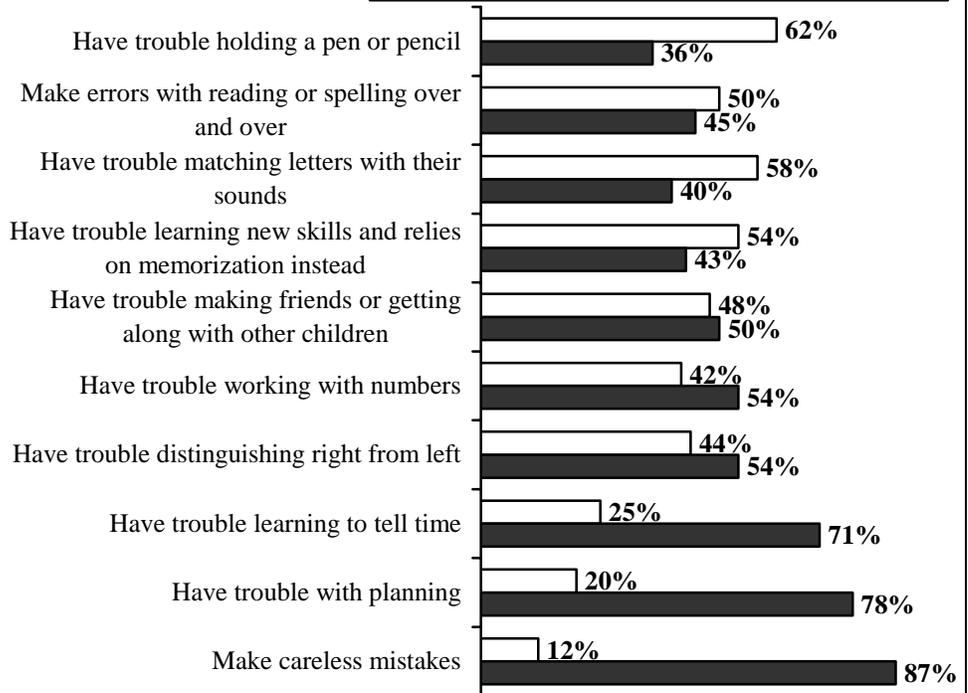
A majority (54%) feel things like trouble distinguishing right from left is something a 5-to-8 year old child will grow out of. In addition, most parents also believe trouble learning to tell time (71%), trouble planning (78%) or making careless mistakes (87%) are behaviors a 5-to-8-year-old will grow out of it. This provides continued support that parents do not necessarily understand the signs of potential problems.

Parents are equally as likely to believe trouble with social skills such as making friends or getting along with other children for 5-to-8 year olds is a potential problem (48%) as to say it is something they will grow out of (50%). Parents are much more forgiving of this trait in younger children (just 23% say this is a sign of potential problem in children between age 3 and 4).

Assessing Behavior in Children Ages 5 – 8

*[Q.9] Base: Parents with child under 18 years old in household
% if you saw a typical 5 – 8 year-old child (that is, a child in
kindergarten through 3rd grade) regularly do any of the following,
would tend to think it was either a sign of a serious problem or
something the child will grow out of*

□ Sign of a serious problem ■ Will grow out of it



% saying each is a sign of a serious problem	2010	2004
Have trouble using a pen or pencil	62	69
Have trouble matching letters with their sounds	58	60
Have trouble with planning	20	21
Have trouble making friends or getting along with other children	48	51
Make errors with reading or spelling over and over	50	60
Have trouble working with numbers	42	48
Have trouble learning to tell time	25	32
Have trouble learning new skills and relies on memorization instead	54	51
Make careless mistakes	12	14
Have trouble distinguishing right from left	44	50

- **Mothers are more educated about what behaviors in children 5-to-8 years old are signs of potential trouble.**

It is interesting to note that mothers are more likely than fathers to believe many of these behaviors in 5-to-8-year-old children are possible signs of trouble:

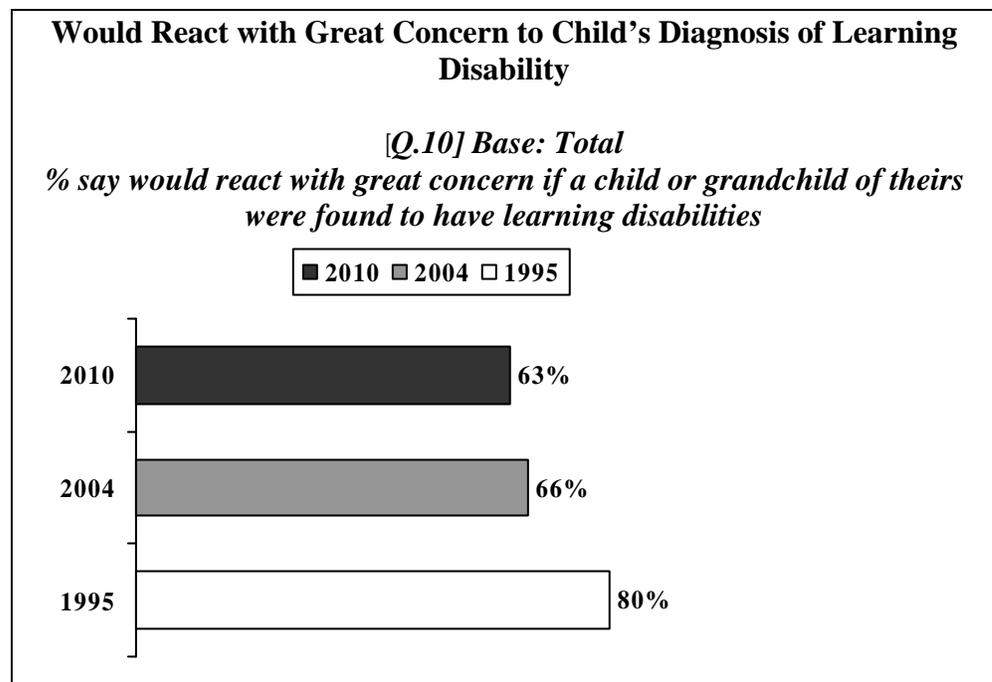
- Have trouble holding a pen or pencil (68% vs. 57%)
- Have trouble making friends or getting along with other children (54% vs. 42%)
- Have trouble with reading or spelling (59% vs. 49%)
- Have trouble working with numbers (50% vs. 41%)
- Have trouble with new skills that require memorization (55% vs. 48%)

III. The Stigma Associated With Learning Disabilities Still Exists

Majority Would React with Great Concern to Diagnosis, though Number Continues to Decline

- **Fewer today would react with “great” concern if their child or grandchild was found to have learning disabilities.**

Six in 10 adults (63%) say they would be greatly concerned if a child or grandchild of theirs was found to have a learning disability. This is down a full 17 points from 1995 when 80% of Americans felt this way.



Younger adults continue to be much less likely to say they would be greatly concerned if a child close to them had a learning disability. Just over half (52%) of people 18 to 34 years old say they would be, compared to nearly seven in 10 adults over 35 years (62% among those 35-54 and 74% among those over the age of 55).

- **Four in ten parents say they have been concerned that one of their children might have a serious problem with learning or school work.**

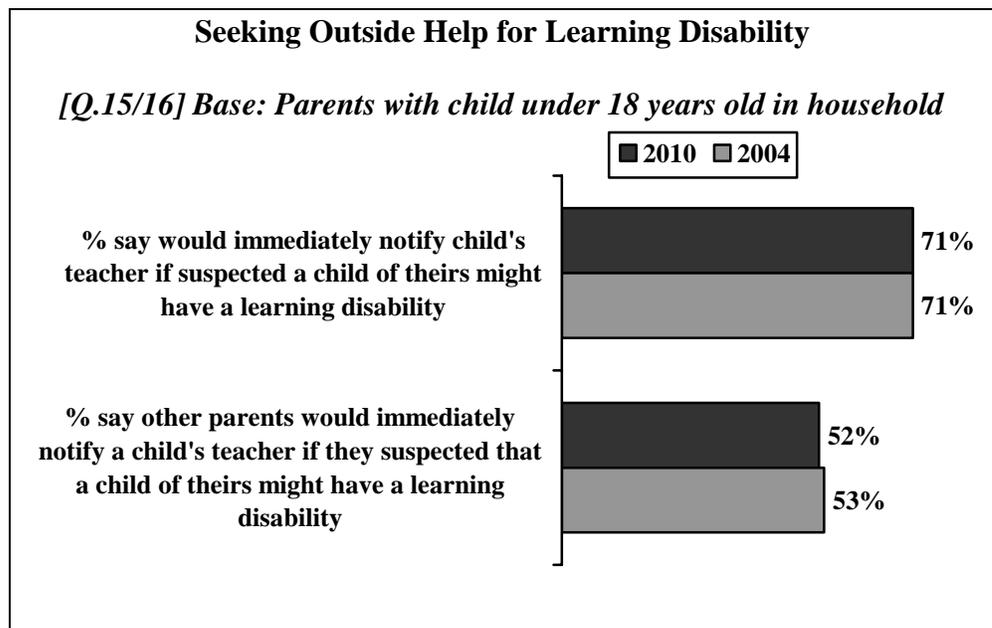
Noting a 13 point decline from 2004, four in 10 parents (43%) say they have considered at one time or another that one of their children might have a serious problem with learning or schoolwork. This marks a return to levels noted in 1999 when 40% said the same.

- **Most parents believe they themselves would be more willing to seek help than other parents in the same situation would be.**

Consistent with findings observed in both 1999 and 2004, seven in 10 parents (71%) say they would talk with their child’s teacher if concerns existed that their child might have a learning disability, as opposed to trying to help the child privately, without involving the child’s teacher (28%).

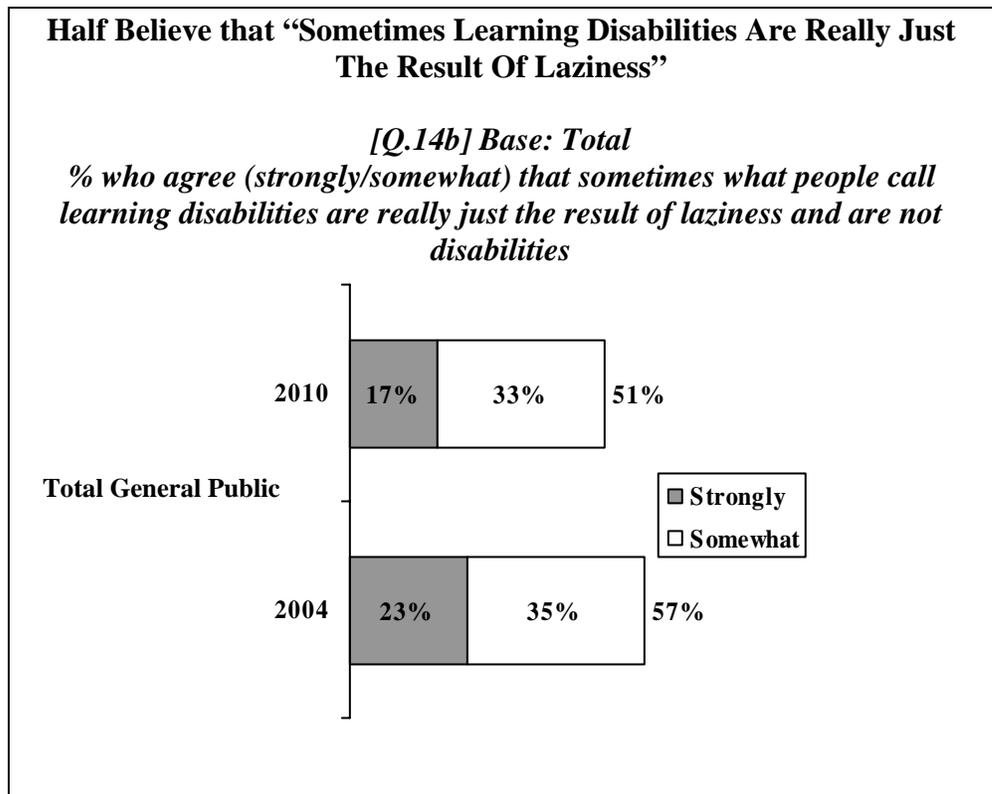
Fathers are more likely than mothers to say they would try to help a child themselves before enlisting the help of others. In fact, one in three (32%) fathers say they would work with their child privately if they suspected the child of having a learning disability. This compares to only 25% of mothers who say the same.

As noted in 2004, there continue to be signs of a possible underlying social stigma associated with admitting that a child has a learning disability, in that parents are more likely to believe they themselves would be willing to seek outside help, while fewer believe that other parents in the same situation would seek outside help. Seven in 10 parents say they personally would talk with their child’s teacher, yet only five in 10 (52%) believe that other parents in the same situation would notify their child’s teacher. This is also unchanged from 2004.



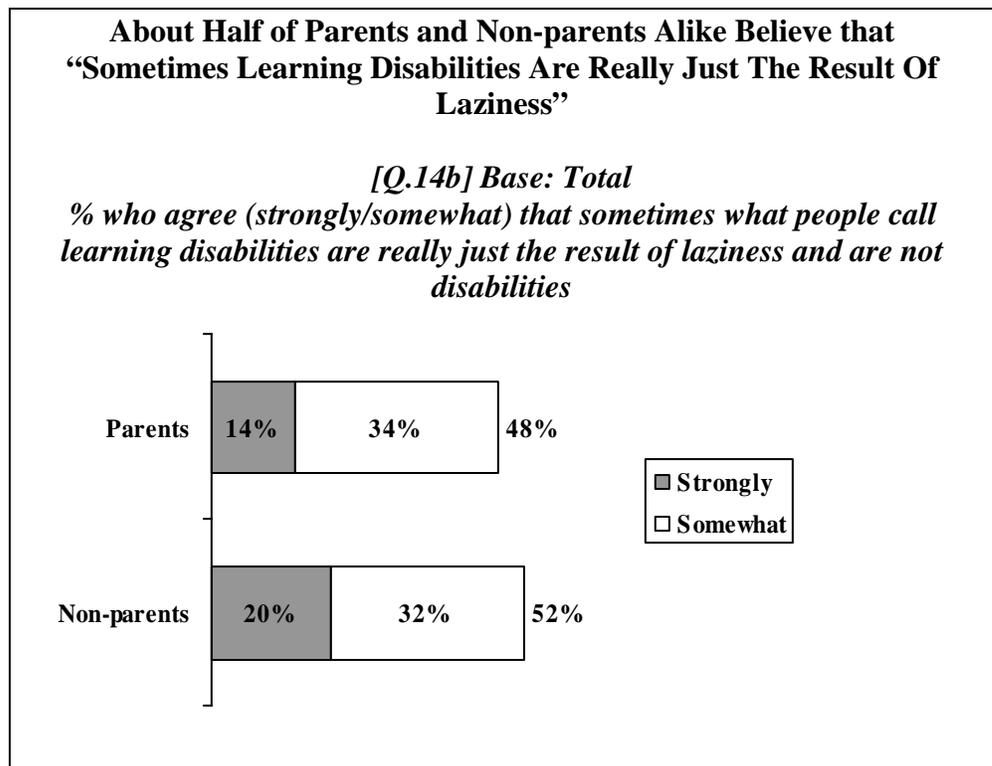
- **Half of Americans believe learning disabilities are laziness in disguise.**

While lower than 2004, the majority of Americans (51%) continue to agree that *sometimes what people call learning disabilities are really just the result of laziness and are not disabilities* (57% in 2004, 48% in 1999 and 53% in 1995).



Parents are only slightly less likely than non-parents to agree with this statement (48% to 52%), and this margin was much wider in past years (e.g., 51% vs. 58% in 2004). It should also be noted that 44% of parents with a learning disability connection also believe that learning disabilities are sometimes the result of laziness.

