

**‘Specialization in ICTs and Special Education: Psychopedagogy of Integration’  
Postgraduate Program  
DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE Department of Greek Philology  
in collaboration with  
NCSR DEMOKRITOS Informatics and Telecommunications Institute**

**ASSOCIATION OF LEARNING DISABILITIES WITH THE OCCURRENCE  
OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CHILDHOOD AND EARLY  
ADOLESCENCE**

POLIDERA ELENI

POSTGRADUATE  
THESIS

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ATHENS 2018

## **ABSTRACT**

Learning Disabilities are a heterogeneous group of disorders which is characterized by serious deficits and problems in the domain of school learning. Learning disorders consist a common phenomenon nowadays as there is a substantial number of children that face problems in learning and are referred for evaluation. Research indicates that pupils who have learning disabilities also tend to exhibit mental health issues. The aim of the present study was to explore whether the presence of learning disabilities is associated with the appearance of mental health issues in childhood and early adolescence. The sample of this study were 30 primary and secondary school students aged 7-13 and their parents. Children were referred to KE.D.D.Y. Arkadias, due to low school performance, psychological difficulties and behavior problems. For the collection of data was used the Achenbach Inventory for parents namely subscales anxiety-depression, social problems and attention problems, while children completed the Depression Inventory for Children (CDI). The collection of data lasted 5 months and was analyzed using the SPSS 23.0 program. According to the results of the present study 43% of children who have learning difficulties face moderate depressive symptoms according to the inventories that completed themselves (CDI). According to the scores of their parents the large majority of children is in the normal range at the subscales anxiety-depression, social problems and attention problems. There is no significant correlation between the mental health of children as evaluated by them and their mental health as evaluated by their parents. Furthermore, above all the social-demographic characteristics of children and parents under study, the participation of children in special education seems to be a statistical significant finding. Children that participate in special education seem to have higher mean scores in anxiety, depression and attention difficulties compared to the children who do not participate in special education. Furthermore, the presence of anxiety/depression in the lives of children appears to correlate significantly with attention deficits as well as with problems in their interpersonal relationships. It also appears that there is a significant positive correlation between social problems of learning disabled children with attention difficulties. The study found that the presence of learning difficulties is associated with mental health problems in childhood and early adolescence. At last, it appears that there are personal characteristics of the children which connect with higher levels in subscales of psychopathology.

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