



LD Connections Newsletter

August 2016



Almost time for School!

It's time to start to gear up for back to school, are you feeling ready? We are excited to dedicate this issue specifically to resources to support the transition back to school.

Don't forget to register for our upcoming workshop in September that will be based on navigating the IEP process. This session will include information, support and answers to you questions regarding this process!

Another great event for supporting our families is our upcoming Parent Conference on October 22nd. This free all day event will provide you with some practical tools and insight to support your family.....check back in our next issue for more information about this exciting event.

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What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive (or Adaptive) Technology (AT) is the term used to describe all of the tools, products, and devices – from the simplest to the most complex – that can make a particular function easier or possible to perform. Some assistive technologies include screen readers, alternative keyboards, head pointing devices, voice recognition software, and screen magnification software.

Who Uses AT?

Often AT devices and products are designed in order to assist a particular group of individuals with specific disabilities. People who are blind or have low vision will often use screen reader software to help them read written text. People with physical disabilities, which render them unable to use a traditional keyboard, might instead use a foot pedal or mouth tube and switch in order to carry out functions on a computer.

What Type of AT Do People With Learning Disabilities Use?

Because learning disabilities affect the way we take in and process information, the most common types of AT used by people with learning disabilities are focused around reading, language, organisational skills, and processing information. Some examples are:

Screen Reading Software

Screen reading software will read the text that appears on a computer screen to the user. Screen reading software is particularly useful for individuals with dyslexia, but is also used for people who are auditory learners.

Speech/Voice Recognition Software

Speech/Voice recognition software also sometimes referred to as speech-to-text software will convert the spoken word into text on a page, or into computer commands (i.e. opening files, or

navigating software applications) via a microphone. Speech recognition software is particularly useful for individuals who have written expressive difficulties and difficulty using keyboards to navigate software applications.



Note: Voice recognition technology is improving all the time, but there is a bit of a learning curve involved with this technology. Voice recognition software trains itself to recognize the individual speech patterns of its users. The more the software is used the better it becomes at recognizing the user's voice. Because of this required time investment, patience is needed when you initially begin using such a program.

Word prediction Software

Word prediction software will present possible words that a user is looking for while typing text, which the user can select with a mouse click. The software will also predict the next possible word based on frequency of usage and context. This technology is particularly useful for individuals with difficulty spelling, and for people who have difficulty typing.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software will convert paper based text into electronic text for use with screen readers. A scanner is needed to scan materials from book or other paper-based text. The

OCR will then recognize the letter shapes through imaging analysis and convert them to electronic text. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who cannot access printed materials due to low vision or processing deficits.

Visual Organizers

Visual Organizers are used to present ideas, concepts, information, and related concepts in the form of charts, tables, graphs, flowcharts, and diagrams. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who have difficulty processing, analyzing, and comprehending text-based information but is also used for people who are visual learners.

Electronic Organizers

Electronic or digital organizers are hardware devices or software used for time management and resource organization. This technology is particularly useful for individuals who have difficulty with time management and organization, and is also used by people who are tactile learners and prefer opportunities where they can actually do something physically with the information they are to learn. For more information on Assistive Technology, please visit www.LDAO.ca.

THE **FOUR** STEPS TO MASTERING TECH TOOLS FOR TEACHING

- 

1. Find the Right Tools

"Teachers need to continually seek out the innovative technologies that will engage their students in their learning. Not to use technology for the sake of technology, rather the best tool that will enhance and support their learning."
- 

2. Introduce One Tool at a Time

"Take a well-developed lesson and implement one effective and appropriate technology tool to enhance and deepen the learning."
- 

3. Learn to Evaluate Tech

"A good program of study will help prospective graduates learn how to effectively evaluate the proper technology tools needed and to implement them appropriately into well-designed lessons."
- 

4. Use Tech to Engage Students

"Tech-savvy teachers use Wikis, Screencasts, and a variety of powerful websites to engage their students in meaningful collaboration and creativity."

Sources:



Mike Ramirez, MET, MAED.
Instructional Technologist, Assistant professor of Education, and Coordinator of Technology Enhanced Teaching at Midamerica Nazarene University

For more information on this article please visit www.ldao.ca or contact our office at info@ldawc.ca for additional support with your tech tool needs.