In terms of gender, well over half of men (55%) believe that sometimes what people call learning disabilities is really just laziness, only 47% of women agree. Similarly only four in 10 mothers (41%) agree with this statement compared to 56% of fathers.



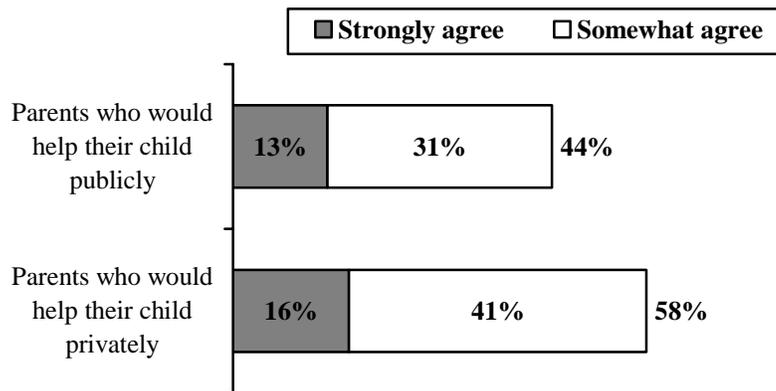
- Parents who would opt to help their learning disabled child privately are much more likely to believe that learning disabilities are really just a result of laziness.**

Nearly six in 10 parents (58%) who would choose to help a learning disabled child privately believe that sometimes what people consider to be learning disabilities are really the result of

laziness. Mirroring the results observed in 2004, such findings continue to suggest that parents who would choose to help their child privately (rather than admit publicly that their child has a learning disability) may be embarrassed by their child’s struggles and are looking for a way to “fix” their child (“they could do it if they just worked harder”). In contrast, among those who would seek help publicly, just four in 10 parents (44%) agree that learning disabilities are sometimes just the result of laziness.

Parents Who Would Help Children Privately More Likely to Believe that “Sometimes Learning Disabilities Are Really Just The Result Of Laziness”

[Q.14b] Base: Parents with child under 18 years old in household % who agree (strongly/somewhat) that sometimes what people call learning disabilities are really just the result of laziness and are not disabilities

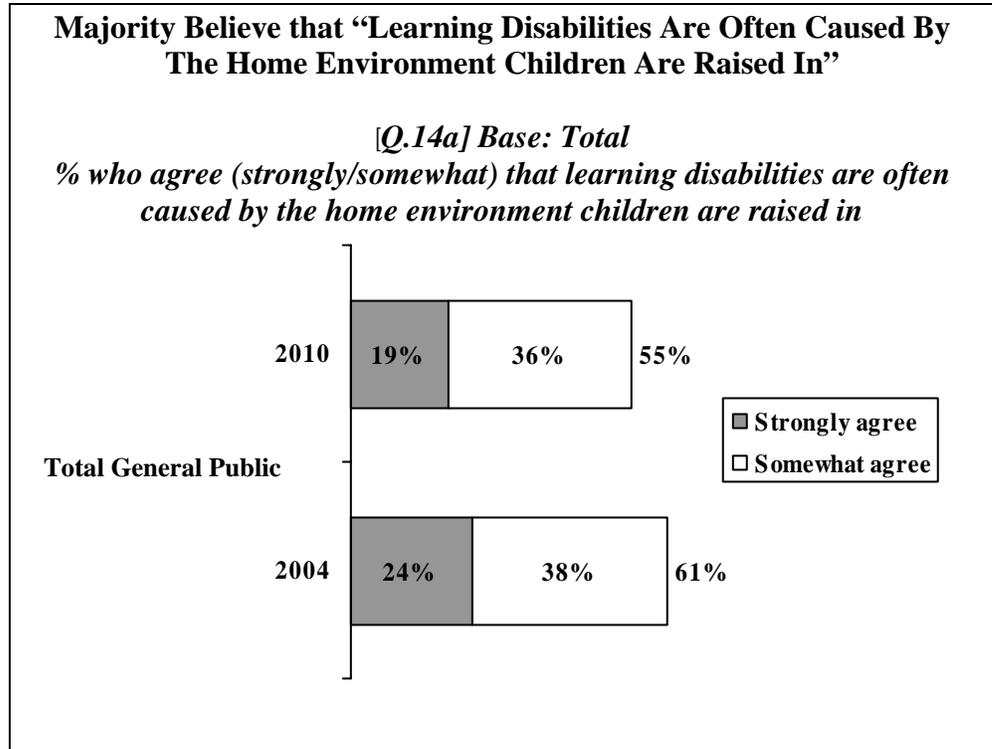


- **A majority of Americans continue to believe learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment a child is raised in, though this number has declined since 2004.**

Currently, well over half (55%) believe that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment children are raised in. This number has fluctuated over the course of the study: 61% noted in 2004, 56% in 1999 and 64% in 1995.

In terms of gender, again, fathers are more likely than mothers to believe learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment children are raised in (63% versus 48% of women with children).

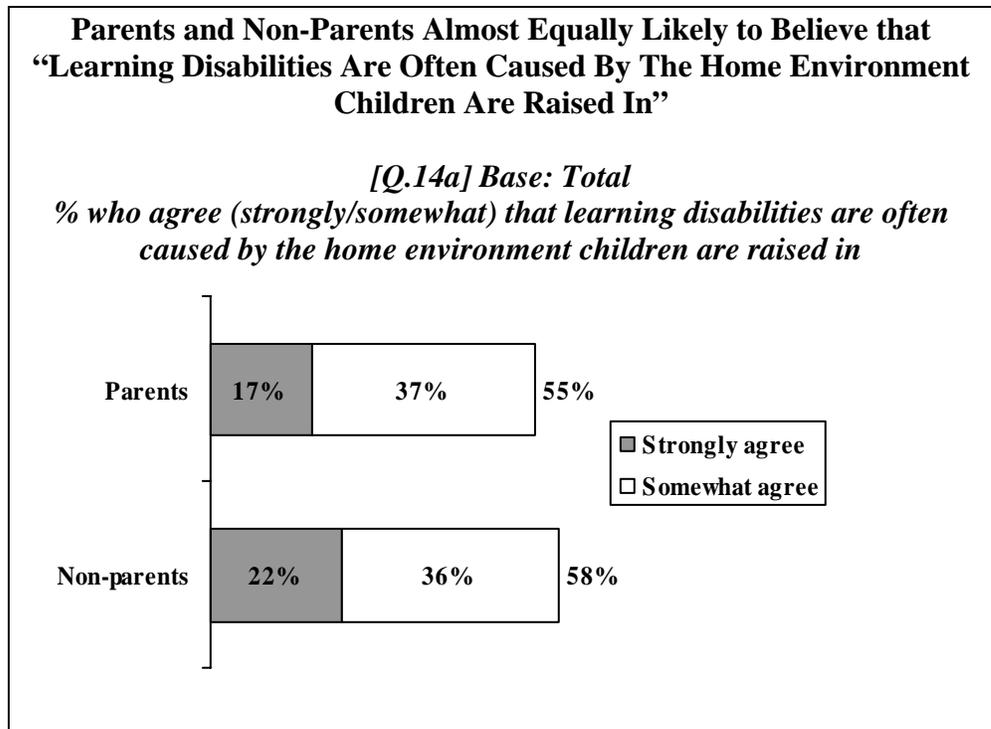
Such findings, coupled with the number of fathers who feel learning disabilities are a sign of laziness and who would treat their child privately rather than publicly, continue to suggest that fathers are a key group that needs to be better educated on learning disabilities in general and the ultimate benefits of early diagnosis for children.



Parents and non-parents are almost equally likely to believe that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment (55% of parents and 58% of non-parents agree with this statement).

The number of parents who attribute learning disabilities to the home environment remains unchanged (55% today vs. 54% in 2004 and 59% in 1995). The proportion of non-parents who hold this view decreased (58% vs. 63% in 2004).

Half of parents (49%) with a learning disability connection agree that the home environment plays a role. This mirrors 2004 findings.

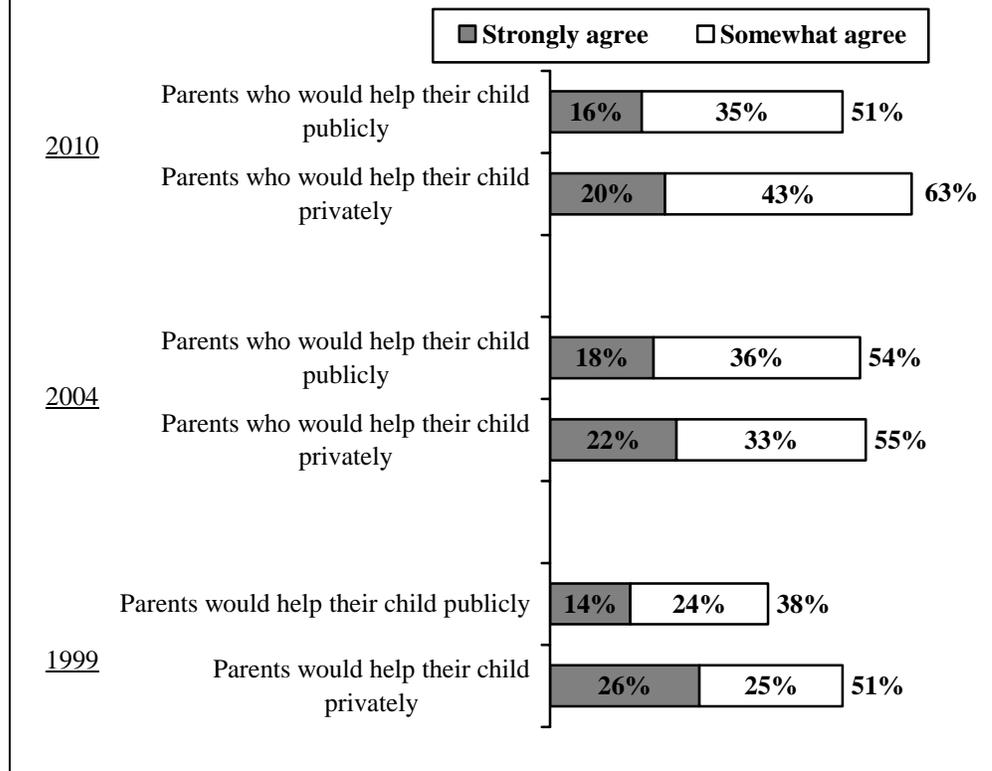


- **Parents who would opt to help their learning disabled child privately are much more likely to believe that home environments are a potential cause of learning disabilities.**

In 1999, parents who chose to help a learning disabled child privately were more likely than parents who would seek help publicly to believe that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment. In 2004, both groups were similarly likely to agree with the statement (55% vs. 54%, respectively). 2010 marks a return to the thinking noted in 1999. Almost two in three parents (63%) who would treat their child privately agree that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment in which the child is raised. This compares to only 51% of those who would reach out for help publicly.

Parents Who Would Help Children Privately More Likely to Believe that “Learning Disabilities Are Often Caused By The Home Environment Children Are Raised In”

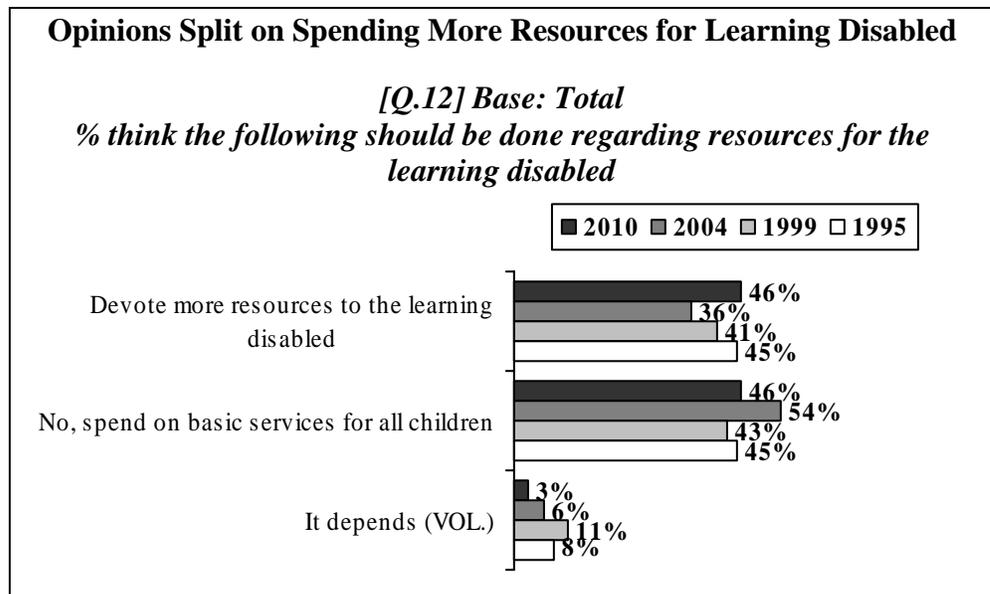
[Q.14a] Base: Parents with child under 18 years old in household % who agree (strongly/somewhat) that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment children are raised in



IV. Additional Support For Learning Disabled Children

- **Americans once again are split as whether or not we should devote additional resources specifically to services for learning disabled children or spend on basic services for all children.**

While 2004 found people having a clear opinion as to how school funds should be spent, this year we find the general public split on whether or not more resources should be devoted to children with learning disabilities or spread evenly among all children. An equal number (46%) agree with each option.



Not unexpectedly, adults who have personal experience with a learning disability³ are more likely than those without a learning disability connection to feel that more resources should be devoted to the learning disabled (49% vs. 43%, respectively). This is roughly 10 points higher for both segments, as 2004 found only 38% of those with a learning disability connection and 33% of those without feeling more resources should be spent on helping children with learning disabilities. Despite the increase noted this year, 1999 found well over half of adults with a learning disability connection (56%) saying that more resources should be devoted to helping children with learning disabilities.

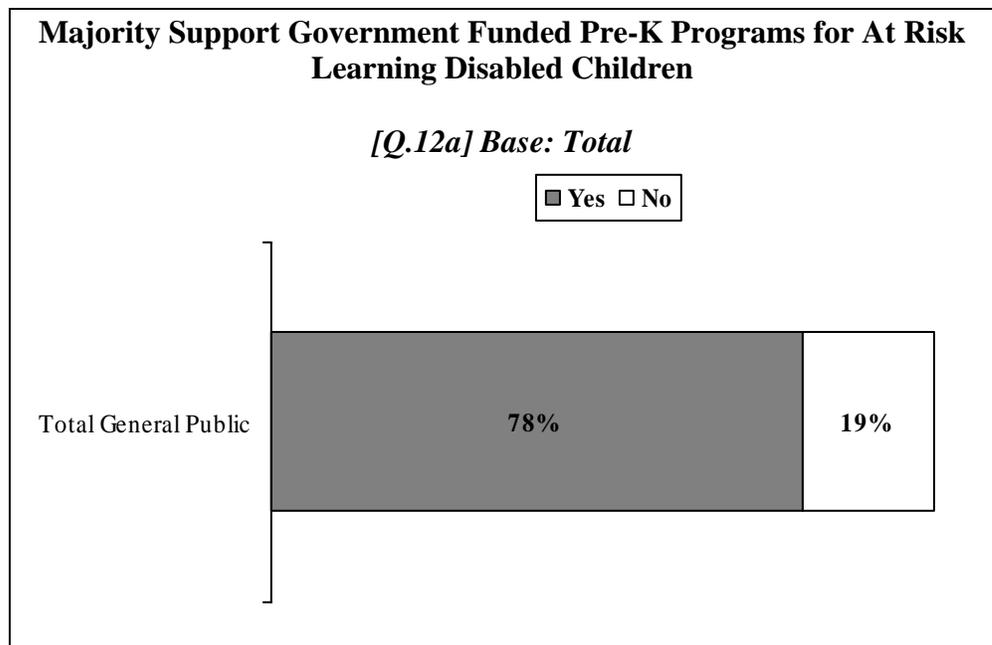
³ They personally have a learning disability, a child of theirs does or someone else close to them does.

