



# LD Connections Newsletter

## June 2016



### **New Season, New Programs**

All of us at Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County are very excited about what Summer brings for our programs! We started to offer monthly workshops in the month of April and this month we will be talking about tutoring over the summer break, you don't want to miss this one! We are also working on offering a new Peer Support Program soon, please contact us if you are interested in learning more about this new and exciting program.

### **Happy Father's Day!**

In 1910, a Father's Day celebration was held in Spokane, Washington, at the YMCA by Sonora Smart Dodd, who was born in Arkansas. Its first

celebration was in the Spokane YMCA on June 19, 1910. Her father, the civil war veteran William Jackson Smart, was a single parent who raised his six children there.

***Father's Day will be celebrated on Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup> this year!***

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## What is assistive technology for LD?

[www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)

Assistive Technology (AT) for kids with LD is defined as any device, piece of equipment or system that helps bypass, work around or compensate for an individual's specific learning deficits. Over the past decade, a number of studies have demonstrated the efficacy of AT for individuals with LD.<sup>1</sup> AT doesn't cure or eliminate learning difficulties, but it can help your child reach her potential because it allows her to capitalize on her strengths and bypass areas of difficulty. For example, a student who struggles with reading but who has good listening skills might benefit from listening to audio books.

In general, AT compensates for a student's skills deficits or area(s) of disability. However, utilizing AT does not mean that a child can't also receive remedial instruction aimed at alleviating deficits (such as software designed to improve poor phonic skills). A student could use remedial reading software as well as listen to audio books. In fact, research has shown that AT can improve certain skill deficits (e.g., reading and spelling).

AT can increase a child's self-reliance and sense of independence. Kids who struggle in school are often overly dependent on parents, siblings, friends and teachers for help with assignments. By using AT, kids can experience success with working independently.

What types of learning problems does assistive technology address?

AT can address many types of learning difficulties. A student who has difficulty writing can compose a school report by dictating it and having it converted to text by special software. A child who struggles

with math can use a hand-held calculator to keep score while playing a game with a friend. And a teenager with dyslexia may benefit from AT that will read aloud his employer's online training manual. There are AT tools to help students who struggle with:

### Listening

Certain assistive technology (AT) tools can help people who have difficulty processing and remembering spoken language. Such devices can be used in various settings (e.g., a class lecture, or a meeting with multiple speakers).

### Math

Assistive technology (AT) tools for math are designed to help people who struggle with computing, organizing, aligning, and copying math problems down on paper. With the help of visual and/or audio support, users can better set up and calculate basic math problems.

### Organization and memory

Assistive technology (AT) tools can help a person plan, organize, and keep track of his calendar, schedule, task list, contact information, and miscellaneous notes. These tools allow him to manage, store, and retrieve such information with the help of special software and hand-held devices.

### Reading

There is a wide range of assistive technology (AT) tools available to help individuals who struggle with reading. While each type of tool works a little differently, all of these tools help by presenting text as speech. These tools help facilitate decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension.

### Writing

There is a wide range of assistive technology (AT) tools available to help students who struggle with writing. Some of these tools help students circumvent the actual physical task of writing, while

others facilitate proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, word usage, and organization.

What kinds of assistive technology tools are available?

The term "assistive technology" has usually been applied to computer hardware and software and electronic devices. However, many AT tools are now available on the Internet. AT tools that support kids with LD include:

### **Abbreviation expanders**

Used with word processing, these software programs allow a user to create, store, and re-use abbreviations for frequently-used words or phrases. This can save the user keystrokes and ensure proper spelling of words and phrases he has coded as abbreviations.

### **Alternative keyboards**

These programmable keyboards have special overlays that customize the appearance and function of a standard keyboard. Students who have LD or have trouble typing may benefit from customization that reduces input choices, groups keys by color/location, and adds graphics to aid comprehension.

### **Audio books and publications**

Recorded books allow users to listen to text and are available in a variety of formats, such as audiocassettes, CDs, and MP3 downloads. Special playback units allow users to and search and bookmark pages and chapters. Subscription services offer extensive electronic library collections.

### **Electronic math work sheets**

Electronic math worksheets are software programs that can help a user organize, align, and work through math problems on a computer screen. Numbers that appear onscreen can also be read

aloud via a speech synthesizer. This may be helpful to people who have trouble aligning math problems with pencil and paper.

### **Freeform database software**

Used in conjunction with word processing or other software, this tool allows the user to create and store electronic notes by "jotting down" relevant information of any length and on any subject. He can later retrieve the information by typing any fragment of the original note.

