

September 2010

LD *Connections*

learning disabilities
different paths.....same destination

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Welcome

For some, the slogan "It's the most wonderful time of the year" conjures up visions of happy parents and their children returning to the routine of school. For others however, the start of school can be stressful for both parents and children, especially when the child struggles. Your child's success can be influenced by the partnership between home and school. In the article by Mary Elizabeth Kinch, she describes the importance of being a parent advocate and how she was able to link her son's emotional outbursts at home with his school performance. With frequent dialogue between school and home, she was able to bridge the gap and work collaboratively with school to maximize her child's success.

In our newsletter you will also find some simple tips for parents to help them evaluate whether a need for intervention might be necessary when their child is experiencing difficulties along with some practical strategies to use at home.

Supporting a child with special needs can take its toll on parents. The LDAWC is

hosting a parent workshop, facilitated by Christine Rickards, to help families manage the stress associated with these challenges. To find out more or to register, contact us at info@ldawc.ca.

We are also pleased to host a workshop by Dr. Louise Scott on October 23rd. This workshop will be of particular interest to parents, students and other professionals interested in sleep and its effects on learning.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario will also be offering a series of workshops about emerging research from The Hospital for Sick Children related to learning.

So that we may continue to offer quality services and events, we will be selling Guelph Storm tickets at a reduced box office cost, the dates of which are included in this newsletter. Contact a LDAWC member, phone or e-mail for tickets.

Remember: October is Learning Disabilities Awareness month!

Sharon Dills, Chair

Thank You!

The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County wishes to thank the various businesses of Guelph and area who donate their goods and services for our events. Specifically, The Village of Riverside Glen for providing space for our Board Meetings, Dr. Brisson who assists us with our postage costs, ARC Industries and Zehrs Imperial for providing us with space for our events, the Guelph Storm for allowing us to have the 50/50 raffle.

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Parental Advocacy for your School-aged Child

After our son's diagnosis of a learning disability last year and his placement in the learning centre, our mornings typically started with cries of how school "sucks" and how he didn't want to go to the learning centre anymore.

For me it was a year of fielding Jamie's emotions and working with the school to ease him through this difficult time. While the school was meeting his academic needs, his success academically was bolstered by recognizing and dealing with not only the curriculum issues that arose, but also acknowledging and finding resolution for his emotional issues. As advocate for my son, I needed to cultivate an atmosphere of collaboration and to temper my tenacity with diplomacy. Frequent informal meetings with his educators gave me the opportunities to discuss issues or test results and to share with them what I knew about my son. His teachers provided me with valuable information about how he was coping at school, often allowing me to predict stress and avoid outbursts. I soon realized that our dialogues were very successful for us all.

When Jamie shared his anger with me about having "extra work" as a result of going to the learning centre and missing classroom work, I in turn shared those feelings with his teachers (with his permission) and they coordinated his assignments. While seemingly small, the recognition and validation of his feelings and the efforts of his teachers made the learning centre more manageable for him. Similarly a "meltdown" at home over a disastrous math test and sharing this reaction with his teacher the next day (again with his permission) afforded two great opportunities. First, he was willing to try again, and was offered that possibility (the new mark would be scrapped, it was the experience that counted) and second, the experience brought to light how he was dealing with his performance in

test situations. His teacher approached me shortly afterwards saying she had been thinking about his reaction to that test and she was now wondering how he was going to deal with the "grade 3 testing." As well, when I received his hearing test results and shared these with his teacher, she changed his seating position in the 'pod' so that his more functional ear "faced" the teacher.

Some issues were less academically oriented but I have also learned that the line between home and school is very fine. Knowing that my son, at present, does not deal well with change, I requested in June that he have an opportunity to meet with both his new teachers for next year, thereby reducing his anxiety about his placement next year. We will make a short trip to the school the week before it starts "just to say hi," easing him into the concept of going back. In the spring, I made strong cases to the principal and vice-principal about his class/teacher placements. While they could not make any promises, I believe that they were making more informed decisions. I also requested that if possible the 'four musketeers' (my nickname for him and his three close friends) stay together for next year, providing him with the support and comfort of his friends. Finally, we have also sought to provide him with situations and encouragement in school and extracurricularly, where he can excel and have a feeling of competency.

While it was a challenging year for him, fraught with frustration and anger, he reluctantly acknowledges his progress. I believe that strong parental advocacy, his supportive teachers and a great group of accepting friends contributed to a successful year for him.

Source: Mary Elizabeth Kinch, parent and advocate. Article originally appeared in the Fall 1998 edition of *Communique*.

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Donation / Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Home Number: _____

Work Number: _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues:☐ Family/Individual \$50☐ Student \$20☐ Professional \$75I am interested in making a donation: _____ and/or
volunteering: _____**Membership Advantages:**

Awareness and advocacy efforts on behalf of those with learning disabilities or ADHD at the local, provincial and national level, subscription to local and provincial newsletters, information on learning disabilities and ADHD, use of local resources and support services.

Please mail this form and cheque to:

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

365 Bloor Street East, Suite 1004, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4

Do you have a few spare hours?

Are you looking to gain some volunteer experience to add to your resume or maybe have an interest in the area of special needs? Do you live in the Wellington County area?

The Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County is looking for board members. All you have to do is become a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, and then be willing to attend our monthly board meetings and occasionally some of our committee meetings, public education events or fundraising events. Your average time commitment would be just 3 hours a month!