- Americans overwhelmingly support the idea of government-funded Pre-K Education programs designed to get a head start on helping children at risk for learning disabilities**

Eight in 10 Americans (78%) recognize the importance of early intervention and support the idea of a government-funded Pre-K program designed to help children at risk for learning disabilities.

Adults 18 to 34 are the biggest supporters of the idea (84%), especially compared to those 35 and older (76%).

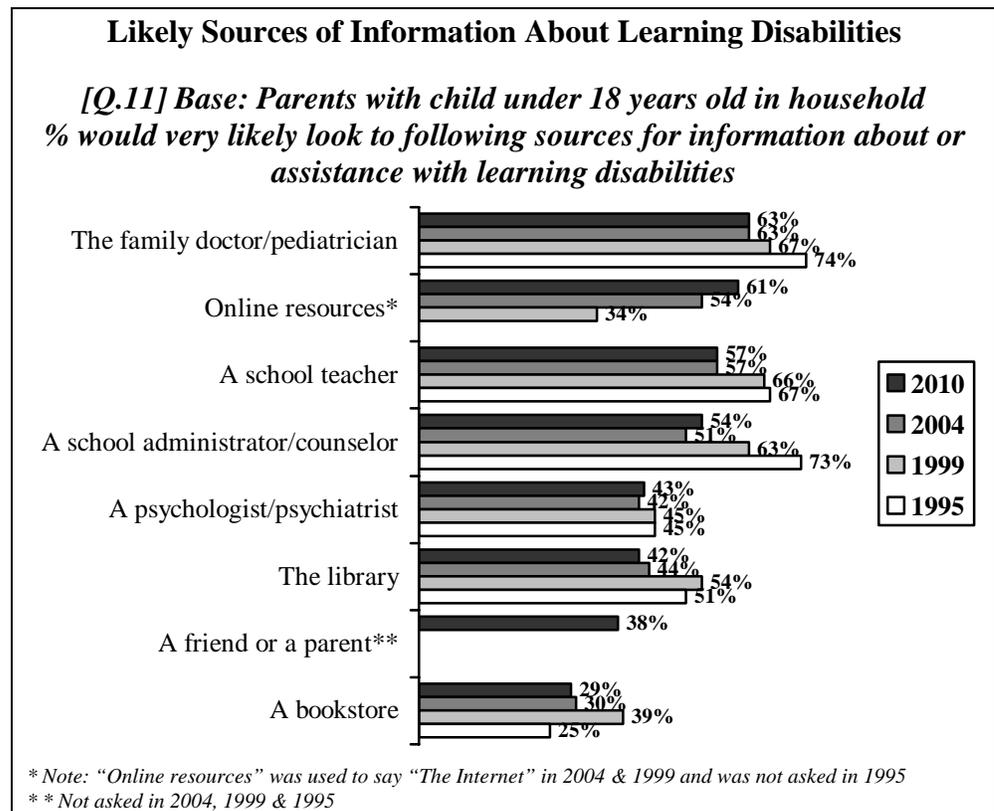
Parents, even those with a connection to a learning disability, are equally as likely as the general public to champion this idea.



- **Online resources rival experts in the field as sources of information about learning disabilities.**

While pediatricians (63%) and teachers (57%) remain top sources parents would likely turn to for information about learning disabilities, six in 10 parents now say they are very likely to turn to online resources when looking for information or assistance about learning disabilities. It should be noted that in 2004 and earlier, online resources were not an option, but rather respondents were asked how likely they were to use the Internet.

Overall, with the exception of the increase in online resources as a source of information, the other options record little change from 2004.



Parents who would choose to help their learning disabled child privately are much less inclined than other parents who would deal with the condition publicly to turn to school teachers (44% vs.

60%) or school administrators or counselors (43% vs. 58%) for information about learning disabilities. They are also less likely to reach out to the family doctor (59% vs. 71%). With the exception of “friend or a parent,” mothers are more likely than their male counterparts to say they would very likely turn to any of these sources for information.

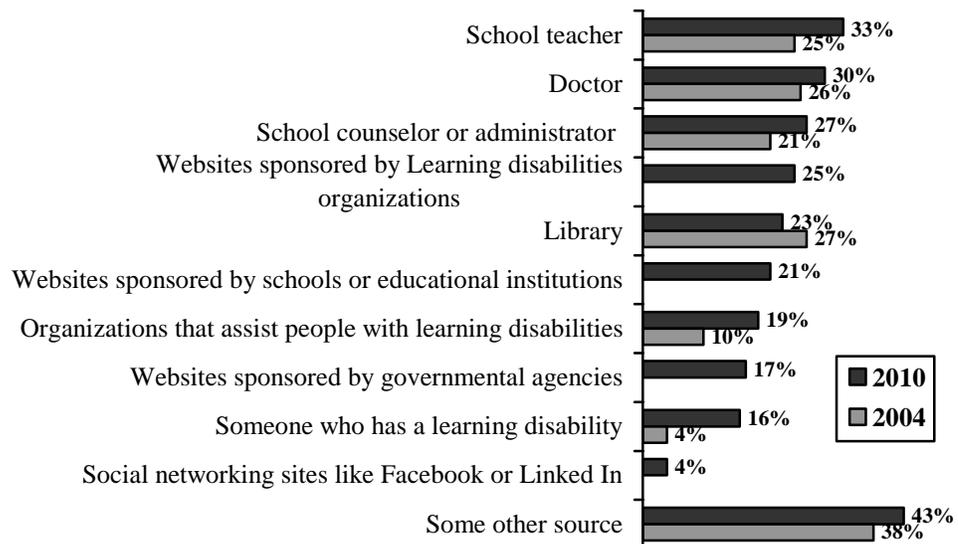
- **Americans with an actual need for information on learning disabilities are most likely to turn to teachers first to get the information they need.**

Identical to 2004, just over four in 10 adults (43%) say they have had a need for information about learning disabilities. Among parents, this figure climbs to 51% (vs. 40% of adults without children). Mothers in particular are most likely to say they have needed information about learning disabilities – nearly six in 10 (57%) say they have compared to only 42% of fathers. These findings are also nearly identical to 2004.

Among people who have ever had a need for information on this topic, one in three (33%) say they first turned to a teacher for the information they sought, making this the source people are most likely to look to. Other key sources of information include: a doctor (30%); a school counselor or administrator (27%); websites sponsored by learning disabilities organizations (25%); the library (23%); websites sponsored by schools or educational institutions (21%); organizations that assist people with learning disabilities (19%); websites sponsored by governmental agencies (17%); someone who has a learning disability (16%); and social networking sites (4%). With the exception of website mentions, which were added this year, the remaining sources all saw sizable increases in mention this year versus 2004. The largest increase was noted among those who first turned to someone who has a learning disability (16% currently, up from 4% in 2004).

Adults Who Needed Information On Learning Disabilities First Turned To Teacher

*[Q.25a] Base: Adults who have ever had a need for information about learning disabilities
% first turned to this source for the information they needed*



Note: Deleted "Internet" as an option in the current wave

New this year, adults were asked how helpful they felt each was as a source of information. Overall, someone with a learning disability was found to be most helpful, with two in three (66%) citing them as a source that was "very" helpful when they first tried to get information about learning disabilities. Teachers follow closely (65%), as do organizations that assist people with learning disabilities (62%). In addition, more than half said doctors (55%) and websites sponsored by learning disabilities organizations (58%) were also "very" helpful. Only 43% of those who mentioned they turned to websites sponsored by governmental agencies responded these cites were "very" helpful.

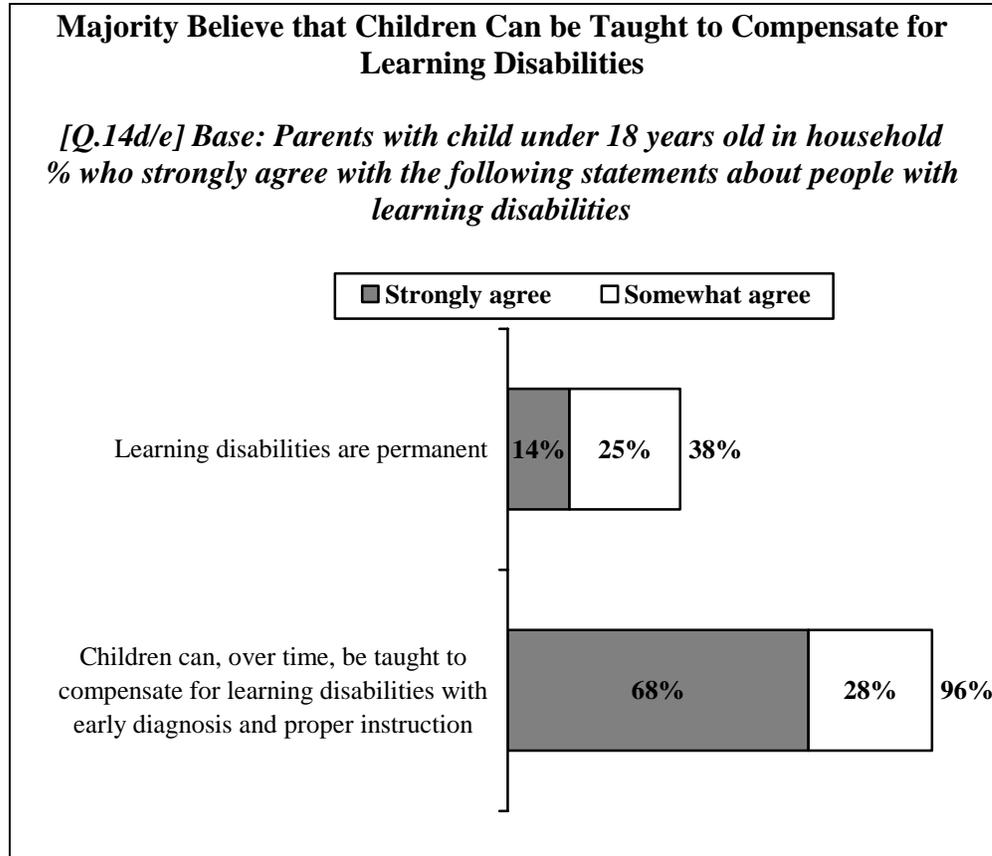
- **Almost all parents agree children can learn to compensate for their disability with proper instruction.**

While fewer than four in 10 parents (38%, up from 33% in 2004) agree that learning disabilities are permanent for people who have

them, almost all (96%) say that, with early diagnosis and proper instruction, children can be taught skills to compensate for their disability. In fact, two in three (68%) *strongly* agree that early diagnosis and proper instruction can be the key to helping children work with their disability. Both are unchanged from 2004.

Majority Believe that Children Can be Taught to Compensate for Learning Disabilities

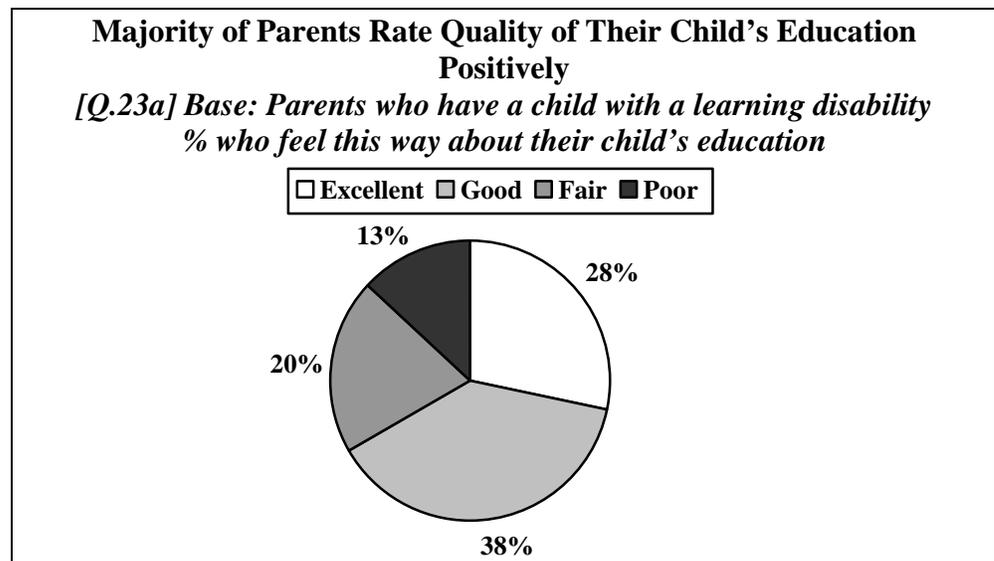
*[Q.14d/e] Base: Parents with child under 18 years old in household
% who strongly agree with the following statements about people with learning disabilities*



V. Children With Learning Disabilities And The American Education System

- **Parents of learning disabled children rate their child’s education positively**

Two in three parents who have a child with a learning disability (66%) describe their child’s education in positive terms – nearly three in 10 (28%) say it is “excellent” while another four in 10 (38%) describe the education as “good.” Only 13% consider their child’s education to be “poor.” Compared to 2004, we see an uptrend in the number of parents optimistic about their child’s education (66% currently vs. 60% in 2004). The number rating it as “excellent” is unchanged.



- **While most parents with a learning disabled child believe their child’s school is prepared to deal with the needs of children with learning disabilities, one in four describe their child’s school as “not prepared.”**

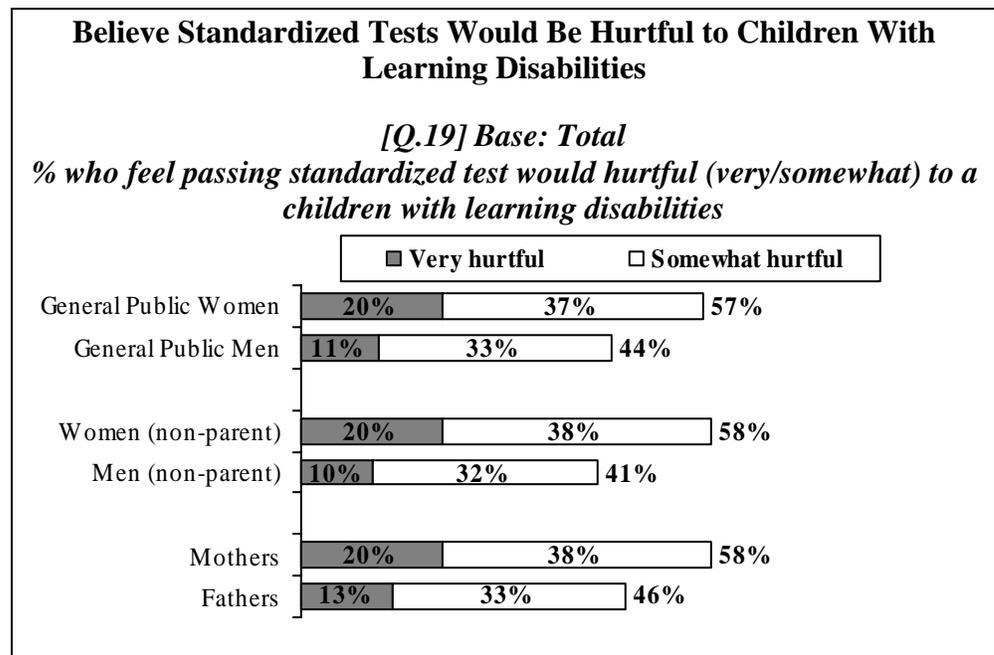
Similar to 2004, three in four (73%) parents who have a child with a learning disability say that their child’s school is very or somewhat prepared to deal with the needs of children with learning disabilities. Again, only 32% consider their child’s school “very” prepared.

