



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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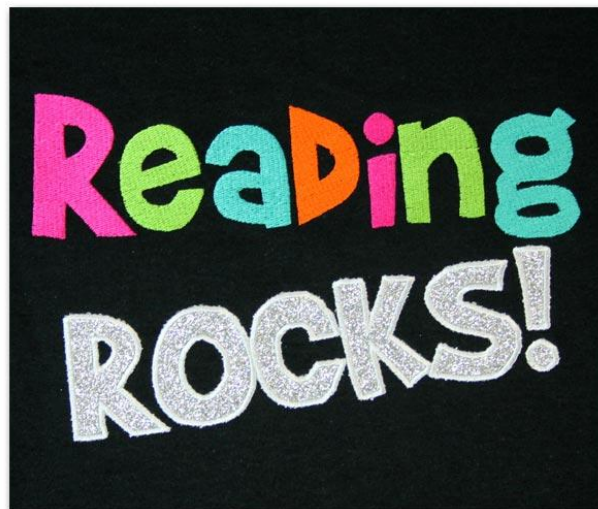
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Reading Rocks is Rocking!



We're ecstatic that our Reading Rocks literacy program was launched very successfully mid-January. This program aims at helping children with learning disabilities or those who are struggling with reading. Reading Rocks relies on very dedicated volunteer tutors who work one-on-one with our students aged 6-12 over an 8-week period, twice a week.

We have 11 pairs working out of the Youth Resource Centre at 2nd Chance in the Stone Road Mall, 10 pairs working out of St. James Catholic High School and 6 pairs at Wellington County Learning Centre in Arthur.

Volunteers spend each hour with their child working on different areas shown to impact reading: phonics, sight words and fluency. This includes drilling, word games and graphing progress in each area to increase motivation and engagement.

We're very excited about the program and are happy to see the relationships developing between each pair. A very special thank you goes out to the volunteers for giving many hours of

their time. I know that the LDAWC Board of Directors and its staff, as well as all the parents who have children in the program are very thankful.



Jaxon and Brooke, left, and Hart and Fatima working on their Reading Rocks boards.

Articles – LDs and ADHD

Social Problems at School: How and When to Jump In



By Amanda Morin

At a Glance

- Every situation is different, so there's no set answer about how involved to get.
- There are many factors to consider in knowing how to help your child.
- It's important for your child to learn coping and problem-solving skills.

If there's an academic problem at school, you may feel confident about when to jump in. But what if your child is having a social problem? Do you wonder how involved to get? There's no set answer to that question. Each situation is different. Here are some basic things to consider.

- **How old is your child?** Younger kids may not have the experience or maturity to handle social problems on their own. Older kids may be embarrassed to have parents fight their battles for them.
- **Is your child in danger?** If his or her emotional or physical well-being is threatened, you need to be actively involved.
- **Does your child understand the situation?** If he has trouble picking up on body language and facial expressions, he may not understand a situation correctly.
- **Have you taught your child the skills to handle this?** If you're sure he knows what to do, let him do it himself.

It's important for your child to learn problem-solving and coping skills. The more you jump in, the less opportunity for him or her. The trick is to find a middle ground where he gets the guidance he needs from you while learning how to handle situations himself.

Here are some examples of problem situations and ways you can help.

Situation #1: Your child is emotionally bullied.

With bullying, you need to get involved. If you tell your child some kids are jerks and he should ignore them, he may continue to feel like a victim and think he can't come to you for help. But if you confront the bully or call his parents, your child may keep things from you because he thinks you'll overact.

How to help: Brainstorm ways your child can defend himself against the bullying. Inform his teacher, who can monitor the situation. This way, your child gets practice standing up for himself, and knows that you'll get involved if the bullying continues.

Situation #2: Your child isn't invited to a birthday party.

You can't always keep your child from having his feelings hurt. So what do you do when they are? If you tell him that's just how it goes and not everyone is going to like him, he may feel unlikeable and think his feelings don't matter. If you call the other child's parents and demand an invitation, your child may feel embarrassed.

How to help: Tell your child you know this is difficult for him. Then talk about how there are different types of friendships. Ask him what type of friendship he has with the birthday child. Are they close and into the same things, or are they just school friends? This way, your child learns that there are different kinds of friends and he probably can't have the same expectations from all of them. He also knows that *you* value his feelings.

Situation #3: Your child says the teacher is picking on him.