### **Graphic organizers and outlining**

Graphic organizers and outlining programs help users who have trouble organizing and outlining information as they begin a writing project. This type of program lets a user "dump" information in an unstructured manner and later helps him organize the information into appropriate categories and order.

### **Information/data managers**

This type of tool helps a person plan, organize, store, and retrieve his calendar, task list, contact data, and other information in electronic form. Personal data managers may be portable, hand-held devices, computer software, or a combination of those tools working together by "sharing" data.

### **Optical character recognition**

This technology allows a user to scan printed material into a computer or handheld unit. The scanned text is then read aloud via a speech synthesis/screen reading system. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is available as stand-alone units, computer software, and as portable, pocket-sized devices.

### **Personal FM listening systems**

A personal FM listening system transmits a speaker's voice directly to the user's ear. This may help the listener focus on what the speaker is saying. The unit consists of a wireless transmitter

(with microphone) worn by the speaker and a receiver (with earphone) worn by the listener.

### Portable word processors

A portable word processor is lightweight device that is easy to transport (e.g., from classroom to home). It can be helpful to kids who may have trouble writing by hand and prefer to use a keyboard. Word processing allows the user to edit and correct his written work more efficiently than doing so by hand.

### Proofreading programs

Students who struggle with writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, word usage, and sentence structure) may benefit from software programs (included in many word processing systems) that scan word processing documents and alert the user to possible errors.

### Speech-recognition programs

A speech recognition program works in conjunction with a word processor. The user "dictates" into a microphone, and his spoken words appear on the computer screen as text. This can help a user whose oral language ability is better than his writing skills.

### Speech synthesizers/screen readers

These systems can display and read aloud text on a computer screen, including text that has been typed by the user, scanned in from printed pages (e.g., books, letters), or text appearing on the Internet.

### Talking calculators

A talking calculator has a built-in speech synthesizer that reads aloud each number, symbol, or operation key a user presses; it also vocalizes the answer to the problem. This auditory feedback may help him check the accuracy of the keys he presses and verify the answer before he transfers it to paper.

### Talking spell checkers and electronic dictionaries

Talking spell checkers and electronic dictionaries can help a poor speller select or identify appropriate words and correct spelling errors during the process of writing and proofreading. Talking devices "read aloud" and display the selected words onscreen, so the user can see and hear the words.

### Variable-speed tape recorders

Tape recorders/players allow a user to listen to pre-recorded text or to capture spoken information (e.g., a classroom lecture) and play it back later. Variable speed control (VSC) tape recorders speed up or slow down the playback rate without distorting the "speaker's" voice.

### Word-prediction programs

Word prediction software can help a user during word processing by "predicting" a word the user intends to type. Predictions are based on spelling, syntax, and frequent/recent use. This prompts kids who struggle with writing to use proper spelling, grammar, and word choices, with fewer keystrokes.

***\*More of this article is available at [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)***



## Rick Lavoie Visits South-Western Ontario



Rick Lavoie, Educator and Author, presented on behalf of the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton in Burlington on Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup>. Rick's presentation was based on his well know book "It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend". Rick's balance of practical strategies, humor and passion for learning disabilities created an engaging and informative discussion.

The premise of Rick's book is that children with learning disabilities struggle to learn social skills. Rick indicated parents and teachers under estimate the importance of breaking down the social environments within a child's life to allow them to understand the social requirements. Rick estimates children spend 1,080 hours a year in school, this translates to only 4% of their time and the remaining 96% is spent in social environments

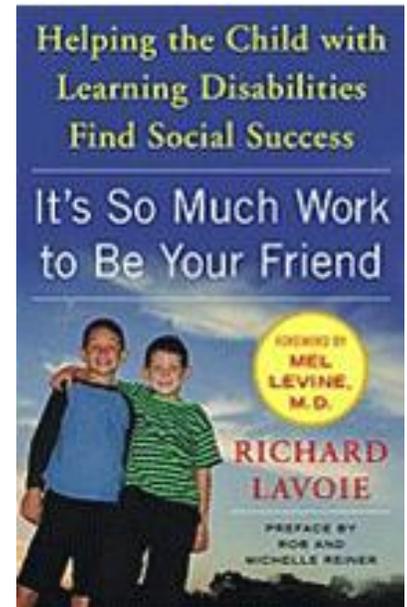
Rick spoke about the use of "Social Autopsies", which began within his residential programs, as an opportunity to teach the social aspect just like a spelling list would be used for academics. This process would involve the examination and inspection of a social error to determine the cause of the error, determine a solution and discuss how this solution could be applied to other social situations. Using these real life situations was a great teaching tool and many of Rick's students would begin this debrief process on their own once the culture had been formed. While this process only takes about 90 seconds, it is a highly effective tool and Rick would often give children social homework where they needed to identify a specific situation that involved a specific social skill