The Standardized Test Debate Continues

- **The majority of people continue to believe that enforced standardized testing will be hurtful for students with learning disabilities**

Half of the general public (51%, down slightly from 55% in 2004) once again believes that standardized tests will be harmful for children who have learning disabilities. Again, differences are seen between men and women on this topic – just under six in 10 women in general and mothers in particular (57% each) say standardized testing is harmful compared to four in 10 of their male counterparts (44% of men in general and 46% of fathers).

While parents who have experience with learning disabilities are more likely than other parents to say the standardized testing will be hurtful for learning disabled children (57% vs. 47%, respectively) the number saying it would be “very hurtful” is identical this year (17%, 16% respectively). The 2004 study found parents with a learning disability connection 1.5 times more likely to say it would be “very hurtful.” (21% vs. 14%).



- **Parents experienced with learning disabilities feel the most valid way to determine the success of a school program for children with learning disabilities is written assessments by special education teachers of progress toward goals established in an Individual Education Program (IEP)**

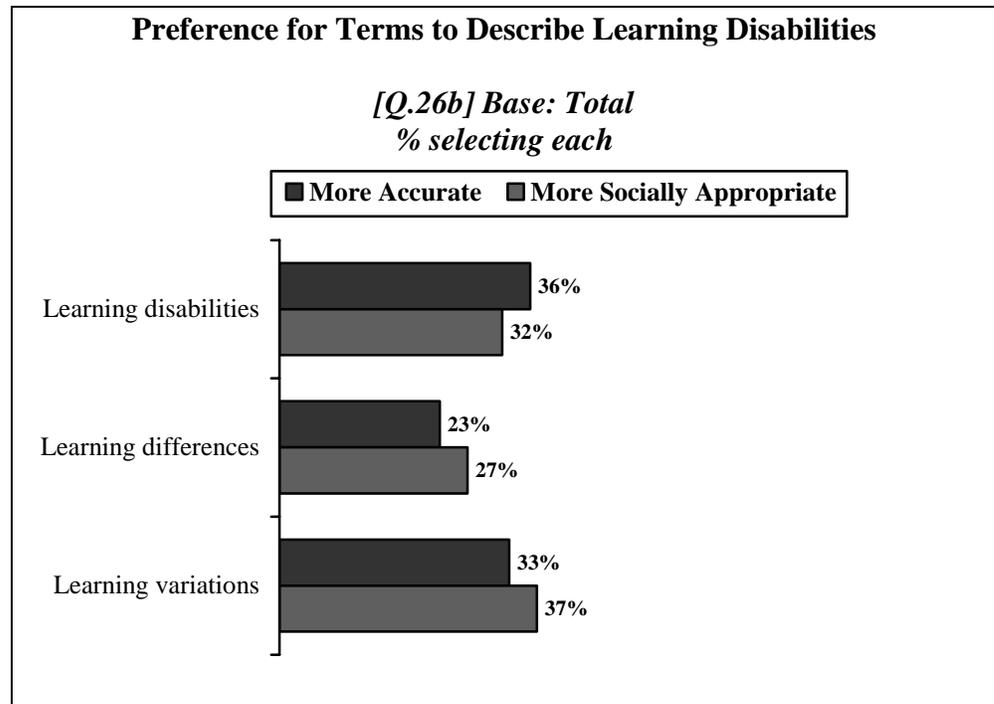
New this year, when asked their opinion on valid ways of determining how well a school has done in providing services to children with learning disabilities, well over eight in 10 (85%) feel the most suitable is special education teachers' written assessments of students progress towards goals established in an Individual Education Program (IEP), followed by parental assessments or feedback (82%).

Administering the same standardized tests to children with a learning disability as those without, ranks near the bottom of valid ways of measuring success. While eight in 10 parents with a learning disability connection say student performance on standardized test with accommodations for students with learning disabilities is a valid method of evaluation, only 46% say the same when there is no mention of special accommodations. Similar gaps are noted when customized test are given with accommodations (81% say valid method) and when asked about giving them the same customized test as children without a learning disability (51%).

- **Americans are split as to whether “learning disabilities” or “learning variations” best describe the topics discussed in the survey, but when asked which is most appropriate, “learning variations” stands out as the top choice**

Also new this year, Americans were asked their opinion on best way to describe the material discussed in the survey. Specifically, one in three (36%) feel learning disabilities is the best descriptor while 33% prefer learning variations. One in four (23%) were supporters of the term “learning differences.” When asked to comment on the most “socially appropriate” term, 37% prefer learning variations while 32% choose learning disabilities.

Parents who have experience with learning disabilities clearly prefer the term learning disabilities (37%) over the term learning variations (31%) when asked best describes what was discussed in the survey, but when asked to choose which is most socially acceptable, they very much prefer learning variations (39%) compared to 31% choosing learning disabilities.



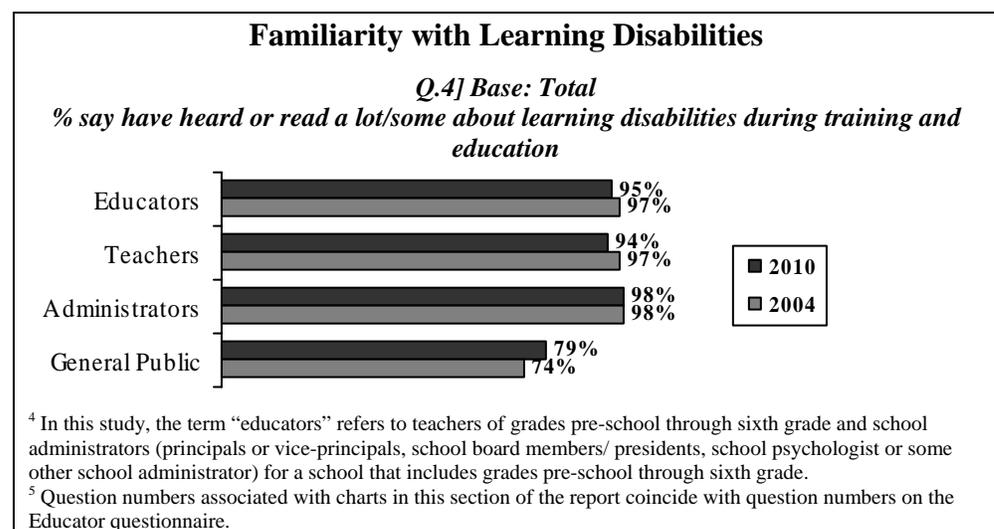
VI. American Educators and Children With Learning Disabilities

Measures of Awareness & Understanding

- **Almost all educators⁴ say they have at least some familiarity with learning disabilities.**

Educators say that their own education and training has given them information about learning disabilities. 95% say they have heard or read some to a lot about the topic (compared to 79% of the general public) with nearly three in four (66%) saying they have heard or read *a lot*. While the number of educators familiar with learning disabilities is basically unchanged from the 97% noted in 2004, there was a sharp decline in the number saying they have heard or read *a lot* (73%).

School administrators are more likely than teachers to say they have a lot of familiarity with the topic. More than eight in 10 administrators (82%) say they have read or heard “a lot” about learning disabilities while just over six in 10 teachers (64%) say they have as much familiarity. The 10 point gap noted in 2004 between teachers and administrators was closer than the 18 point gap recorded this year between the two groups of educators.

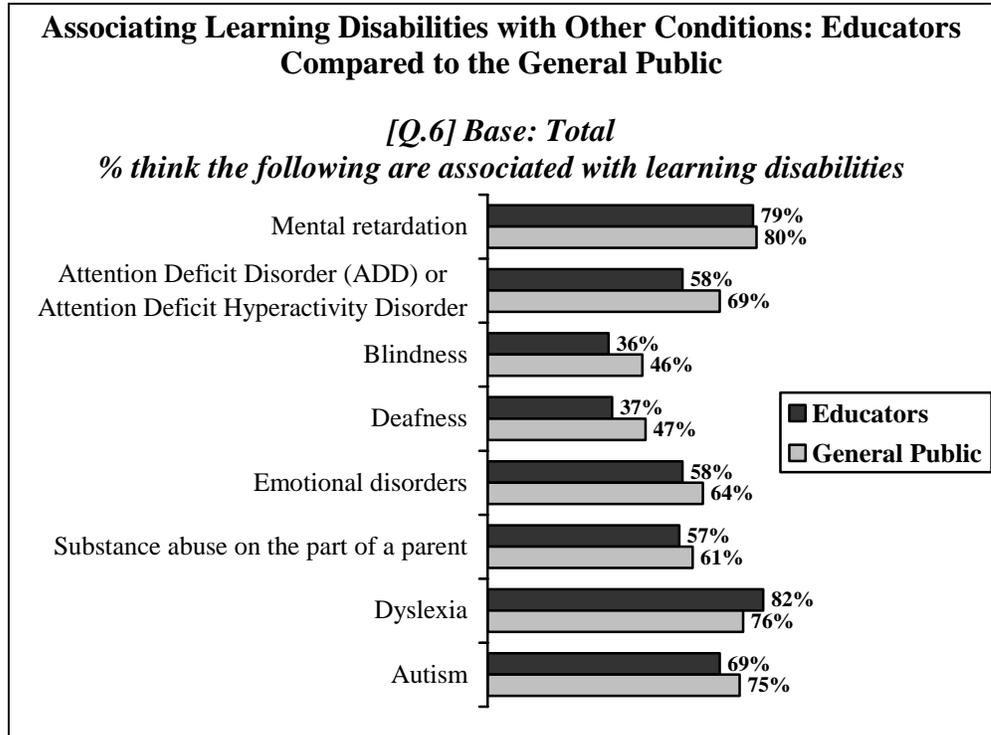


- **Even educators do not clearly understand what is or is not associated with learning disabilities.**

Eight in 10 educators (82%) correctly associate *dyslexia* with learning disabilities, compared to three out of four adults in general (76%). The 2004 study found 90% of educators associating *dyslexia* with learning disabilities.

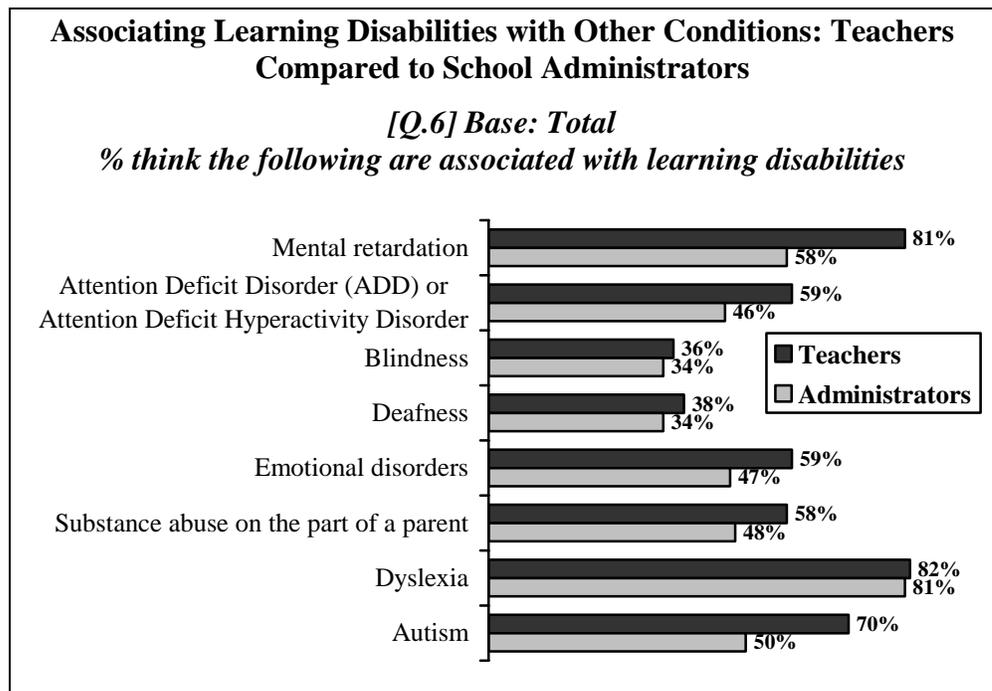
Yet, there is some confusion on many other conditions associated with learning disabilities. Although educators are less likely than the general public to erroneously attribute learning disabilities to blindness (36% vs. 46%, respectively) and deafness (37% and 47%), one in three educators do associate the two conditions with learning disabilities

Although educators are also less likely than Americans in general to mistakenly associate *emotional disorders* (58% vs. 64%, respectively), *attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder* (58% vs. 69%, respectively) and *autism* (68% vs. 75%) with learning disabilities, sizable numbers of educators do equate these. Also worth noting, 57% of educators associated learning disabilities with *substance abuse on the part of a parent*, compared to 61% of the general public. This marks a substantial decline from the seven in 10 educators (70%) who in 2004 said the two are linked. Educators and the general public are equally as likely as the population to erroneously link learning disabilities with *mental retardation* (79% compared to 80%).



- Teachers continue to be more likely than school administrators to incorrectly associate certain conditions with learning disabilities.**

As noted in 2004, teachers are more likely than school administrators to wrongly associate certain conditions with learning disabilities. For example, nearly eight in 10 teachers make a link between learning disabilities and mental retardation (81%, up from 76% in 2004). Seven in 10 teachers associate autism with learning disabilities (vs. 50% of administrators). Six in 10 incorrectly believe attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (59%) is correlated to learning disabilities. By comparison, 58% of administrators make the same erroneous link to mental retardation and 46% associate the condition with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Both teachers and administrators were much less likely to associate ADD or ADHD with learning disabilities this year compared to 2004 (59% vs. 73% in 2004 among teachers and 46% vs. 65% administrators). Also, while six in 10 teachers (58%) believe that parental substance abuse can be associated with a learning disability in a child, only half of administrators (48%) agree. Declines are noted for both teachers and administrators compared to 2004 (71%, 60% respectively).