Is the teacher *really* singling him out, or is your child misreading the situation? You weren't there to know. If you tell your child to just work it out with the teacher, he may think you're not on his side. If you run to confront the teacher, your child may think you'll jump to his rescue no matter what the situation. And he'll miss a chance to learn how to self-advocate.

How to help: Ask your child for more information. Talk with him about how he can approach the teacher. (You can always intervene later.) This way, he knows you want to get to the truth and you're willing to help. But he also gets to be part of the solution.

By knowing when and how to get involved, you give your child the chance to learn how to handle problems himself. You can even troubleshoot some problems by role-playing common social situations.

Key Takeaways

- If your child is being bullied and is in danger, you need to get involved.
- Being too involved can be just as hard on your child as not being involved enough.
- Think about your child's age and skills before helping in a social situation.

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/child-social-situations/school-events-and-situations/social-problems-at-school-how-and-when-to-jump-in>

Possibilities and Pitfalls: Employment and LDs

By Catherine M. Smith

First, the good news. Most people who have learning disabilities heave a sigh of relief when school days are finally behind them and get on with satisfying, successful lives. They find a niche where they can fit into the workforce, matching their skills and abilities to the right job. Many are college and university graduates, and take their places confidently and comfortably in their chosen fields.

Now, the less good news. Many people who have learning disabilities struggle to get appropriate training or education, struggle to find jobs, struggle to get accommodations in the workplace, or get jobs only to lose them within a short time. There are several possible reasons for this: lack of fit between skills and job requirements; social skills difficulties; systemic barriers resulting in lack of appropriate accommodations; and difficulty handling the learning experiences inherent in any job in today's world.

Fit, between skills and jobs is a primary ingredient for success. This is true for everyone. For individuals who have learning disabilities it means that they must have a clear understanding of their specific learning disabilities and understand when and how they are likely to manifest. Many individuals leave high school with only the vaguest general idea of what their deficit areas are, and little idea of how those will impact on various career possibilities. For example, I have worked with an individual who struggled mightily to get through law school. She finally succeeded. However, her main area of difficulty was auditory processing deficits. Her score on a standardized test placed her well below the 16 th percentile. This is a major handicap for a lawyer whose job is to process accurately and remember large amounts of information. When I tried to reach her at her business number a year or so after her graduation, it was out of service. I do not know that she was not able to make it as a lawyer, but it would surprise me greatly if she did. On the other hand, I worked with a young man at university who had great difficulties with writing. He was in an applied program of video production in which his strengths were utilized and the need for writing was minimal. This represents a good "fit" between strengths and job requirements. He had all the part-time work he could handle in his field and would likely have no difficulty achieving success as a full-time worker.

Some individuals with learning disabilities have social skills deficits. They have difficulty reading social situations, understanding the non-verbal aspects of communication (tone of voice; pace of delivery; non-word vocalic such as "um, ah, oh"; body position and gestures; facial expressions), using eye contact appropriately, listening, asking for help, explaining a problem, accepting 'no' for an answer, and turn-taking in conversations. The Conference Board of Canada

has published a leaflet called *Employability Skills Profile*. It lists the general skills that all employers look for and value in all employees. A look at this list of Critical Skills Required for the Workforce makes it clear why individuals with social skills deficits have difficulty succeeding in the workplace even if they have the requisite hard job skills. The list of 'critical skills' includes the abilities to: listen to understand and learn; understand and contribute to the organization's goals; understand and work with the culture of the group; plan and make decisions with others and support the outcome; respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group; exercise "give and take" to achieve group results; seek a team approach as appropriate; and lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance. A survey of employers conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Labour revealed that they cite 'lack of social skills' as the main reason for termination of employment. This makes social skills deficits a serious issue for people with learning disabilities who have this particular deficit.

