

IDENTIFICATION OF EARLY INDICATORS FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS THROUGH AN OBSERVATIONAL INSTRUMENT (IPDA)

Elena Commodari¹

It is estimated that about 5%-10% of school-age children present with learning disabilities and difficulties in developing academic skills, namely literacy.

Learning disabilities are likely to be diagnosed only during primary school years, when deficits become evident. Early assessment of learning problems might be useful for preventing further learning disorders; however, psychometric and standardized testing are not appropriate because of the children's age and/or because such kind of wide-range screening is not time-consuming.

This study analyses the importance of early assessment in preschool children with learning disabilities. The basic assumption is that most of the functions underlying academic skills develop in preschool years.

The IPDA questionnaire, an instrument for early assessment of learning disabilities through observation, proved to be as effective in predicting possible learning disabilities.

Keywords: Learning disabilities, Early assessment, Observational instrument

¹ Università degli Studi di Catania. Dipartimento dei Processi Formativi. Via Di Mattei, 4 95124 Catania
E-mail: brucomm@tiscalinet.it