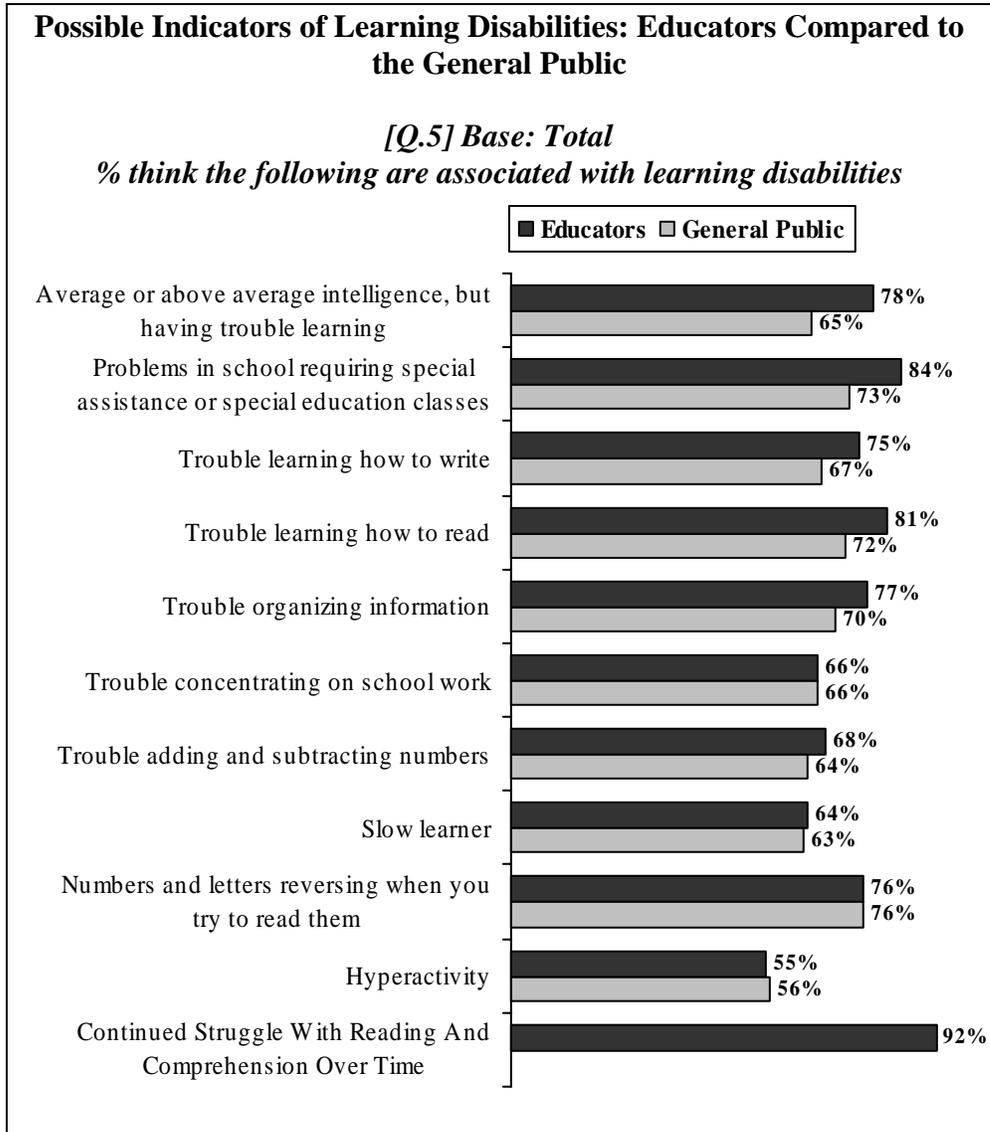
- **Educators are more likely than the general public to correctly identify possible indicators of learning disabilities.**

School educators are aware of behaviors that are signs of a learning disability in a child – often much more so than the general public. In particular:

- 81% of educators say having trouble learning how to read is a sign of potential problem, compared to 72% of adults in general;
- Three out of four (75%) educators say trouble learning how to write may be a sign of a learning disability while 67% of adults say this;
- Eight in 10 (78%) understand that having average or above average intelligence but trouble with learning is a possible indicator of a learning disability while only two-thirds (65%) of the general public understand this.

While 2010 again found educators much more likely than the general public to identify all of the above as possible signs of a learning disability, fewer cited each behavior than observed in 2004.

Overall, few differences exist between teachers and administrators. However, teachers are much more likely than school administrators to believe reversing numbers and letters (77% vs. 68%) and being a slow learner (65% vs. 56%) are signs of a learning disabilities.



[Q.5] Base: Total

% think the following are associated with learning disabilities

	General Public		Educators	
	2004	2010	2004	2010
Average or above average intelligence, but having trouble learning	56	65	85	78
Problems in school requiring special assistance or special education classes	68	73	86	84
Trouble learning how to write	65	67	80	76
Trouble learning how to read	72	72	86	81
Trouble organizing information	67	70	81	77
Trouble concentrating on school work	60	66	73	66
Trouble adding and subtracting numbers	59	64	70	68
Slow learner	60	63	66	64
Numbers and letters reversing when you try to read them	79	76	79	76
Hyperactivity	n/a	56	n/a	55
Continued Struggle With Reading And Comprehension Over Time	n/a	n/a	n/a	92

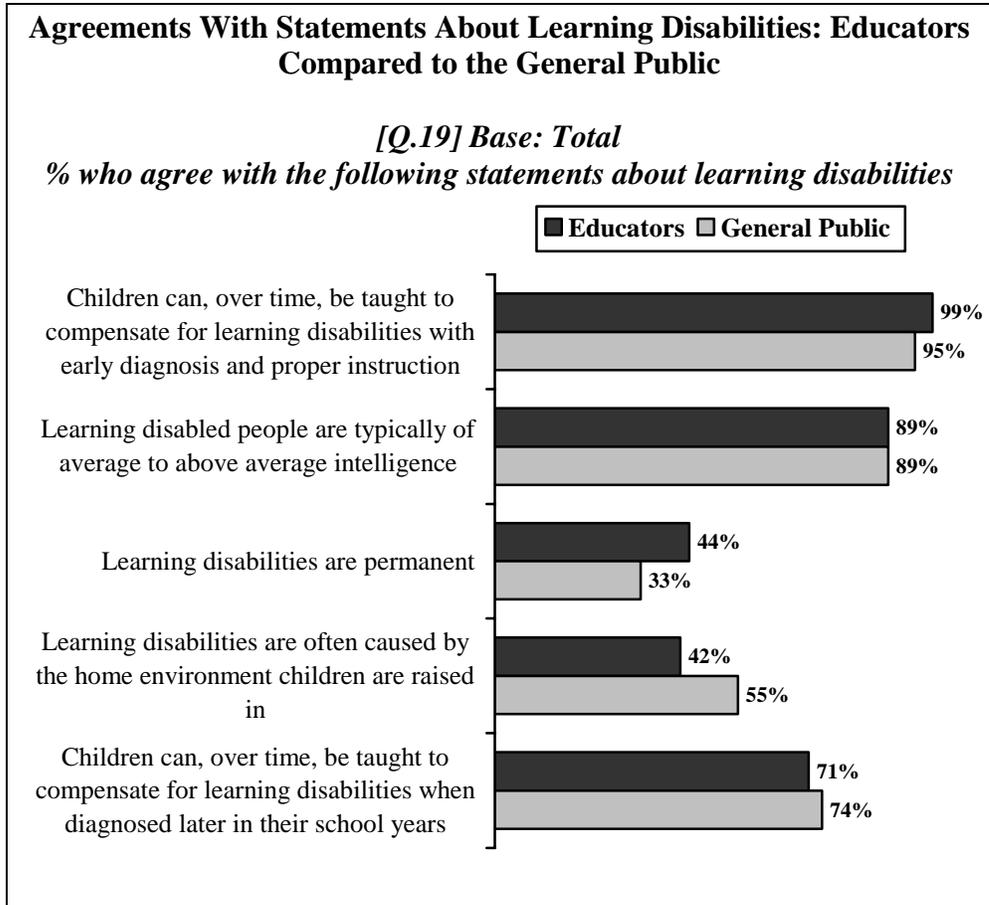
- **Among educators some confusion still exists about possible indicators of learning disabilities.**

Educators are as likely as Americans in general to incorrectly associate *hyperactivity* with learning disabilities (55% and 56% respectively). While they are equal in agreement that there is an association between the two, they are not necessarily in agreement that there is no association. Educators are much more likely to say “it depends” (23% and 8% respectively) while the general public is much more certain there is no relationship (35% vs. 22%). Educators are therefore equally as likely to say there is no relationship between hyperactivity and learning disabilities as they are to say “it depends.” As mentioned in the past, hyperactivity is a condition that individuals sometimes have *in addition* to learning disabilities – but is not itself an indicator of learning disabilities.

- **Educators continue to have difficulty spotting the signs associated with learning disabilities – but they do understand the condition better than the general public**

Overall, educators seem more knowledgeable of the truths about learning disabilities than the general public. For example, educators are more likely to agree that learning disabilities are permanent. While 33% of adults in general agree with this, 44% of educators do. It should be noted, however, that school administrators are much more likely than teachers to feel learning disabilities are permanent – 57% vs. 43% of teachers. This was true in 2004 as well with comparable numbers recorded for each.

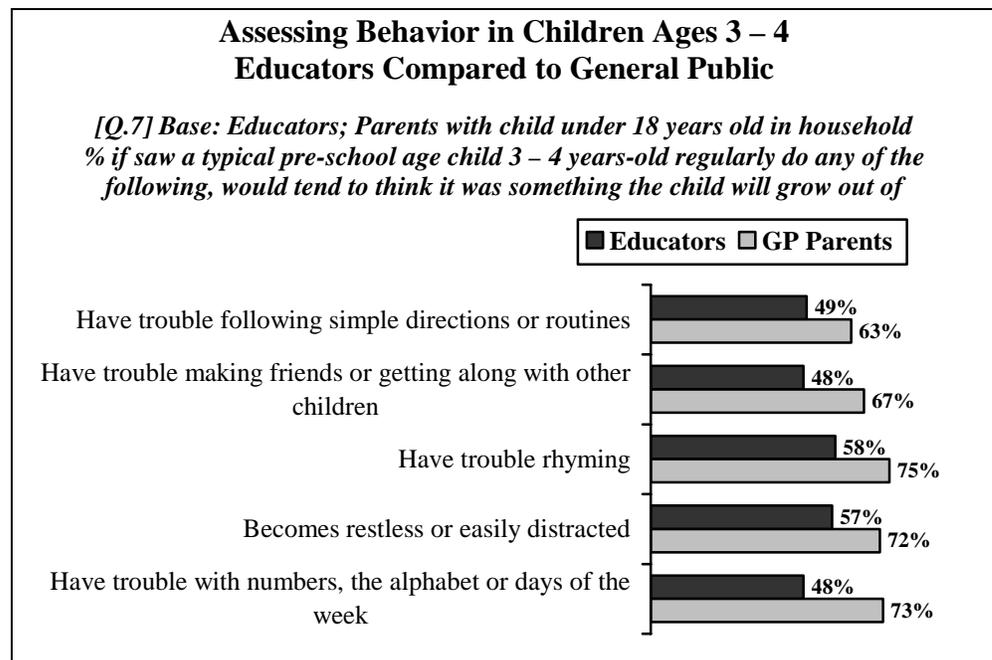
Similarly, while well over half (55%) of Americans incorrectly believe that learning disabilities are often caused by the home environment children are raised in (perhaps contributing to the stigmas associated with learning disabilities), only four in 10 educators (42%) say the same. Here teachers are more likely than school administrators to agree (43% and 31%, respectively). 2004 found teachers and administrators equally as likely to agree.



Assessing Behavior In 3-To-4-Year-Old Children

- **When it comes to possibly troubling behavior in children 3-to-4-years-old, educators are often as likely as parents in the general population to not recognize the signs of some serious problem**

Roughly half of all educators believe having trouble rhyming (58%) and having trouble with numbers; the alphabet or days of the week (48%) – both of which could be signs of a serious learning problem in a child 3-to-4 years old – are something a child at this age would grow out of. Similar numbers comment restlessness or becoming easily distracted is something a child this age would out grow (57%). In addition, educators (48%) are also much less likely than parents (67%) to feel the same in regards to having trouble making friends or getting along with other children and having trouble following simple directions or routines (49%, 63% respectively). It should be noted that educators were allowed to answer “depends” this year, but not in 2004; therefore a true comparison to 2004 is not possible.

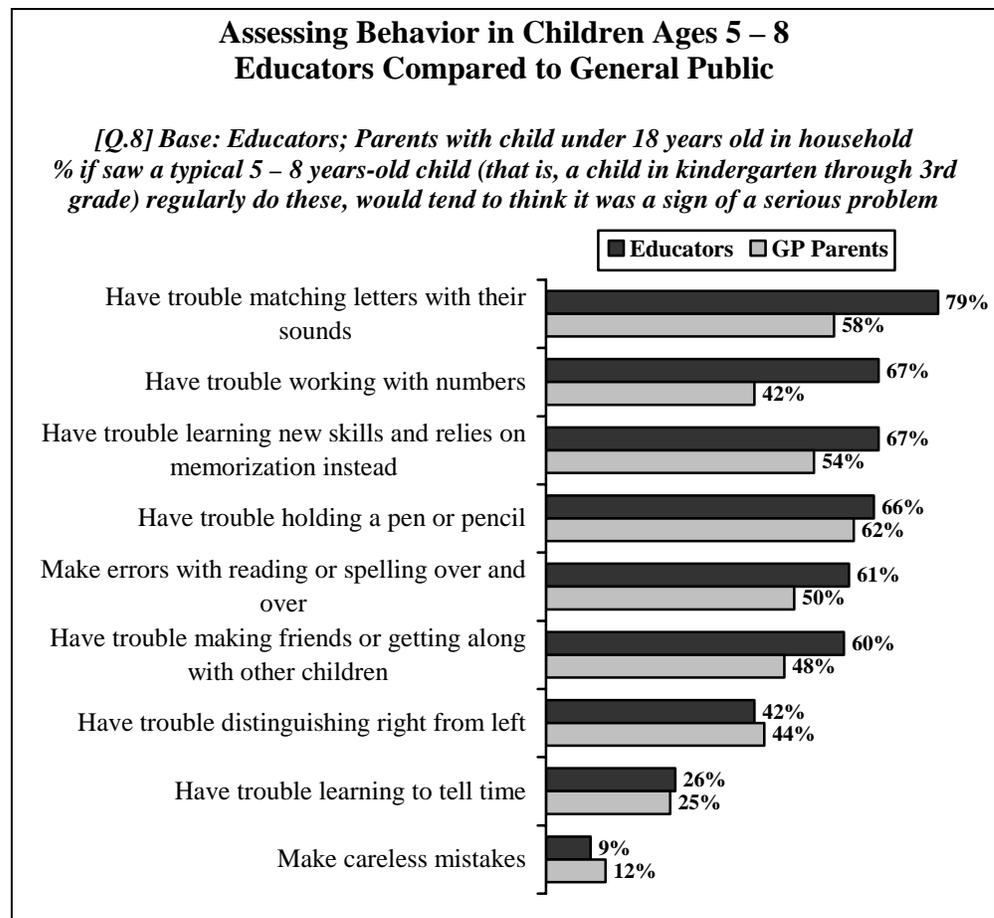


On all measures, teachers and administrators are similarly likely to believe these are potential signs of trouble among 3-4 year olds.

Assessing Behavior In 5-To-8-Year-Old Children

- **Educators are much more aware of potential signs of trouble among 5-to-8-year-olds**

Educators are more likely to view academic difficulties as signs of potential problems in children age 5 to 8. Eight in 10 educators (79%) consider academic difficulties such as trouble matching letters with their sounds or repeated errors with reading or spelling as signs of a serious problem in children this age. Two out of three (66%) say it is a sign of a problem if a child has difficulty holding a pen or pencil, while 67% consider having trouble working with numbers or with learning new skills to be potential warning signs. Educators are less likely this year to feel difficulty holding a pen or pencil is a sign of a problem than in 2004 (72%).



