

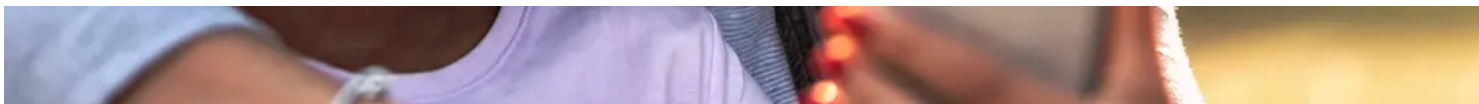
< Treatment options

9 Resources to Find Local Specialists for Kids Who Learn and Think Differently



By Lexi Walters Wright





Are you looking for a reading specialist for your child? An occupational therapist? Or another professional who works with kids who learn and think differently? Try these resources to find nearby specialists for your child.

Keep in mind that working with a specialist can be expensive. Kids with IEPs or 504 plans may be eligible for free help through the school. If you're interested in having your child evaluated by the school, learn how to **request a free evaluation**.

1. Your Child's Health Care Provider

When looking for specialists, your child's pediatrician or health care provider is a great place to start. This is especially true if it's the same doctor who initially evaluated your child. Your child's pediatrician may have a clear sense of which specialists could be most helpful for your family.

2. Other Families

You might have to look beyond your immediate family and friends when looking for specialists. You can ask parents and caregivers you meet through your child's class, playgroup, or sports team for recommendations—especially if their kids have challenges similar to your child's.

And don't forget to check out our online community. It's a great place to connect with families that have had similar

experiences.

3. Hospital or Clinic Directories

Some medical facilities share their professional listings with the public. See if your local hospital makes lists like this available. If so, check if any of their clinicians have their own private practices. Sometimes private appointments are easier to schedule than in-clinic visits.

4. Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs)

PTIs provide free information to families of kids who learn and think differently. That might include lists of local specialists. By law, every state has at least one PTI, so **there should be one available to you.**

5. National Professional Organizations

Many national organizations list licensed professionals on their websites. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is an example. ASHA can help you find a nearby speech pathologist. The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) can also help.

6. National Advocacy Groups

Groups that support families of kids who learn and think differently often have local chapters. Through these, families can find names of local professionals whose specialties match their child's needs.

For instance, you can check out the resource directory run

by Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD). You could also look into one of the state branches of Decoding Dyslexia or the Parents Education Network (PEN).

7. Work and Insurance Resources

Some employers offer an employee assistance program. This program may be able to help families find local specialists. Keep in mind that these specialists may be in or out of network. Keep in mind, too, that if a specialist has multiple offices, not all of the locations may take your insurance.

8. Search Engines

Search engines like Google or Bing can also help you find a professional. Simply enter the name of your town and the type of professional you're looking for. (Keep in mind that the people at the top and sides of the page have paid for those positions.) You can also try doctor finders on impartial sites like U.S. News & World Report.

9. School Staff

The school nurse, guidance counselor, and others may have connections to pass along. Try to talk with as many members of school staff as possible. You can also contact the special education director for more names. There are lots of resources that can help you find the right specialist for your child. Since working with one can be costly, remember that there may be free options available through the school. To have access, your child will have to be evaluated. Learn [more about evaluations](#).

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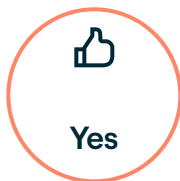
Lexi Walters Wright is the former Community Manager at Understood (u.org/community). As a writer and editor, she helps parents make more informed choices for their children and for themselves.

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