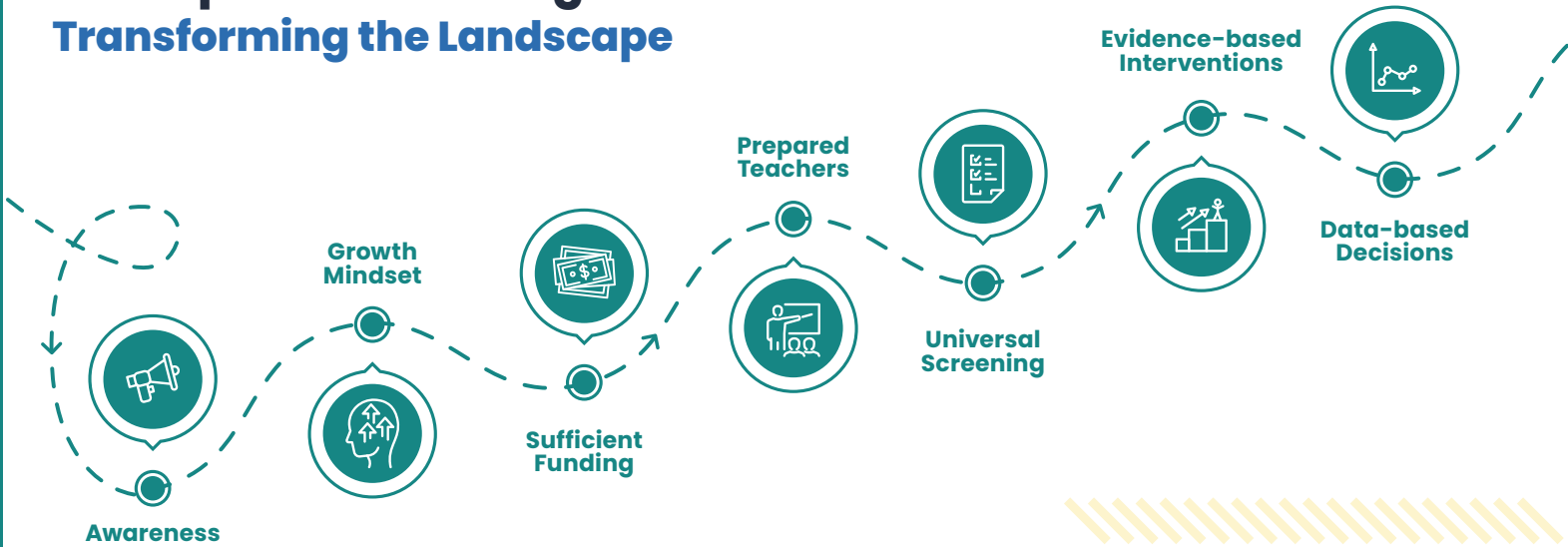


# The Path to Success for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

## Transforming the Landscape



**Students with learning disabilities face numerous challenges on their academic journey. These challenges must be addressed in order for our students to reach their full potential in an education system that is truly equitable.**

We know what learning-disabled students need to succeed. We have ample evidence from large-scale studies funded by federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the Institute of Education Sciences. We now need the resources to implement effective services and support for those 2.3 million students with learning disabilities currently served in our public schools.

The path to success consists of seven milestones that lead to better resource allocation and outcomes for students with learning disabilities.

- ▶ **Awareness:** The prevalence of misinformation surrounding learning disabilities has led to numerous myths and misconceptions, hindering opportunities for success for these individuals. We must do better. We must stay well-informed, be skilled consumers of research, dismantle stigmas, educate, and advocate for those with learning disabilities.
- ▶ **Growth Mindsets:** Approaching learning from a growth mindset has been shown to improve motivation<sup>10</sup>, academic self-concept, academic resilience<sup>11</sup> and academic performance<sup>12</sup> of lower-performing students.

- ▶ **Sufficient Funding:** Funding, such as funding from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), support services such as early intervention and special education services for students with disabilities<sup>13</sup>. Without sufficient funds to appropriately serve students with learning disabilities, schools have to make difficult decisions about which programs and services to cut.
- ▶ **Prepared Teachers:** Considering students with learning disabilities spend most of their time in the general education classroom<sup>14</sup>, teacher preparation must focus on evidence-based instructional strategies to reduce reading, writing, and math difficulty.
- ▶ **Universal Screening:** The sooner students are identified and receive intensive instructional services, the better off they will be.
- ▶ **Evidence-Based Interventions:** When students with learning disabilities receive evidence-based intervention aligned to their needs, the national educational assessments and other standardized assessments will accurately portray their full academic potential.
- ▶ **Data-based Decisions:** Monitoring student progress using multiple sources of information helps educators adjust instruction as needed and determine if additional services are needed.

**Addressing roadblocks is the first step to ensuring that students with learning disabilities get what they need in order to be successful. With a society that is well-informed and dedicated to the success of ALL students, the sky is the limit for students with learning disabilities.**

<sup>10</sup> Kapasi, A., & Pei, J. (2022). Mindset theory and school psychology. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 37(1), 57-74.

<sup>11</sup> de Carvalho, E., & Skipper, Y. (2020). A two-component growth mindset intervention for young people with SEND. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 20(3), 195-205.

<sup>12</sup> Yeager, D.S., Hanselman, P., Walton, G.M. et al. A national experiment reveals where a growth mindset improves achievement. *Nature* 573, 364-369 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1466-y>

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2021, July 1). *IDEA American Rescue Plan Funds*. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/arp/index.html#:~:text=IDEA%20funds%20are%20appropriated%20by,with%20disabilities%20and%20their%20families>