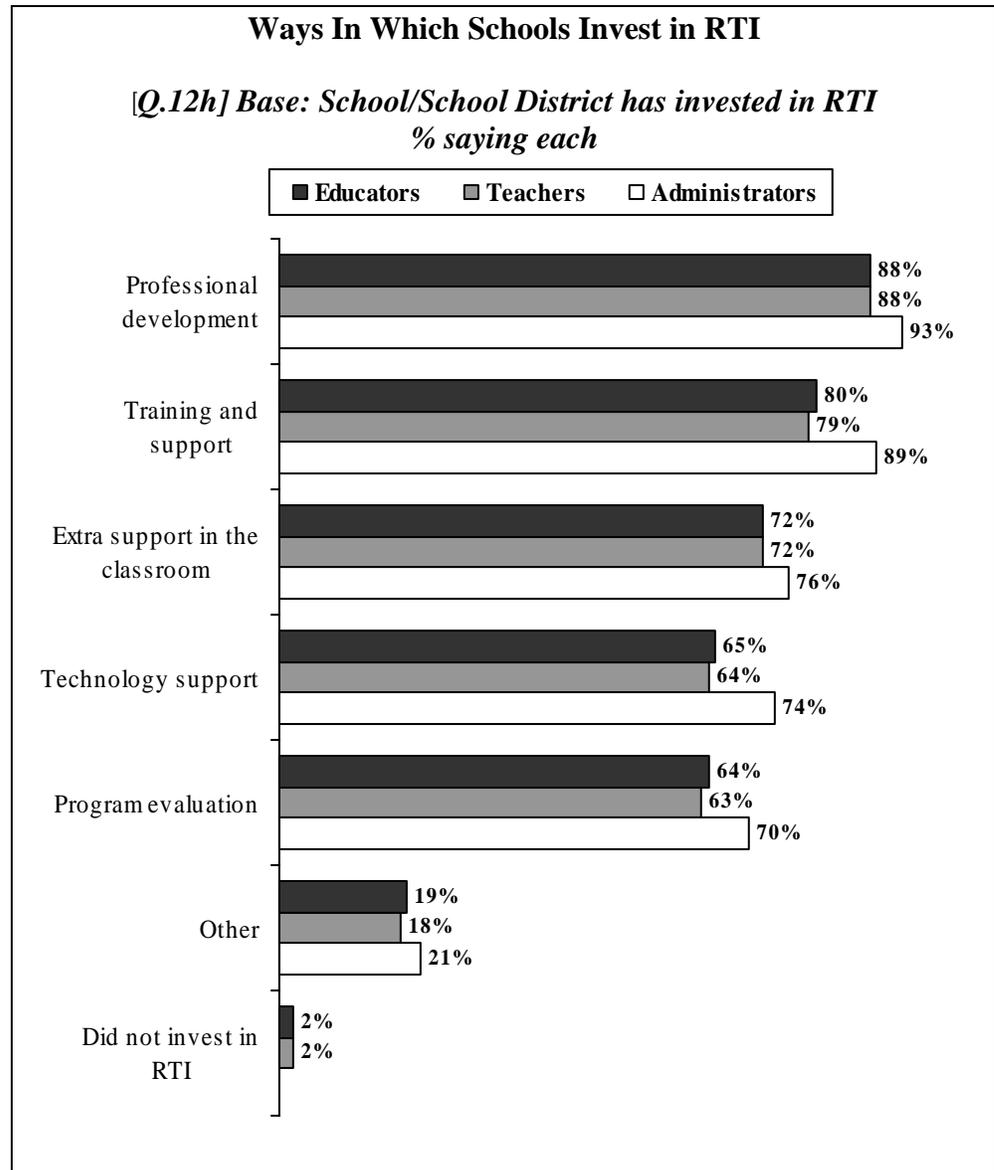
When it comes to behaviors that are less academic in nature, educators, like parents in general, are not as likely to be concerned. Just over half (54%) of educators consider it a potential problem for a child this age to have trouble distinguishing right from left. The majority believes *trouble learning to tell time* (66%), *trouble planning* (76%) or making *careless mistakes* (87%) are actually behaviors a 5 to 8 year old will grow out of. In 2010, educators seem to be less willing to “wait and see” if a child grows out of trouble they may be having with planning (62%).

- **Schools are engaging in RTI**

Eight in 10 (82%) educators say their school or school district engages in “RTI” (Response to Intervention). Administrators are somewhat more likely than teachers to say this is true (87%, 81% respectively). When these same educators are asked to what degree their school is invested in RTI almost all feel they are fully invested, with 93% saying “a lot/a little.” Seven in 10 (69%) say “a lot.”

Ways in which schools invest in RTI range from professional development to program evaluations. Almost nine in 10 say “professional development” is one of the ways their school/school district empower RTI while eight in 10 (80%) say they are given training and support. Somewhat fewer list extra support in the classroom (72%), technology support (65%) and program evaluations as ways their school/school district currently invests in RTI.

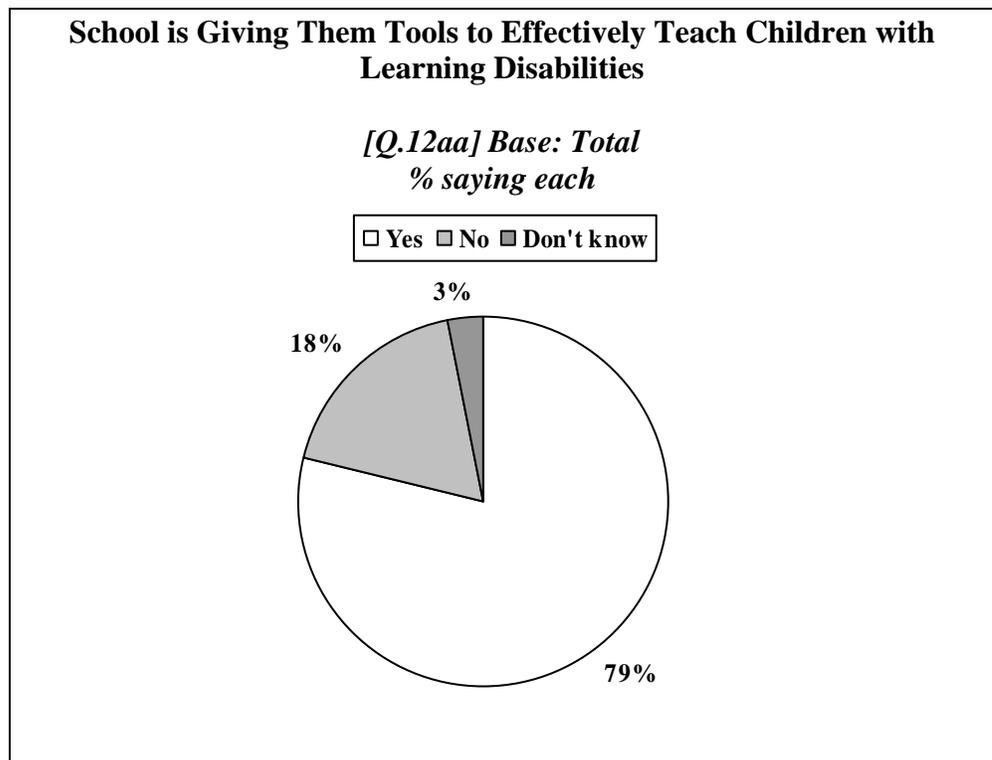
Administrators are more likely than teachers to comment that their school district offers training and support (89% vs. 79%) as well as technology support (74% vs. 64%).



School Procedures For Working With Learning Disabled Children

- **Educators believe their school/school district is effectively teaching children with learning disabilities.**

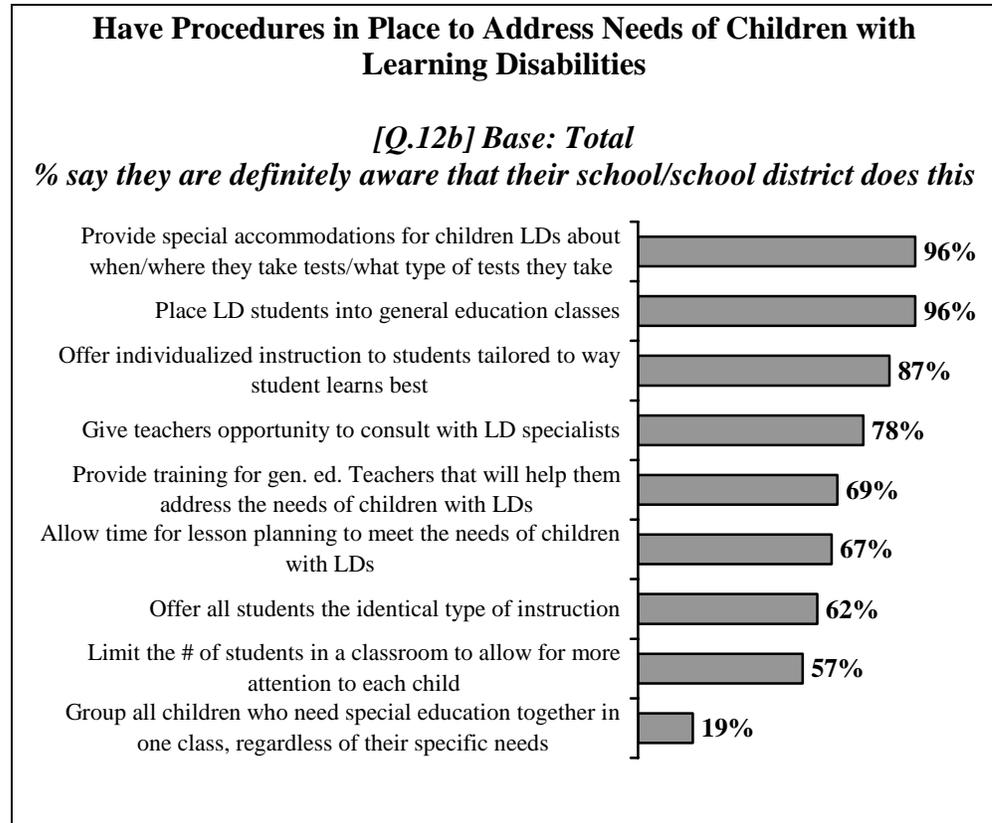
When asked whether their school or district is doing a good job at giving them the tools they need to effectively teach children with learning disabilities, 79% say “yes.” Interestingly, special education teachers are most likely to say this is not true (23%) while teachers and school administrators are in equal agreement.



- **Most educators say their schools have procedures in place to address the needs of children with learning disabilities**

Nine in ten educators (92%) say they currently work with children who have learning disabilities. Seven in 10 (68%) are familiar with the term “RTI” (Response to Intervention). Almost all say their school or school district has procedures in place to address the needs of learning disabled children (98%). Some of the procedures educators are more likely to be aware of in their school/school district are:

- Providing special accommodations for children with learning disabilities about when or where they take tests or what type of tests they take (96%, unchanged from 2004)
- Offering individualized instruction to students tailored to the way students learn best (87%, unchanged)
- Giving teachers the opportunity to consult with learning disability specialists (78%, down from 82%)
- Allow time for lesson planning to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities (67%, up from 59%)



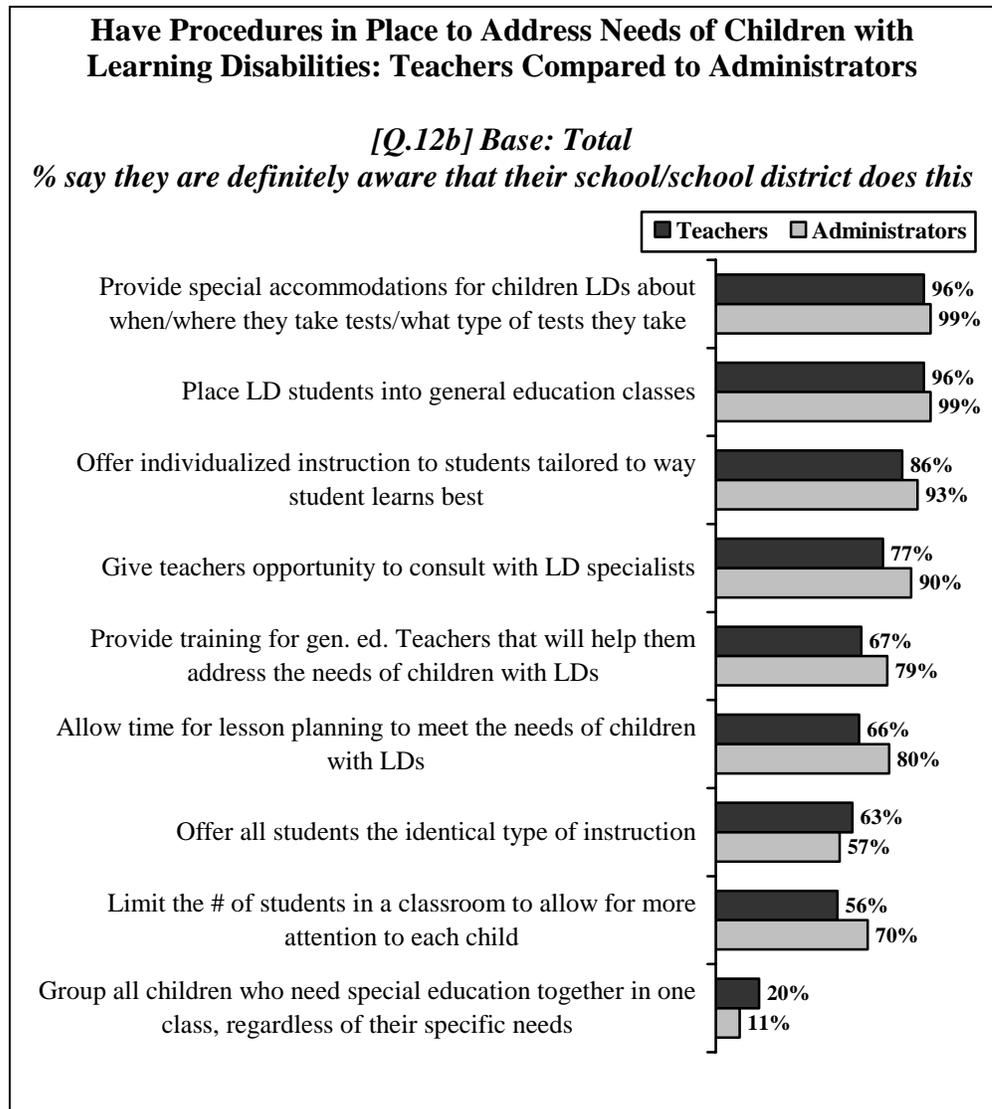
- **Sizable gaps often exist between teachers and administrators when asked about the procedures used to help learning disabled children**

As previously mentioned, most educators say their school or school district has procedures in place to address the needs of learning disabled children. Teachers and administrators, however, appear to have different opinions on what those procedures are.

In detail, eight in 10 administrators believe their school district provides training for teachers to help them address the needs of children with learning disabilities (79%) and allows time for lesson planning to meet the needs of these children (80%). Teachers think differently. Only 66% say their school provides enough time for lesson planning and 67% are aware that their school provides training to work with learning disabled children. Three out of four teachers (77%) say their school gives them opportunities to consult with learning disability specialists. In contrast, nine in 10

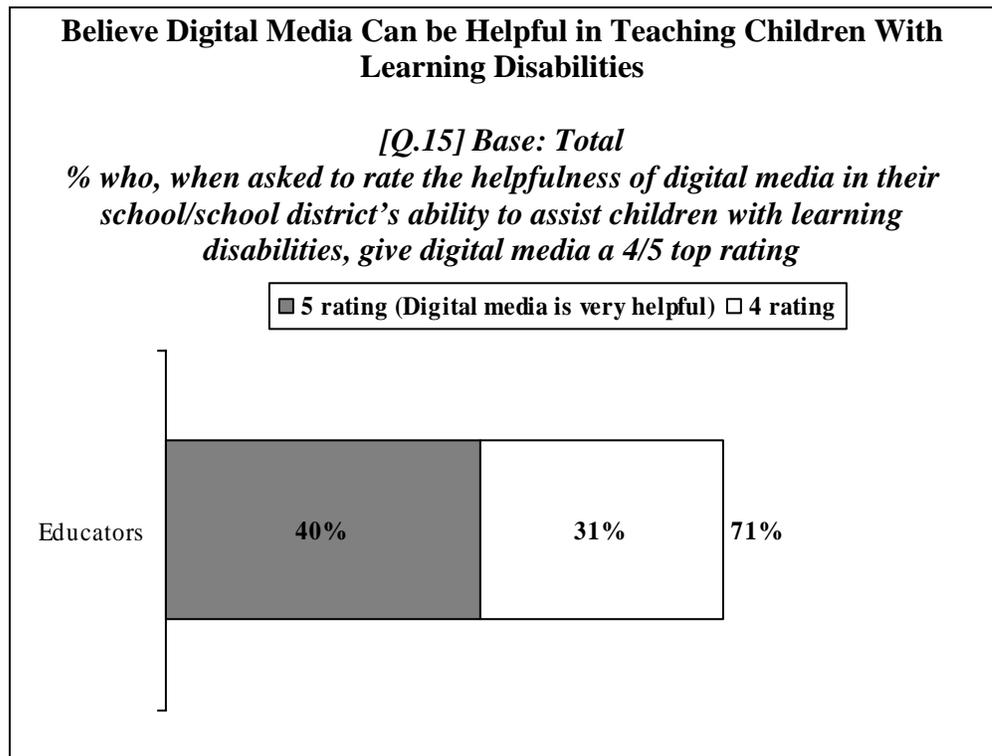
administrators (90%) say their district provides the opportunity. Seven in 10 (70%) administrators say the number of students in a classroom is limited so teachers will have sufficient time to devote to individual students. Only 56% of teachers say the same. Along this same line, teachers are twice as likely as administrators to comment that their school groups all children who need special education together in one class regardless of their specific needs (20% vs. 11%).