Individuals who have social skills deficits can learn to perform many of the skills mentioned as essential. They do not learn automatically, but they need to have each skill made explicit, have the skill demonstrated, and practice the skill in a supportive environment receiving corrective feedback. They often need ongoing 'remediation' to help them apply the skills they have learned when they are actually in the workplace. Social skills training is best done in small groups where students can help each other as they are learning under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

Even those who have good job skills and good social skills may run into systemic barriers. This refers to practices or attitudes within the workplace that work to prevent individuals from achieving success. Such practices or attitudes preclude implementation of accommodations that would enable people to do their work effectively. Our Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, and associated Human Rights Acts dictate that accommodations must be provided to individuals with disabilities. In order to refuse a job to, or let go, a person for lack of ability to do the job, the employer first must make sure the individual cannot do the job even with appropriate accommodations. Accommodations include such things as assistive technology (voice interactive software), job restructuring (if there is one minor aspect of the job that cannot be performed even with accommodations, giving that part of the job to another individual in exchange for something the person can do), providing written instructions for workers with memory problems; and allowing extra time for new skills required for the job to be learned. A recent case that went to trial involved an individual who was denied a promotion because it took her longer to achieve a second-language proficiency requirement. After many years, the individual won her case. But how many people are there who do not have the time, motivation, or resources to fight such a battle, and therefore simply accept the discrimination?

Paul Gerber and his colleagues who have spent years researching adults with learning disabilities, have looked at the positive side of employment by interviewing many highly and moderately successful adults with learning disabilities. They concluded that the overriding issue mitigating for success was the quest by individuals to gain control over their lives. Control was pursued through two sets of themes: internal decisions and external manifestations.

The internal decisions included having the desire to succeed, being goal-driven, and having reframed how learning disabilities was thought about. Having the desire to succeed is quite straight forward. Everyone I have ever met has that desire. It becomes trickier when self-efficacy enters the picture. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief that one's own efforts have a direct impact on outcomes. Many people with learning disabilities do not believe that what they do makes any difference...they will either succeed or not, depending on luck, their teacher, their boss, or other factors apart from their own effort. Those who succeed want to succeed and believe that what they do makes the difference. Therefore they are more motivated to take action and persevere. At some point, adults with learning disabilities who achieve success decide to take control over their own lives and make things happen by taking direct action.

All of the successful adults interviewed by Gerber and his colleagues routinely set goals, both long-term and short-term. It is important that the goals be realistic, that is, achievable. Goals that are too easy are not meaningful as motivators. Goals that are unrealistic in light of the individual's strengths and weaknesses are not likely reachable and so serve to de-motivate rather than motivate. But clear, achievable goals, accompanied by a plan of action, serve to propel individuals toward success. Strategic thinking becomes important if goal-setting is to work. Success or failure to reach goals needs to be accompanied by reflection about why the individual succeeded or not, and if not, what other strategy could be tried. This type of strategic thinking does not come naturally to many individuals with learning disabilities. Deborah Butler has developed a method to help college students learn to think strategically by repeatedly leading them through the cycle of goal-setting, plan development, plan implementation, and reflection.

The third internal decision identified by Gerber was reframing . That is the process of recognizing and accepting the impact of the learning disabilities and accepting and valuing oneself, including the learning disabilities. It means making friends with one's learning disabilities, and approaching life with a positive attitude. Such acceptance brings with it the ability and willingness to discuss one's learning disabilities with others when and as appropriate, without shame or guilt. In order to be able to do so, individuals need to truly understand their own strengths and weaknesses so they can be dealt with realistically when making career decisions or discussing the need for accommodations. The final stage in the reframing process is action : taking direct action toward goal achievement.

Having made these internal decisions, successful individuals then exhibit behaviours that are consistent with those decisions. They select jobs or careers which fit well with their abilities and disabilities, persist in their efforts to achieve success, and become creative in developing or learning new strategies to help them get around their areas of difficulty. To do this, many develop a solid network of friends, supporters, mentors, and learning experiences/resources that may be called upon when required. Learning how to make effective use of technology would fall into this category. Developing the ability and willingness to seek out and accept support is key.

A very pragmatic question often arises for individuals with learning disabilities. “When should I disclose to an employer that I have learning disabilities?” There is no stock answer to this question. If the individual’s learning disabilities are not expected to be an issue in the particular job, there is no need to disclose. For example, a person may have arthritis, diabetes, or depression. If the condition is under control and not likely to surface as a barrier to that individual’s effective job performance, then it is a non-issue and does not need to be disclosed. If, however, the condition is not well controlled and is likely to interfere with the individual’s ability to carry out all aspects of the job effectively, then the condition needs to be disclosed and adaptations identified to deal with the issues. The same is true for learning disabilities. The more one has chosen work that provides a good fit with individual strengths and weaknesses, the less likely it is to be an issue. If it is an issue, it needs to be disclosed before work commences, but after the job offer has been made. This allows the individual to identify strategies and adaptations which will permit effective job completion, or allows the employee and employer to work together to find workable solutions. The bottom line always must be that the employee can perform the essential elements of the job with adaptations. If the essential elements of the job cannot be performed, even with adaptations, there is no ‘fit’, and the employer needs to find another person who can do the job. The potential employee needs to find work or a job where there is a fit. Happily, recent court decisions have made it clear that the onus is on employers to prove that every avenue has been tried to make jobs work for individuals with learning disabilities before refusing to hire or promote, or terminating employment.

