287,431 children were identified in 2015-2016 with **specific learning disabilities (SLD)** in California, where they accounted for the largest of the 13 disability categories covered under special education law.

Children are often classified under the category of **other health impairments (OHI)** when ADHD is the primary reason they qualify for special education. OHI can cover other health conditions but is used here as a rough proxy for students receiving special education who have ADHD.
Educational Environment

As detailed in this chart, many students receiving special education spend 80% or more of the school day in general education classrooms. Inclusion can improve outcomes—if teachers have the skills needed to help diverse learners.

![Graph showing % SLD and % OHI](National vs California data 2015-2016)

Discipline

Nationwide, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be suspended as those without disabilities, and the loss of instructional time increases the risk of academic failure and school aversion.

In California, students identified with SLD or OHI accounted for 70.9% of students with disabilities who received out-of-school suspensions in 2014–2015.

Leaving High School

Students with learning and attention issues are as smart as their peers and, with the right support, can achieve at high levels. But too often students with these issues leave school with a certificate of completion—instead of a regular diploma—or drop out altogether. Here’s a look at outcomes for students receiving special education in California, where 82.0% of all students graduated in 2014–2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All special education</th>
<th>Diplomas</th>
<th>Certificates</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHI</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sources: [IDEA 618 data](https://idea.gov), [Civil Rights Data Collection](https://ocr.justice.gov), and [White House graduation data](https://www.whitehouse.gov) |

State Literacy Laws

California law requires reading assessments in grades 2–3. Struggling readers will be retained in third grade if they do not participate in an intervention, but teachers can recommend exemptions.

California also has a law that requires the state to develop guidelines to help educators and parents identify and serve students with dyslexia.