

# The Learning Ally Solution Can Empower Your Struggling Readers

## Eligibility Guide

At least 20% of your student population may be eligible

### Who is Eligible?

Four qualifying categories: When enrolling a student for access in Learning Ally's Educator Portal, you will be prompted to select one of the below categories.



#### Reading Accommodation

Students who struggle with reading, who are not responding to instructional interventions, or who need a reading accommodation to keep up with course content while working to improve reading skills. A competent authority should conduct student observations, assessments, and a review of student work to determine if the student's reading skill deficits are consistent enough to prohibit accessing standard texts at the expected benchmarks for the student's grade.



#### Specific Learning Disability

Students who have a specific learning disability, meaning a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. It includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Students in this category often have SLD on their IEP or have a diagnosed learning disability.



#### Blind or Visually Impaired

Students who are blind or visually impaired.

#### Other Physical Disability

Students who have a physical impairment that prevents them from reading standard print, such as can't hold a book, turn the pages of a book, etc.

## Characteristics of Students Who Are Eligible

These characteristics should not determine eligibility in isolation. A competent authority must evaluate and determine qualification through assessments, observations, and a review of student work and must be consistent enough to prohibit accessing standard print at the expected benchmarks for each grade.

- **Phonemic Awareness**  
Lack of understanding of the explicit correspondence between sounds and letters or letter combinations
- **Phonics**  
Unable to blend sounds together to form words
- **Decoding**  
Inability to rapidly match letters and letter combinations to their sounds and recognize the patterns that make syllables and words
- **Fluency**  
Struggle with accuracy, automaticity, and rate of reading — oral reading lacks intonation with deficiencies in understanding phrasing and pausing
- **Vocabulary**  
Lack of exposure to an increased number of words because of the inability to read standard print
- **Comprehension**  
Inability to decode words, fully understand and decipher what is read due to unmastered reading skills, not an intellectual deficit
- **Prosody**  
Lack of understanding and difficulty understanding the rhythm and patterns of accent and intonation in language
- **Access to Grade Level Content**  
Unable to access grade level materials because of a learning disability or characteristics of a learning disability
- **Executive Functioning**  
Struggles with the set of processes that have to do with managing oneself and one's resources
- **Reading Motivation and Stamina**  
Displays a lack of motivation, the desire and drive to read, and stamina — the ability to read for an extended period of time, not because of willingness or interest, but because reading skills have not been mastered
- **Social/Emotional**  
Avoids reading tasks for fear of embarrassment and shame over academic struggles, exhibits anxiety or frustration, and/or appears distracted or unfocused

## Who Can Determine Eligibility?

It is your responsibility to identify competent staff in your school who can determine students who are eligible for the Learning Ally Solution. The competent authority will be classified as a certifier in the educator portal. Below are examples to guide you in selecting certifiers in your school.

- Special Education Teachers
- Learning Disability, Dyslexia, or Resource Specialist
- Reading Specialist
- Educational Diagnostician
- Child Study Teams
- School Psychologist
- Clinical Psychologist with learning disabilities background
- Doctors of Medicine
- Osteopathy Psychiatrists
- Neurologists
- Special Education Teachers
- Teachers of the Visually Impaired
- Doctors of Medicine
- Doctors of Osteopathy
- Ophthalmologists
- Optometrists
- Registered Nurses
- Therapists, including Physical
- Professional staff of hospitals, institutions, public or social welfare agencies

## Why Do We Need a Competent Authority?

### The Chafee Amendment

Learning Ally conforms and operates under the Chafee Amendment to the U.S. Copyright law. Learning Ally can offer *qualified individuals* human-read audio textbooks and literature titles.

### Learning Ally Terms of Service

*Qualified individuals* are those persons who exhibit the characteristics of a learning disability as certified by a Competent Authority in accordance with 17 U.S.C. § 121 (commonly known as the Chafee Amendment), and other applicable copyright laws, which may include persons having a learning disability, such as dyslexia, visual impairment, or other physical disability that limits the ability to effectively read standard print.

General Education Teachers, School Principals, and Librarians should only be considered certifiers if they have a background or specialized training in special education, visual impairments, medicine, reading and literacy, etc.