In school, students with learning disabilities vary greatly in their need for support. Some need a special school, some a special class, some resource support, and some cope nicely without any special supports. In the workplace, the same is true for adults. Some require significant rehabilitation programs to prepare them for success in the workplace. Such a program could include assessment, remediation, career assessment and counselling, skills training with proper adaptations, on-the-job training, unpaid work placement with monitoring, coaching, or counselling, and social skills training. Some require access to education and training with

adaptations provided. Some only need employers willing to provide adaptations in the workplace. And some perform with no special supports. Hopefully this article offers guidance to help you, or your loved one, make decisions about what, if anything, is needed.

In this article, the term learning disabilities includes attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Source: <http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadh/articles/about-lds/possibilities-and-pitfalls-employment-and-learning-disabilities/>

Excellent Online Resources

For those of you who are not familiar with the ‘newish’ site launched by LDAO, I would encourage you to take a look at it. This site – LD@Home at www.ldathome.ca – is a tremendous resource geared to parents, families, and students who are dealing with LDs. This website features expert advice, articles, personal stories, videos, webinars and podcasts. Funded by an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, this site is maintained by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.

For example, included in the LD@home site is a Parent Guide that LDAO put together to help parents with “My Child Just Got Diagnosed with an LD. NOW WHAT?” The guide is at the following link: <https://www.ldathome.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SURVIVAL-GUIDE.pdf>

If any of you are educators, or want to see an excellent website about learning disabilities geared to educators, please check out LD@school. www.ldatschool.ca is also managed by LDAO, and tackles issues of literacy, numeracy, mental health, executive functions, social-emotional development, non-verbal LDs, accommodations, modifications & alternative skill areas, and PPM 8. Each section is very detailed.

Guelph Storm – get tickets!

Tickets are \$17.50 each (regular adult price \$26)

Help support LDAWC and The United Way!

We have 2 game dates left:

Friday, February 23, 7:30 PM - Storm vs. Owen Sound Attack

Friday, March 9, 7:30 PM - Storm vs. Saginaw Spirit



To order tickets email info@ldawc.ca or call (519) 837-2050.

Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops

Transitioning to Post-secondary

February 28, 2018



About our Workshop:

Parents, do you have a child in high school? Is college or university something he or she is thinking of? Transitioning from different phases of life can be difficult, so preparing for and learning the most from experts is vital. Join this exciting workshop – geared to parents and students with LDs or ADHD who are considering going to college or university. The evening will open with 4 educators giving important perspectives and tips about planning for this important transition. The majority of the evening will be question and answer format, so bring your questions! It's never too early to start planning...even for those in grade 9! Remember – dreams are only dreams unless you have a plan...so let's start a plan!

This workshop will have 4 panellists who will speak about different areas of transition planning, and they'll answer all of your questions! The panel is made up of Ben McCabe from Upper Grand District School Board, Ruthanne Finnigan from Wellington Catholic District School Board, Erin Downs from Conestoga College and a representative from the University of Guelph.

Who: Parents and your teens with LDs or ADHD, grades 9-12

When: Wednesday, February 28, 7-9 PM

Where: Zehrs Community Room (2nd floor), 1045 Paisley Road, Guelph, ON

Cost: \$15 for non-members; \$10 for LDA members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/transitioning-to-post-secondary-ldawc-workshop-tickets-42722396839> or find a registration link on our homepage at www.ldawc.ca.

Navigating the Workplace

March 26, 2018



About our Workshop:

The workplace can be a difficult place to navigate. If you have a learning disability or ADHD, it's likely much harder. You likely have a unique set of strengths and skills, and require the right environment to thrive. Perhaps you're wondering about workplace issues like when or if to disclose my LD or ADHD, or what's the best way to ask for accommodations? Workplace relationships can also be difficult, so is there a way to approach these more easily?