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Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

2nd Annual LDAWC Family Conference **SAVE THE DATE!** **October 22, 2016**

This event is intended for parents and caregivers of children with learning disabilities. The focus is providing parents with tools and strategies to aid them in supporting their children.

The day will include key note speakers and choice of break-out sessions lead by inspiring professional speakers.

Guelph location for this event to be announced

REGISTRATION IS FREE!

We invite you to watch your email or visit our website at www.ldawc.ca as we post updates about this event!

Helping Your Child Cope with Back-to-School Anxiety

Anxious feelings are normal and expected during times of transition or change. This is especially true for children and teens going back to school, or for first-timers starting kindergarten. This transition can be stressful and disruptive for the entire family! Prior to the first day of school, your anxious child may cling, cry, have temper tantrums, complain of headaches or stomach pains, withdraw, and become sullen or irritable.

Worries are Common. Anxious children and teens worry about many different school-related issues, such as teachers, friends, fitting in, and/or being away from their parents. Some common worries include:

- *Who will be my new teacher?*
- *What if my new teacher is mean?*
- *Will any of my friends be in my class?*
- *Will I fit in?*
- *Are my clothes OK?*
- *Will I look stupid?*
- *Who will I sit with at lunch?*
- *What if I miss the bus?*
- *What if I can't understand the new schoolwork?*
- *What if something bad happens to mom or dad while I am at school?*

Although it is normal for your child to have worries, **it is crucial to make your child attend school.** Avoidance of school will only increase and reinforces your child's fears over the long-term, and make it increasingly more difficult to attend. Besides missing school work, children and teens who stay home because of anxiety miss:

- valuable opportunities to develop and practice social skills
- important chances for success and mastery

- being acknowledged and praised for talents
- fostering close friendships with classmates

Most importantly, anxious children and teens who miss school cannot gather evidence that challenges their unrealistic and catastrophic fears!



How To Deal With Back-to-School Worries!

Below are some **general strategies** parents can use to deal with back-to-school worries, followed by a schedule leading up to the first day of school.

Look after the basics.

Nobody copes well when they are tired or hungry. Anxious children often forget to eat, don't feel hungry, and don't get enough sleep. Provide frequent and nutritious snacks for your child. During this time, you also need to build in regular routines, so that life is more predictable for your child. These routines can involve the morning and bedtime habits, as well as eating schedules.

Encourage your child to share his or her fears.

Ask your child what is making him or her worried. Tell your child that **it is normal** to have concerns. Before and during the first few weeks of school, set up a regular time and place to talk. Some children feel most comfortable in a private space with your

undivided attention (such as right before bed, or during mealtime). Teens often welcome some sort of distraction to cut the intensity of their worries and feelings (such as driving in the car, or taking a walk).

Avoid giving reassurance...instead, problem-solve and plan! Children often seek reassurance that bad things won't happen in order to reduce their worry. Do not assure them with *"Don't worry!"* or *"Everything will be fine!"* Instead, encourage your child to think of ways to solve his or her problem. For example, *"If (the worst) happens, what could you do?"* or *"Let's think of some ways you could handle that situation."* This gives you the opportunity to coach your child on how to cope with (and interpret) both real and imagined scary situations. You will also be giving your child the tools he or she needs to cope with an unexpected situation that might arise.



Role-play with your child. Sometimes role-playing a certain situation with your child can help him or her make a plan, and feel more confident that he or she will be able to handle the situation. For example, let your child play the part of the demanding teacher or bullying classmate. Then, model appropriate responses and coping techniques for your child, to help them calm down.

Focus on the positive aspects! Encourage your child to re-direct attention away from the worries, and towards the positives. Ask your child, *"What are three things that you are most excited about on your first day of school?"* Most kids can think of *something* good, even if it's just eating a special snack or going home at the end of the day. Chances are that the fun aspects are simply getting overlooked by repetitive worries.

Pay attention to your own behavior.

It can be anxiety-provoking for parents to hand over care and responsibility of their child to teachers. Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and comfort you can model, the more your child will understand there is no reason to be afraid. Be supportive yet firm. When saying goodbye in the morning, say it cheerfully – once! Ensure you don't reward your child's protests, crying, or tantrums by allow him or her to avoid going to school. Instead, in a calm tone, say: *"I can see that going to school is making you scared, but you still have to go. Tell me what you are worried about, so we can talk about it."* Chances are, your child is anxious about something that requires a little problem-solving, role-playing, planning, and/or involvement from the teacher.

