Basic Psychological Processing Deficits

Basic Psychological Processing Deficits are behavioral characteristics that might be observed in a student with learning deficits.

Basic Reading Skills
- lacks basic book-handling skills
- does not understand what letters or words are
- cannot recognize letters when names are provided
- has difficulty discriminating between letters
- does not know sound-symbol relationships
- cannot recite the alphabet correctly
- demonstrates difficulty with left-to-right sequencing of letters, syllables, or words when reading
- loses place or skips words frequently when reading
- has limited sight word vocabulary in comparison with age peers
- exhibits problems with word identification (decoding) skills (e.g., phonics analysis, structural analysis)
- does not use context cues to assist in word identification
- demonstrates a reliance on only one strategy or uses ineffective strategies for word identification
- appears reluctant to risk errors when reading
- reads in a “mechanical” sound-by-sound or word-by-word manner (rather than processing larger units of print or rereading material to confirm meaning or gather additional information)

Reading Comprehension
- has difficulty understanding meanings of words when reading
- has difficulty understanding meanings of phrases or sentences when reading
- cannot draw inferences or conclusions from passages that have been read
- exhibits difficulty retelling a story that has been read
- does not follow written directions
- cannot identify the author’s purpose (e.g. to inform, to persuade, to entertain,) after reading a passage
- cannot determine cause-effect relationships within passages
- has difficulty predicting outcomes using information in a story
- does not comprehend figurative language or idioms when reading
- exhibits difficulty understanding or identifying synonyms and antonyms

Written Expression
- cannot accurately write information dictated by others
- exhibits difficulty with writing conventions (i.e. spelling, punctuation, capitalization)
- uses incorrect grammatical constructions (e.g. plurals, subject-verb agreement, tense endings) when writing
- confuses the order of words or phrases in sentences
- uses incomplete sentences frequently when writing
- uses primarily short, simple sentence structure rather than a variety of more complex structures
- has a limited vocabulary as indicated by repeating frequently used words in written compositions
- cannot express ideas or meanings clearly when writing
- exhibits difficulty with logical organization, sequence, or cohesiveness of ideas when writing
- does not properly combine sentences into paragraphs
- expresses a strong dislike for writing or avoids participating in writing activities
- has problems with handwriting (e.g., letter formation, spacing, staying on the line)
- does not copy information accurately from material at desk or on chalkboard.
Math Calculation
- cannot identify numerals
- has difficulty with rote counting ability
- cannot count the number of objects in a set
- does not understand the meaning of basic computational symbols (e.g., +, -, x, =)
- does not know basic arithmetic facts (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division) that should have already been mastered
- makes careless computational errors frequently
- does not understand place value when performing calculations
- cannot perform calculations involving “regrouping” or “carrying”
- has difficulty with problems involving geometric shapes
- has difficulty with problems involving fractions or decimals
- confuses arithmetic operations when working problems
- demonstrates difficulty following the sequence of steps in a multi-step computation

Math Reasoning
- does not understand concepts related to size (e.g., larger, smaller), sequence (e.g., first, last, before, after), or quantity (equal to, more, less)
- has difficulty identifying and using appropriate problem-solving strategies
- cannot solve word problems
- cannot judge whether obtained results are reasonable
- exhibits difficulty applying mathematics to daily situations (e.g., involving money, time, measurement)
- demonstrates difficulty with problems involving estimation or prediction
- cannot understand or construct charts, graphs, or tables
- does not generalize mathematical skills from one problem to other types of problems or tasks
- has difficulty with abstract mathematical concepts (e.g., positive and negative values on a number line, set theory, etc.)

Oral Expression
- confuses or leaves out speech sounds
- exhibits dysfluent language
- demonstrates grammatical problems
- uses words in incorrect order within sentences
- has difficulty forming appropriate sentence structures
- uses primarily short, simple sentences
- has limited vocabulary
- exhibits difficulty in finding proper words to express certain meanings
- demonstrates problems with language usage or pragmatics

Listening Comprehension
- does not follow directions when given individually or to a group
- asks for instructions to be repeated frequently
- has difficulty focusing on the main idea or topic when listening
- misunderstands what is said by others in conversations
- exhibits difficulty sequencing information heard in class
- seems to be easily distracted by noise or other sounds
- exhibits a short attention span during auditory tasks
- confuses similar words due to difficulty discriminating between certain speech phonemes
- does not understand common grammatical constructions
- has difficulty understanding sentences with longer or more complex sentence structures
- exhibits a limited receptive vocabulary for words spoken by others
- does not appear to understand the relationship between information presented verbally in class and information that is acquired through reading or other sources
- cannot remember information that was presented orally or discussed in class
- cannot repeat or imitate sentences that were just spoken by others
- cannot learn from or appears disinterested in audio materials used in class
• demonstrates disruptive or off-task behaviors during activities requiring listening skills

Organizational Skills
• materials (has materials when needed, physical organization of space and materials)
• written work (organized on page in sequential manner, i.e. name at top, items in logical order, capitalization, paragraphs, etc)
• thoughts (states thoughts and stories sequentially—beginning, middle and end, stays on topic

Work Completion within Timelines
• self-initiates (able to independently work on a task)
• displays on-task behavior (ability to continue working on a task)
• follows directions (can follow directions given to the entire class without individual assistance.)
• homework (independently keeps track of assignments, completes them and hands them in on time.)
• can manage self-care activities without assistance (clothing, totebag, bathroom, lunch)
• motoric management of materials (computer, books, notes, pencil, scissors, desk, locker)
• level of self-advocacy (requests help/seeks out assistance from teachers or peers)