Comparing results to 2004 finds administrators less likely to say both their school district provides training for general education teachers (79%, down from 85%) and the number of students in a classroom is limited so teachers will have sufficient time to devote to individual students. Teachers are in turn much more likely than in 2004 to say their school provides enough time for lesson planning (66%, up from 56%).



- **Educators believe that digital media can be helpful in teaching children with learning disabilities**

Seven in 10 (71%) believe digital media could be in helpful in their school/school district’s efforts to assist children who have learning disabilities. Four in 10 (40%) believes computers can be “very” helpful. Very few comment that digital media would not be helpful at all.

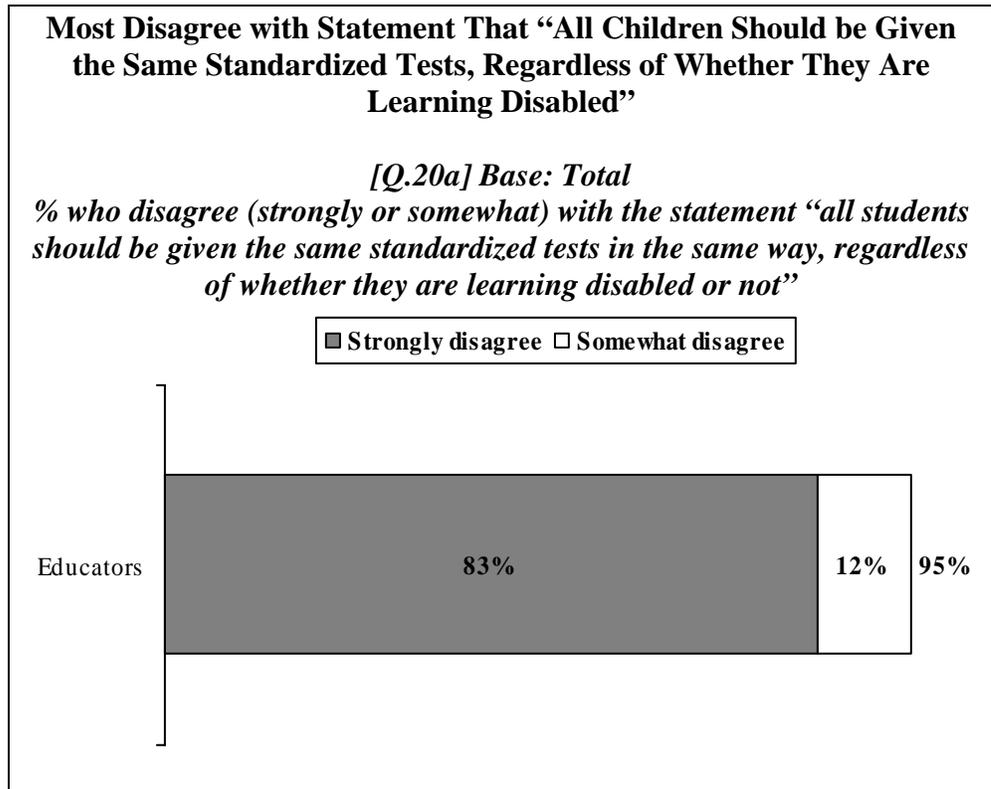


Testing all Children the Same Way?

- **When it comes to standardized exams, educators feel strongly that all children should not be given the same test in the same way.**

Nearly all educators (95%) disagree with the idea of giving all students the same standardized test in the same way, regardless of whether or not they are disabled. Most (83%) strongly disagree with this notion. 2004 results were nearly identical.

While teachers and administrators share similar thinking when it comes to the question of whether or not children should be given the same standardized test, they do have differing opinions when asked about the possibility of giving children with learning disabilities the same standardized test as other children but more time. One in three teachers (35%) disagrees with this idea, compared to one in four (24%) administrators.



- **Educators firmly believe enforced standardized testing will be hurtful to students with learning disabilities**

A large majority of educators (79%) say standardized tests will be harmful for children who have learning disabilities (1.5 times more than the general public at 51%). Among educators who feel this way, at least a third (29% of all educators) believes the exams will be “very” hurtful. Again, differences are seen between teachers and administrators on this topic – 80% of teachers say the exams will be harmful compared to 71% of administrators. Decreases are noted compared to 2004, which found 84% of all educators commenting on the harmfulness of standardized tests for students with learning disabilities. The largest decline was noted in the proportion of educators saying this was very harmful (29%, down from 43%).

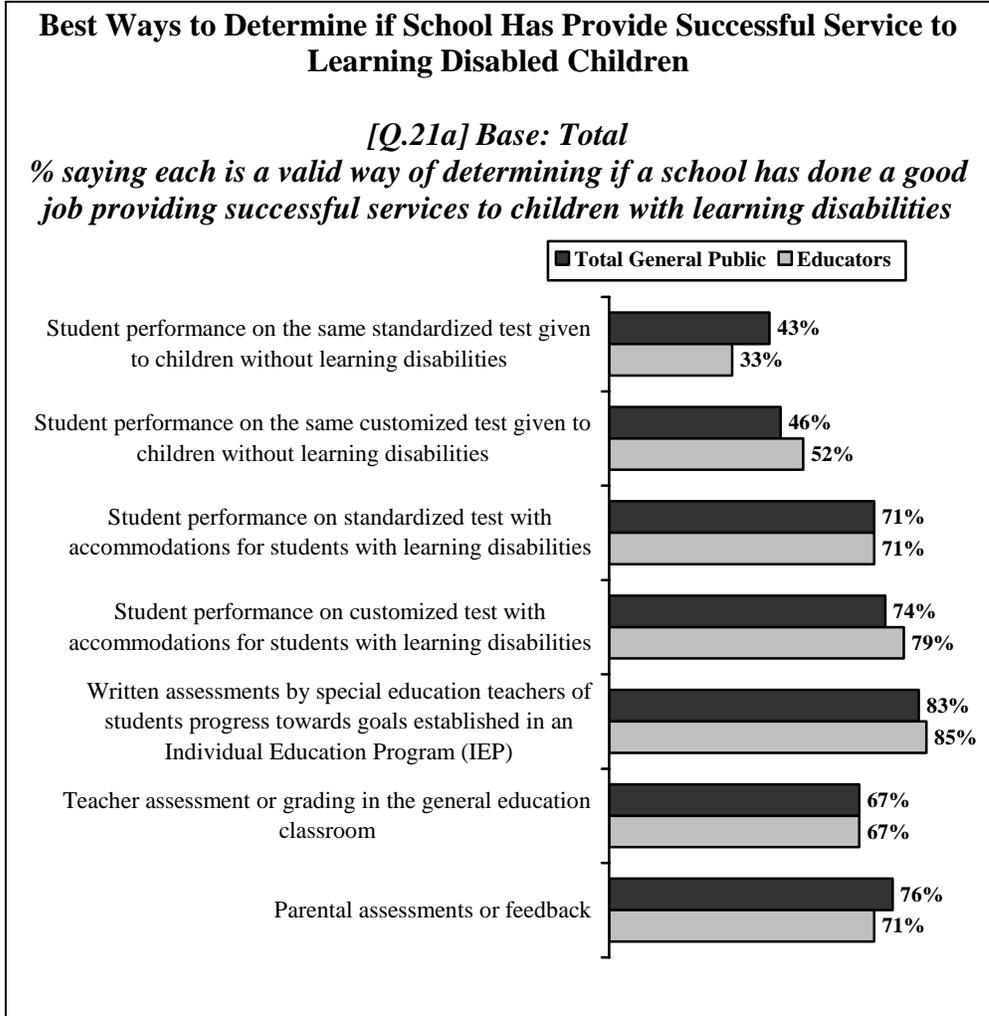
The emphasis on standardized testing appears to limit an educator’s ability to teach. More than seven in 10 educators (74%) agree (strongly/somewhat) that the emphasis on having students pass standardized tests gives educators no choice but to teach based on the material covered in exams—and not necessarily teach on the broader educational needs of the students. Teachers are again more likely than school administrators to believe this: three-fourths of teachers agree (75%) compared to two-thirds administrators (67%). Four in 10 teachers (42%) strongly believe this to be true.

- **Educators are changing their opinion and appear more comfortable with the idea that standardized tests are fair for children with learning disabilities if modifications in the test environment are allowed. This is especially true of administrators**

Two-thirds of educators (65%, up from 57% in 2004) say that, if children with learning disabilities are given more time or a quiet environment, it is fair to give them the same standardized test as other students. Administrators are much more likely to agree with this statement (75% vs. 64% of teachers). 2004 survey results found teachers and administrators noting near identical levels of agreement.

- **For the most part educators and the general public are in agreement as to the best way of determining if a school has done a good job at providing successful services to children with learning disabilities**

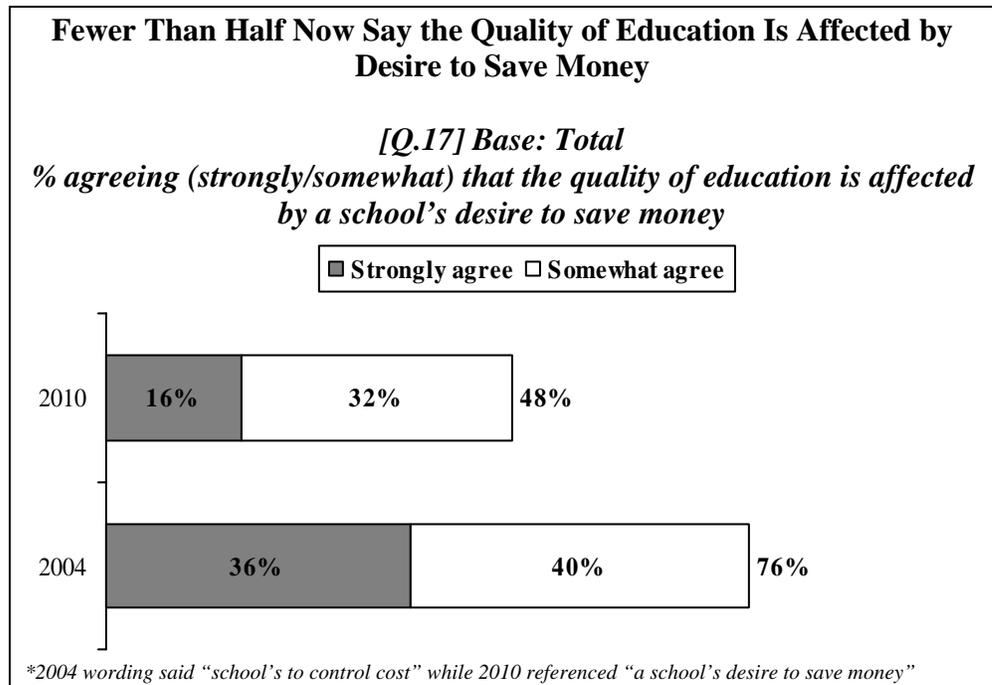
With few exceptions, educators and the general public are in agreement as to which are the best ways of measuring if a school is doing a good job at providing services to children with learning disabilities. Americans in general are, however, more likely to say that student performance on the same standardized test given to children without learning disabilities is a valid measurement tool (43% vs. 33%). Teachers are in turn more likely to say student performance on the same customized test given to children without learning disabilities is a good indicator of success (52% vs. 46%). The general public is also a stronger advocate of parental assessments than educators (76% vs. 71%). This is especially true of parents (82%).



- **Educators are split as to whether the desire to save money is put ahead of the best way to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities**

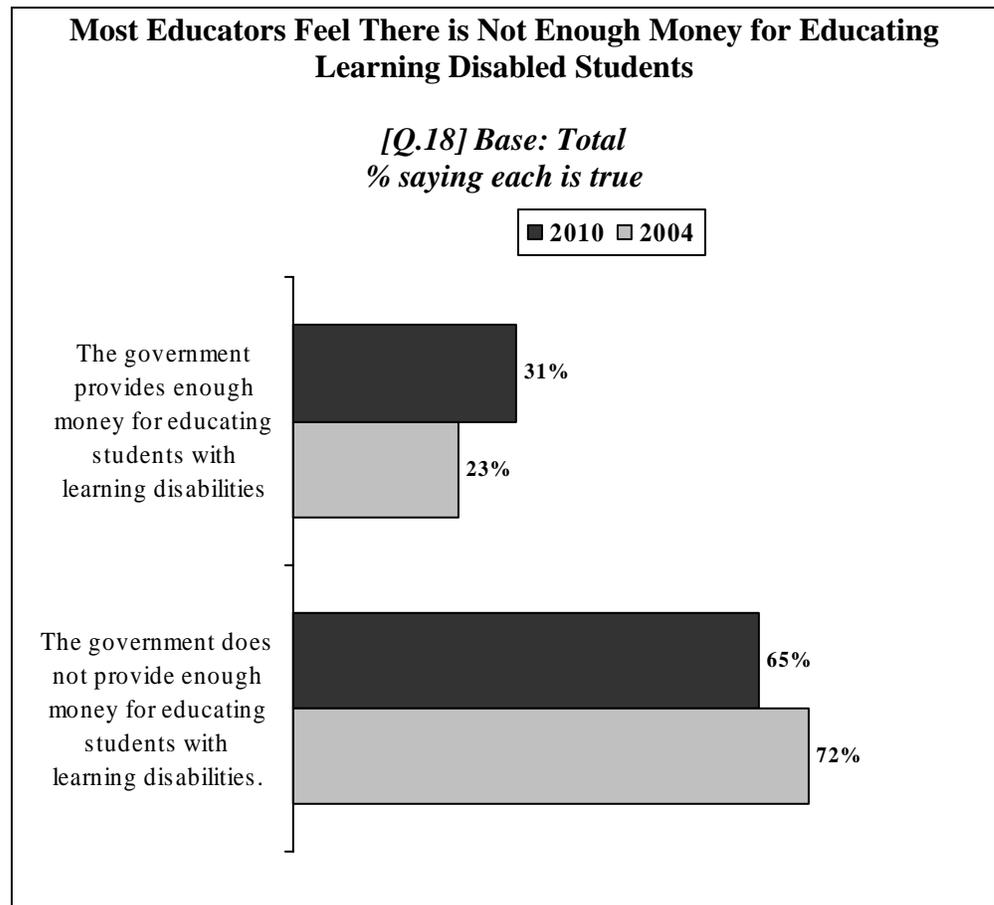
Just about half (48%) of today's educators agree (strongly/somewhat) that "the quality of education provided to children with learning disabilities is often affected more by a school's desire to save money rather than the needs of the children with learning disabilities." An equal number (50%) disagree. While teachers and administrators are equally likely to agree with this statement, administrators are much more likely than teachers to strongly disagree with the notion that saving money is put ahead of the needs of the children with learning disabilities. Overall 33% of administrators disagree compared to just 20% of teachers.

There is a dramatic difference between 2010 and 2004 findings. Currently about half of teachers (48%) feel saving money is often put ahead of the needs of children with learning disabilities. This compares to 76% who agreed with a similar statement in 2004. Comparison to 2004 should be made with caution as the wording was slightly different in that study. Educators in the earlier study were asked if they felt the quality of education provided to children with learning disabilities was affected by "the need to control cost" whereas 2010 asked about "saving money."