Timeline Leading Up to the First Day of School (You may not need to take all of these steps)

At least one week before:

- Start your child on a school-day routine – waking up, eating, and going to bed at regular times. Explain that everyone in the family needs to adjust to the new schedule, so he or she doesn't feel alone with these changes.
- For older children who having troubles getting up and out of bed, give them a "big person" alarm clock, and let them practice using it.

- Ask your child to help plan school lunches for the first week.
- Create a list of school supplies together and plan a fun shopping trip.
- Teach and practice coping skills to use when feeling nervous, such as How to Do Calm Breathing and Developing and Using Cognitive Coping Cards
- Have your child go to school with a friend for the first couple of days.
- Tell the teacher that your child is having some separation anxiety – most teachers are experts in this area, and have years of experience!
- Most importantly, **praise and reward your child for brave behavior!**

A couple days before school:

- Go to school several times – walking, driving, or taking the bus. For young children taking the school bus, describe and draw out the bus route, including where the bus goes and how long it takes to get to school. Talk about bus safety.
- For new students, take a tour of the school. Show your child the classrooms, the cafeteria, and the bathrooms. If possible, meet your child's teacher with your child present.
- Ask your child to help choose the outfits for the first week of school. Let your child wear his or her favorite outfit on the first day.
- Together with your child, pack up the schoolbag the night before, including treats.
- For younger children who are nervous about separating, suggest taking a special object to school that reminds him of home. A reassuring note in a child's lunch can also help ease separation anxiety.



More information on this article and related articles can be viewed at www.anxietybc.com

The first day of school:



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The right to learn, the power to achieve

Come and join us for some great Workshops!

September- Navigating the IEP Process
September 22nd at 7:00pm- Guelph location TBA

October- Family Conference
October 22nd 9:00am-4:00pm- Guelph location TBA

November- Homework Help
November 15th at 10:00am- Fergus location TBA

December- ADHD and Mental Health
December 8th at 7:00pm- Guelph location TBA



For more information or to register for our upcoming workshops please email us at info@ldawc.ca or call us at 519-837-2050

Useful Links

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

<http://www.caddra.ca/>

People for Education

<http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/profile/child-advocacy-project-cap/>

Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities

<http://www.pacfold.ca/>

Special Needs Ontario Window (SNOW)

<http://www.pacfold.ca/>

Totally ADD

<http://totallyadd.com/>

The We All Learn Differently Organization

www.thewald.org

Learning Potentials

www.learningpotentials.com

Family Anatomy

www.familyanatomy.com

Contact us

Telephone: 519-837-2050

Mailing address: 233, 17A -218 Silvercreek Parkway N. Guelph N1H 8E8

Email address: info@ldawc.ca

Website: www.ldawc.ca

Don't forget to like us on facebook for the chance to learn about information and events happening in your communities!

www.facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty



LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



Mr. Mrs. Miss Dr.

New Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Chapter Affiliation: _____

Please check this box if you agreed to receive your copies of Communiqué by email in the future

E-mail address: _____

Type of Yearly Membership (please check one)

Family/Individual \$50.00 Professional \$75.00
Institutional \$125.00 Student \$20.00 (ID # Required)

Type of Payment

Cash (only if paying in person) Cheque (payable to LDAO) Money Order Visa Master Card
Card # _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name as it appears on the Credit Card: _____ Signature: _____

Benefits of Membership for all Members:

- Discount to LDA Programs and services
- Communiqué (Provincial) newsletter – 2 times per year (5 copies each printing of Communiqué for Professional and 10 each for Institutional members)
- National newsletter – 1 time per year (5 copies each printing of National for Professional and 10 each for Institutional members)
- Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from Chapter to Chapter)

Please make all payments payable to LDAO and forward to:

LDAO Membership Coordinator

365 Bloor Street East, Box 39 Ste. 1004, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4

Phone: 416-929-4311, ext 21 Fax 416-929-3905

Website: www.LDAO.ca



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