What is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)?

An SLD is a brain-based disorder that affects an individual’s ability to read, write, and do math (e.g., dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia). Students identified with SLD receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a law that provides a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities. Of the 13% of the U.S. school-age population who received disability services under IDEA in the 2020–2021 academic year, 34% received services for SLD as the primary disability.