

What Impact Can Age Have on a Child's Traumatic Brain Injury?

Source: Produced by Victoria Tilney McDonough and Brian King

Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=3265>

Dr. Jane Gillett: I think if it's within a year or two of the accident, most schools and families might think it's related to the accident. So, it's not as much as a problem. Where it's more a problem is when you're injured when you're say around two -- three -- four, you recover from, even it's true with a sever brain injury, the kids recover from their injury, they look and they act very much like a typical three -- four year old because we don't expect three and four years olds to have much in the way of an attention span and we don't expect them to be able to read and we don't expect them to be able to do these things because they're only three. So, they come back and they look like a three year old, which is great. But then what happens is when they get into the higher school grades and they're suppose to have developed attention and they're suppose to have learned how to do certain things and they're suppose to have continued their normal development and they don't and they start turning into problems. Then they get labeled as having a learning disability because people have forgotten about that brain injury that occurred back when they were three.

But the teaching mechanism, although some of the strategies are the same for a learning disabled person versus a brain injured person, they are different in that a learning disabled child can learn how to do one thing in a strategy and then generalize it to other areas. Most children who've had a brain injury learn how to do X in a situation Y and then they go to situation ZED and they're suppose to do acts and it's like an entirely new problem and they can't generalize and so you have to be prepared to teach things over and over and over again to someone with a brain injury whereas you're not necessarily having to do that with a learning disability.