Who are we, you ask? We are a non-profit organization funded by The United Way. Our mission is to educate, advocate for and provide resources about learning disabilities. Our part time Administrative Coordinator is responsible for responding to the telephone calls made to our answering service, and for picking up the mail at our post office box. We do not have an office, but most folks are not aware of this! Our programming committee is responsible for arranging 4 public education events per year. We also have committees representing outreach, fundraising and governance. We employ a part time Newsletter Editor who works with our Newsletter Committee to produce 4 newsletters per year. We usually have one main fundraising event per year and occasionally we are asked to do a presentation about learning disabilities. If you are interested, simply contact us at (519) 837-2050 or info@ldawc.ca.

Upcoming Event

Saturday October 23rd is a morning session with Dr. Louise Scott on the importance of screening for sleep problems in your LD child.

Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
(registration at 8:30)

Location: Arc Industries, 8 Royal Road, Guelph

\$20.00 Members

\$25.00 Non-Members

Reserve your seat at 519-837-2050

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Some Common Questions Parents Ask

My three year old is having trouble learning to talk. Could she have a learning disability?

Some kids with early difficulties in language development are later diagnosed with learning disabilities, but young kids develop in many different patterns so it is hard to predict their future. It would be important to share your concerns with your doctor or pediatrician, and to ask to have your daughter assessed by a speech-language pathologist. There are preschool speech and language programs in the community that you could find out about.

My son is in kindergarten and he is printing most of his letters backwards. I am worried that he might be dyslexic.

It is very common for young children to get confused about which way to make letters. With other objects in their world, it doesn't matter which way they face – they are still the same object. It is only letters and numbers that have to face a particular way, and it takes some time to learn this. If your son is still consistently reversing most of his letters beyond age six, you should talk to his teacher.

Reversing letters is not the most common sign of dyslexia. Research has shown that most dyslexics have trouble distinguishing the sound portions of words. Young children need practice with rhyming words and picking out parts of words that they hear.

Some Tips for Parents

 Learn about LD. The more you know, the more you can help yourself and your child.

 Praise your child when he or she does well. Children with LD are often very good at a variety of things. Find out what your child really enjoys doing, such as dancing, playing soccer, or working with computers. Give your child plenty of opportunities to pursue his or her strengths and talents.

 Find out the ways your child learns best. Does he or she learn by hands-on practice, looking or listening? Help your child learn through his or her areas of strength.

 Let your child help with household chores. These can build self-confidence and concrete skills. Keep instructions simple, break down tasks into smaller steps, and reward your child's efforts with praise.

 Work with your child on her homework every night. This will have three benefits: you'll be able to observe how your child learns best, your child will learn the material better as you help her to focus, and her self-esteem will be boosted when she sees that your time working together is "special time" that can't be interrupted (so let the answering machine or voicemail take your calls during homework time).

GUELPH STORM FUNDRAISER 2010-2011

We have tickets available for the following games. Tickets are \$13.00 each.

Friday, December 10/10 7:30 pm vs Sarnia Sting

Sunday, December 12/10 2:00 pm vs Erie Otters

New Year's Day - Saturday, January 1/11 2:00 pm vs Saginaw Spirit

Friday, January 14/11 7:30 pm vs Owen Sound Attack

Friday, January 28/11 7:30 pm vs Sarnia Sting

50/50 Raffle for LDA Wellington County is Monday, February 21/11
2:00 pm vs SS Marie Greyhounds

For tickets contact us at (519) 837-2050.

Info from Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Each year, the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) presents Practical Applications of Current Research for Parents and Professionals, a series of workshops that provides families, educators, and the community with important information about emerging research from The Hospital for Sick Children on learning, teaching, learning disabilities, ADHD, and parenting. Please find information on three upcoming workshops.

Chris Dendy : ADHD and School Performance: Practical Interventions
and Best Strategies for Success - October 1, 2010.

Dr. Rhonda Martinussen: Learning Disabilities, ADHD and Working
Memory - November 26, 2010.

Lawrence Feld: Closing the Gap Between Student Ability and
Achievement; Note Taking, Study, Exam, and Test Taking Strategies
for Students - March 4, 2011.

Costs and registration information can be found at www.ldao.ca.

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Resources

Websites to check out

www.solaro.com SOLAROTM is an online learning resource. This unique application provides students with focused educational content for Math, Science, and English Language Art courses from Grades 6 to 12.

www.transitionsportal.ca - This is a resource and communication portal for participants of the longitudinal research study Transitions. All Transitions participants are invited, as well as all others interested in the study to contribute discussion, resources, and support on the Portal.

<http://www.uniquelygifted.org> Resources for Gifted Children with Special Needs (ADD/ADHD, Learning Disabilities (LD), Aspergers Syndrome, etc.).

<http://www.totallyadd.com>

Upcoming Course

Stress Management for Parents

October 13 to November 17, 2010 (Wednesdays for 6 weeks)

Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Cost: \$60.00 - Registration is required, some subsidized spaces are available.

Location: ARC Industries, Community Room, 8 Royal Rd, Guelph

Details: Parents of Learning Disabled or ADHD children may experience stress resulting from behaviours, guilt, fear for the future etc. Learn how to deal with this stress and make changes in your life with instructor Christine Rickards, M.A., Behaviour Consultant. Christine has many years of experience working with families dealing with these issues.

RSVP by phone (519)837-2050 or email info@ldawc.ca

This course is financially supported by the Rotary Club Guelph Trillium.

Resource Fair

9th Annual LD & ADHD Resource Fair

The Learning Disabilities Association - Mississauga and North Peel Chapter will be hosting their 9th Annual Learning Disabilities and AD(H)D Resource Fair on Thursday, November 4th, 2010 from 12noon to 8:00pm at the Mississauga Convention Centre

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