If any of these issues resonate with you and you'd like to learn more and chat with other adults about these issues, please join our workshop host Barbara Lustgarten-Evoy, who will be leading an informal, interactive discussion about these and other topics.

About our Speaker:

Barbara Lustgarten-Evoy is a dynamic individual who seeks to empower and inspire others. Through her company "With Barbara", she hosts TV and radio shows, and delivers workshops on a wide range of topics – from educational topics like homework and self-esteem for girls to resiliency for all. Barbara also owns the educational/tutoring company Fergus Educational Services. She's worked with adults and families over her career helping them to overcome a variety of obstacles.

When: Monday, March 26, 7-9 PM

Where: Community Living Guelph, 8 Royal Road, Guelph, ON

Cost: \$15 for non-members; \$10 for LDA members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/navigating-the-workplace-ldawc-workshop-tickets-42723897327> or find a registration link on our homepage at www.ldawc.ca.

Other Community Events

LDA Halton

Lecture Series Workshop: Parent Advocacy Roadmap – From Here to There

When: Wednesday, February 21, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Where: LDA Halton, 560 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON

Cost: \$20 for LDAO members; \$30 for non-members

Register: <https://ldahalton.ca/solutions-learning-lecture-series/>

This workshop will look at some essential skills to successful parent advocacy. It will touch on events that trigger crisis and obstacles to success in parent's advocacy efforts. Attendees will walk away with a better understanding of:

- Their personal advocacy skills strengths and weaknesses
- How to communicate more effectively
- How to recognize and navigate different personality types including their own
- Dealing with the emotion of anger and its impact on advocacy success

Who Should Come? Workshops are primarily designed for parents/caregivers of children with Learning Disabilities. Family members are also welcome.

7th Annual Solutions for Learning Conference: Embracing Abilities

When: Thursday, March 22, 8 am – 3:30 pm

Where: Holiday Inn Burlington Hotel & Conference Centre

Cost: \$172 for LDAO Members; \$222 for Non-Members

Register or Additional Information: <https://ldahalton.ca/annual-conference/>

About: The 2018 conference features a morning keynote session, followed by 3 sessions of breakout presentations with 4 presentations to choose from. Along with a day filled with important information sharing, participants will have a great opportunity to network with like-minded individuals to build on their knowledge. The 2018 conference keynote presentation is: **“Taking a ‘VOCAL’ Approach to Assessment – Validating Observation and Conversation when Assessing Learning.”** by Damian Cooper, Education Consultant.

LDA Peel Region

“Assistive Technology Supports for Learning Disabilities”

Presented by Microscience Computers

Thursday, February 22 at 7:00 PM

Mississauga Central Library

Cost: FREE

Register: lmastrocola@ldapr.ca

This workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about and try out various assistive technology accommodations and supports available for individuals with Learning Disabilities.

“Understanding Anxiety and Learning Disabilities”

Presented by Integra

Tuesday, March 27 at 7:00 PM

Chinguacousy Library, Brampton

Cost: FREE

Register: lmastrocola@ldapr.ca

In this introductory workshop, participants will gain an understanding of anxiety, when to be concerned, approaches to treatment, and the relationship between anxiety and Learning Disabilities.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM



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Association of Ontario

The right to learn, the power to achieve

Date _____

Name _____

Member #: _____

Chapter #: _____

Address _____

City/Province/Postal Code _____

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

Email address: _____

(please print clearly)

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 Money Order Visa Master Card

Card # _____ Expiry Date: _____

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

I would like to volunteer: at the local level at the provincial level

Benefits of Membership for all members:

- Member fee rates to all LDAO programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.
- Member fee rates to all chapter programs and services, where available
- 2 issues of the LDAO Newsletter Communiqué – by mail and now electronically to those who chose to receive their issues to a designated email address
- Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from chapter to chapter)

For Professional and Institutional Members only (In addition to those mentioned above)

- Professional members will receive 5 hard copies of each issue of Communiqué to use as they choose (if a member elects to receive their copy of Communiqué by email we will still send hard copies) and 5 member fee rate entitlements to any **LDAO** programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.
- Institutional members will receive 10 hard copies of each issue of Communiqué to use as they choose (if a member elects to receive their copy of Communiqué by email we will still send hard copies) and 10 member fee rate entitlements to any **LDAO** programs and services, including online workshops/courses, etc.

Please make all payments payable to **Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario** and forward to:

LDAO Membership Coordinator

365 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2

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



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