Rick's book focuses on the need to break social skills into sub skills:

1. Timing & Staging
2. Social Memory
3. Social Prediction
4. Affective Matching
5. Zero Order Skills
6. Social Contracts
7. Interrogation
8. Negative Reputations

Rick also discussed the concept of "Hidden Curriculum" and how children with learning disabilities are not aware of this within their social environment at school.

After attending the discussion, I would definitely recommend Rick's book as a strong source of strategies for parents of children with learning disabilities.

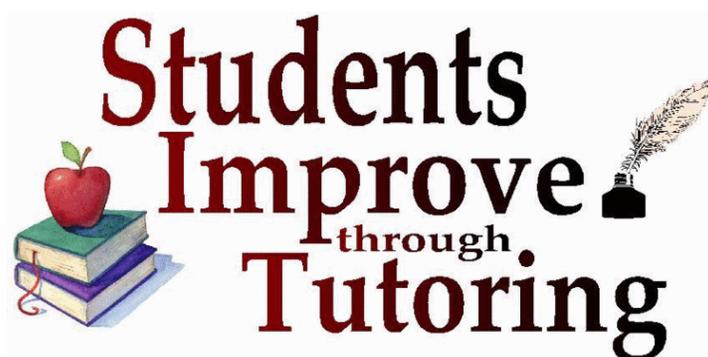




**Idawc** • Learning Disabilities  
Association of Wellington County

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

**Upcoming Workshop in Wellington County,  
Hosted by LDA Wellington County!**



**Tutoring during Summer Break**

Join us to learn about strategies and ways to best support your child during the summer break around tutoring and preparing for the return to school.

Where- Centre Wellington Sportsplex, 550 Belsyde Avenue East (Fergus)

When- June 15<sup>th</sup> “ 7:00pm

Cost- \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members

How- Call 519-837-2050



Generously Funded by United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin

## 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](http://www.thewald.org)

Learning Potentials

[www.learningpotentials.com](http://www.learningpotentials.com)

Family Anatomy

[www.familyanatomy.com](http://www.familyanatomy.com)

## Contact us

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[www.facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty](http://www.facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty)



## Events

### Creating a Balanced Literacy Diet for Emergent Readers and Writers

This 2 day workshop will discuss the process of implementing a balanced literacy diet for emergent readers and writer. There will be an emphasis on making it accessible for students with complex communication needs and a range of other abilities and disabilities. The philosophy, fundamentals and principles of the approach will be covered – using information, data, video and examples collected across several classrooms. Emergent readers and writers are those student who are not yet reading and writing conventionally, but who need to develop their language skills as well as understandings in key areas such as print concepts, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. We will discuss the interrelated nature of literacy and language and the importance of Augmentative and Alternative Communication for students with complex communication needs. The components of a balanced literacy diet for emergent readers and writers will be covered, with specific information on supporting learning for a range of students and the importance of learning the functions of literacy at this stage.

**Date:** August 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 8:30am-4:40pm

**Location:** Wilfred Laurier University

**Cost:** \$125 before June 1, \$150 after



### Superhero Run for KidsAbility

On Sunday, June 19, KidsAbility will be hosting its annual Superhero Run for KidsAbility at Exhibition Park in Guelph. Visit the Superhero Run for KidsAbility registration page for more information.

**Date:** Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup>

Visit [www.kidsability.ca](http://www.kidsability.ca) for more information

## LDAWC Upcoming Tutoring Workshop and Peer Support Program!

### Tutoring During Summer Break!

Join us to learn about strategies and ways to best support your child during the summer break around tutoring and preparing for the return to school.

**Date:** June 15<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 7:00pm

**Location:** Fergus Sportsplex

**Cost:** \$10 for members \$15 for non-members

\*\*\*We are in the process of starting a Peer Support Network, if you are interested in sharing your experiences and learning from others please contact us for more information on this upcoming program.\*\*\*

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

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

Website: [www.LDAO.ca](http://www.LDAO.ca)



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