- Educators continue to believe the government does not provide enough money for educating students with learning disabilities, although there appears to be some movement in the right direction**

Two-thirds of educators (65%) believe that the government does not provide enough money for educating students with learning disabilities. In turn, roughly one-third (31%) comment that the government does provide enough money for educating students with learning disabilities. Teachers and administrators are in agreement on both. 2004 found only 23% feeling the government provided adequate funding, which implies some positive change has been noticed overtime.

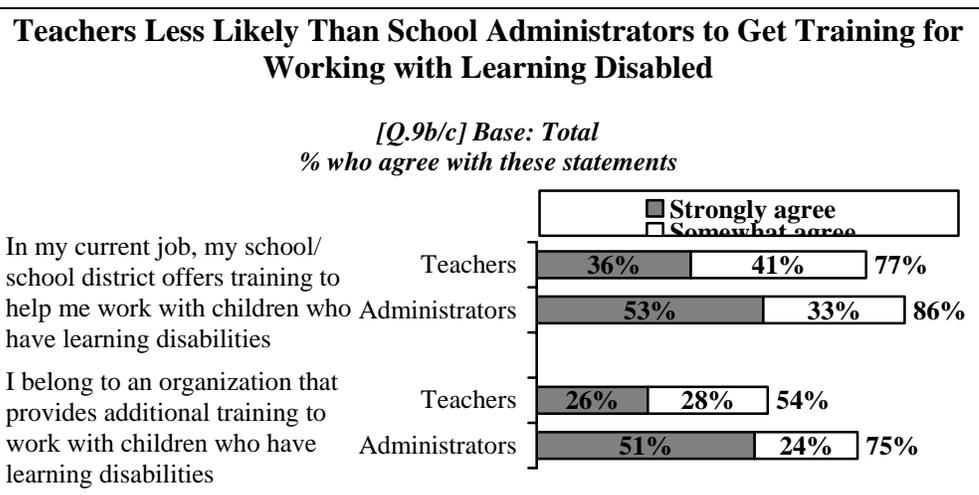


Support For Educators In Working With Learning Disabled Children

- **Teachers continue to be less likely than school administrators to say they currently have opportunities to receive training to work with students who have learning disabilities**

The majority of educators, seven in 10 (68%), say they received some kind of formal training to help them work with learning disabled children prior to starting their careers. Specifically, 68% of teachers say this while 72% of school administrators say they had formal training.

When asked about opportunities that exist today, teachers are less likely than school administrators to say they have such exposure. While 86% of school administrators say their school/school district offers them training to work with children who have learning disabilities, only 77% of teachers say this. Furthermore, only 54% of teachers belong to an organization (such as a union or some other professional group) that might provide additional training to work with this group of students. By comparison, 75% of school administrators belong to such a group. These numbers are basically inline with 2004.

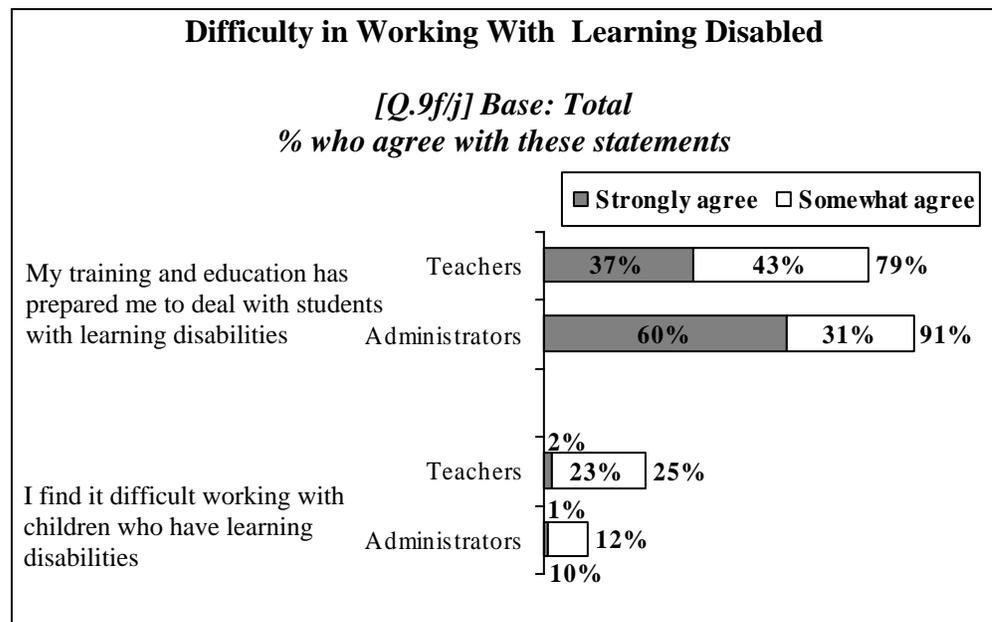


Nearly one in three teachers (32%) say they are not aware that their school provides training for general education teachers to help them work with students with learning disabilities. Only 19% of school administrators say the same. The number of teachers unaware of such training is unchanged from 2004, but 2010 does find administrators more likely to be unaware of training (19%, up from 14%).

- The direct contact between teachers and students is perhaps the reason teachers tend to be more likely than administrators to say they have difficulty working with learning disabled children**

Fewer than eight in 10 teachers (79%) agree that their training and education has prepared them to deal with students with learning disabilities, compared to nine in 10 administrators (91%). 2004 found nearly identical results.

Furthermore, teachers are nearly twice as likely as school administrators to agree that they find it difficult working with children who have learning disabilities. In fact, one in four teachers (25%) say it is hard for them to work with this student population. By comparison, one in eight administrators (12%) agree they have difficulty working with these students. This also is unchanged from 2004.

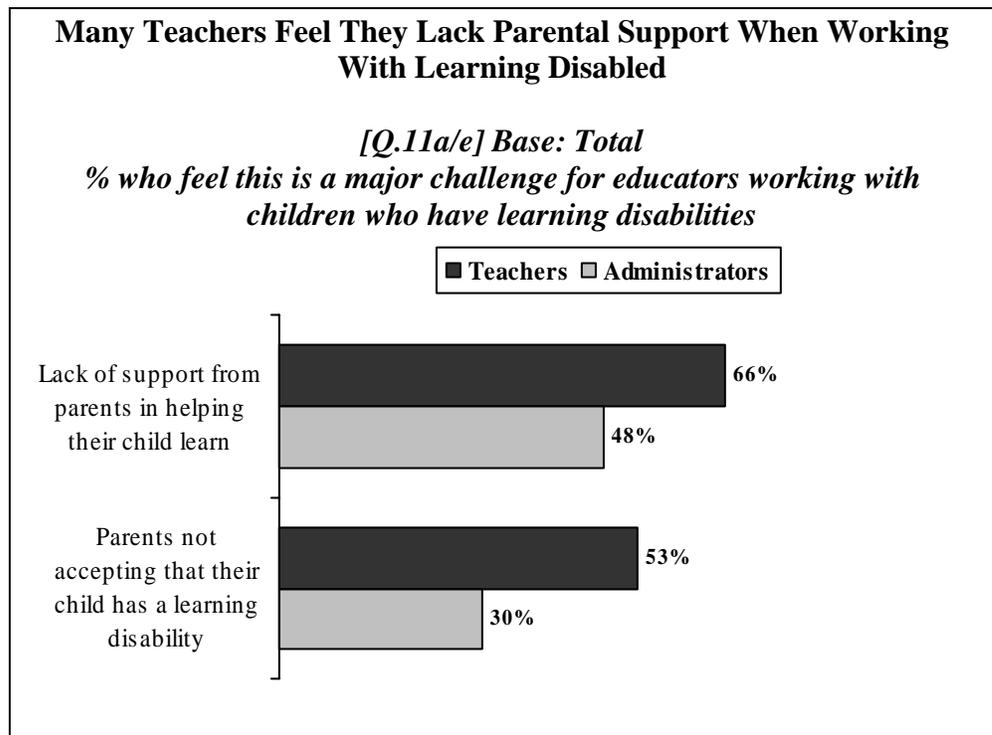


More than four in 10 teachers (42%) consider not being sufficiently prepared to teach children with learning disabilities a major challenge that all educators face when working with this group of students. Only 26% of school administrators consider a lack of training a major challenge. Both declined from 2004 (49% of teachers and 36% of administrators said “major” challenge.)

- **Educators continue to feel they do not get the parental support that is needed to help children with learning disabilities**

Most educators (66%) consider a lack of support from parents in helping their child learn to be a major challenge facing schools working with learning disabled children. At least half (53%) also believe a major challenge educators manage is working with parents who are not accepting that their child has a learning disability. Near identical findings were observed in 2004 on both measures.

In detail, teachers are more likely than school administrators to feel both of these are major challenges. In fact, fewer than half of school administrators (48%) consider a lack of parental support a problem facing educators while 66% of teachers do. Similarly, while a majority of teachers (53%) believe a major challenge schools deal with are parents who refuse to accept their child has a learning disability, only three in 10 administrators (30%) feel the same way. Again, all are unchanged from 2004.



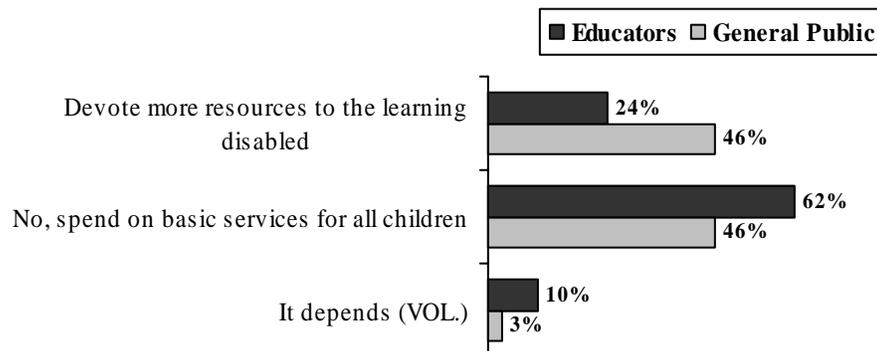
- **Educators overwhelmingly believe that current educational resources should be distributed evenly to all students – but that the government should provide more for those with learning disabilities**

Most educators (62%) say that available resources for education should be spent on providing basic services to all children. In fact, when thinking of resources for children with learning disabilities, the general public is twice as likely as educators to say more resources should be devoted specifically to helping this group (46% vs. 24%, respectively). This marks a sizable increase from 2004 when the difference between the two groups was 1.5 times as great (36% vs. 24%).

Mixed Opinions On Allocating Resources for Learning Disabled

[Q.16] Base: Total

% think the following should be done regarding resources for the learning disabled



However, when asked about challenges all educators face when working with children who have learning disabilities, half of educators (51%, down from 62% in 2004) consider not having enough money to sufficiently meet the needs of these children a “major” challenge. Thinking about the government and its spending on education, two-thirds of educators (65%, down from 72% in 2004) feel not enough money is provided for educating students with learning disabilities. Decreases in both numbers indicate perhaps a shift in thinking about the distribution of money for children with learning disabilities.

Roughly half of educators (48%) agree “in the real world, the quality of education provided to children with learning disabilities is often affected more by a school’s desire to save money than it is by the needs of the children with learning disabilities.”

- **Educators feel prepared to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities**

More than nine in 10 educators (93%) believe that their school/school district does a good job of working with students who have learning disabilities. Similar numbers (89%) feel confident when teaching children who have learning disabilities and nearly all (99%) agree they know of different teaching methods that can be used when working with children who have learning disabilities. Eight in 10 (81%) strongly agree that they are familiar with different teaching techniques. This is up from 68% in 2004. All else is unchanged.

Again, there are differences between teachers and administrators in their perception of how well prepared schools are to meet the needs of learning disabled children especially when it comes to actually working with these children. Teachers are more likely than administrators to feel confident teaching children who have learning disabilities (90% vs. 79%, respectively) – although teachers continue to perceive or report fewer current opportunities for training.

- **Educators with an actual need for information on learning disabilities look within the school system for their answers**

Educators are almost twice as likely as people in general to say they have ever had a need for information about learning disabilities (81% vs. 43%, respectively). More specifically, 80% of teachers and 90% of school administrators have had a need for information on the topic as part of their job.

Among educators who have ever had a need for information on this topic, six in 10 (62%, up from 41% in 2004) say they first turned to another teacher for the information they sought.

Administrators, however, are less likely to go to this source for information (only 38% do compared to 65% of teachers).

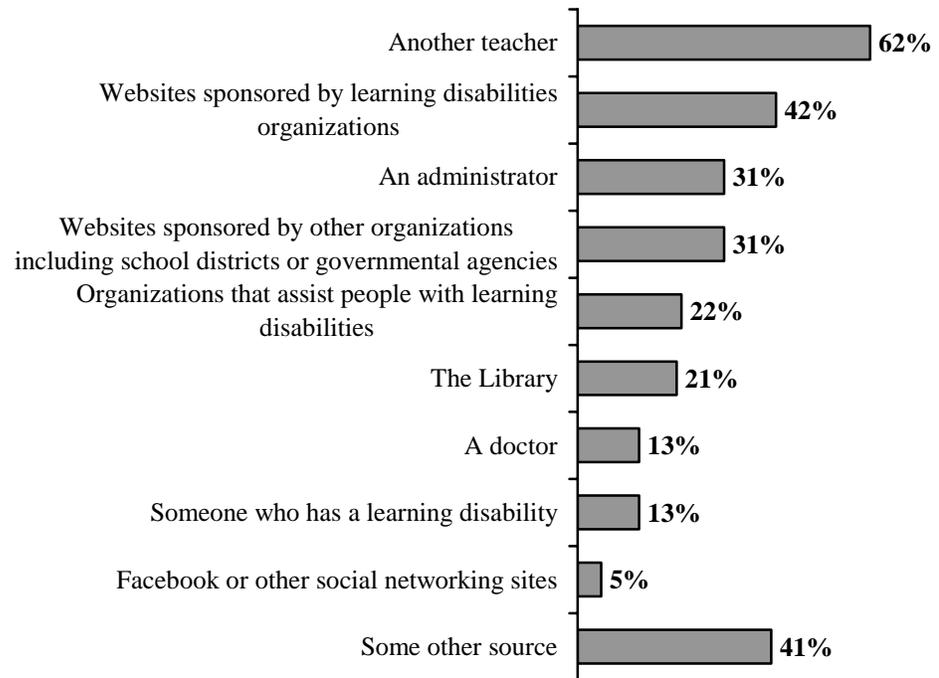
Administrators are in turn more likely than teachers to reach out to other administrators for assistance (38% vs. 31%, respectively).

School administrators, are also more likely to consider organizations that assist people with learning disabilities more so than teachers. In fact, one in three administrators (36%, up from 25%) say they turned to such an organization for this information while only 20% of teachers do.

Online resources, specifically websites sponsored by learning disability organizations, have a greater influence on educators by a large margin. While one in four people (25%) say they turn to these types of websites for information on learning disabilities, four in 10 educators (42%) do the same. Three in ten educators (31%) turn to websites sponsored by other organizations including school districts or governmental agencies compared to 25% of the general public.

Educators Look Within School First When Information on Learning Disabilities Is Needed

*[Q.14a] Base: Educators who have ever had a need for information about learning disabilities as part of their job
% first turned to this source for the information they needed*



- **Educators overwhelmingly believe “learning differences” is more socially appropriate than “learning disabilities,” however the general public does not necessarily agree**

When asked if they felt “learning disabilities,” “learning variations” or “learning differences” best described the topics covered in the survey educators are equally as likely to choose learning disabilities (32%) as to select learning differences (34%). When asked, however, to choose which one is more socially appropriate, learning differences emerges as the clear winner (44%) over learning disabilities (15%).

Learning differences comes in last place among the general public as the term which best describes the study topic (23% vs. 34% among educators). It also places last when asked which term is more socially acceptable (27% vs. 44% of educators.)

