



LD Connections Newsletter

November 2016

Advocacy is Critical

Advocacy is defined as the public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. When it comes to learning disabilities, advocacy is so important – both as parents for your child and as an individual with a learning disability. This edition of the newsletter is focused on this critical topic.

LDAWC’s Second Annual Family Conference was a great success. We would like to thank all the presenters who donated their time and expertise to this event. We would also like to thank all the parents who attended to arm themselves with information and strategies that will allow them to be a strong advocate for their children.

LDAWC has been very busy! We have some great workshops planned for November and December, we are working on forming a peer support network and we will be launching our Reading Rocks program in the New Year. We are very excited about these new programs and need your involvement. If you are interested in any of these programs please contact us at www.info@ldawc.ca



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Creating an Advocacy Binder on Your Child

Adapted from *Partnering with Schools for Student Success* LDAO online course

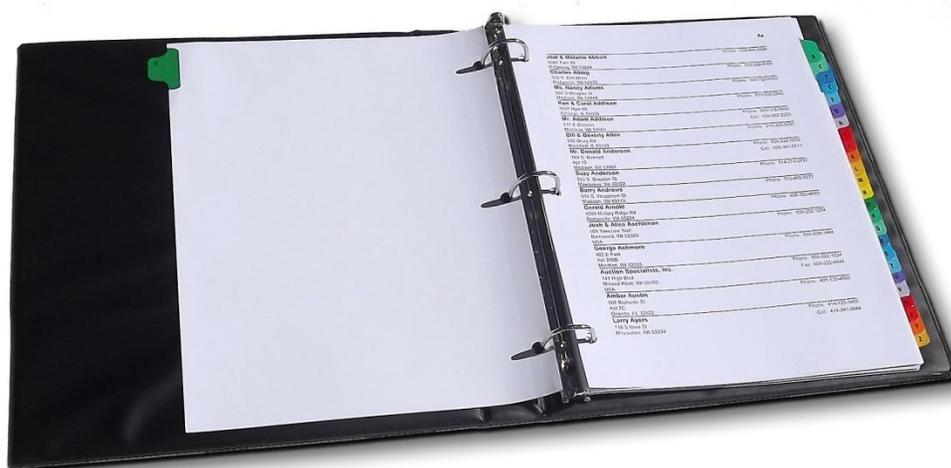
LDA Ontario www.LDAO.ca

As an effective advocate for your child you need to back up and support what you know about your child with written proof and store it in a Advocacy Binder. First you have to construct the system for long-term use.

Begin with the storage organization. You may want to have a dual system which involves your computer as well, but you should start with a portable system with hard copies. The most flexible and versatile system employs a 2 to 3 inch loose-leaf binder which has colour-coded sections for easy access. Build in large envelopes to store tests, report cards, commentary of any kind, and any other relevant material sent home by the school.

Always date everything and write a brief note attached with a paper clip so you can separate it easily from the original. The note should outline the significance of the document.

Never give away original documents — always make copies if the need arises. Also, do not mark the original in any way. Keep records in chronological order from the most recent to the earliest material you have.



The **Table of Contents** or sections of your Advocacy Binder should include, but not be limited to, the following entries:

- **Profile of your Child:** This contains developmental, psychological/emotional, family and home life, medical and educational information. The purpose is to have a complete picture of your child, so that you can decide what relevant information to share.
- **List of Professionals:** This contains the full names of all professionals your child has had contact with, including telephone, email, fax, cell phone and address. Include therapist, doctors, counselors, and specialists of any kind and indicate the date your child was seen.
- **Reports and RecordsSection:** This section contains reports from the school as well as from professionals outside of the school. Ask the school principal to show you your child's OSR (Ontario

School Record) and duplicate the contents and transfer them to this section. Also ask to see any correspondence, records, evaluation, or any other document the school may have pertaining to your child, request copies and transfer them to this master system (you may have to pay copying fees).

- **Communications log:** Good practice includes maintaining a diary of each and every school contact, and summarizing what takes place at meetings. You should include samples of your own observations and impressions in this section. This allows you, just as if you were reading a personal diary, to recover memories and opinions of the events backed up with documents of the details of what transpired.

It is in this portion of the Advocacy Binder that you will post your diary notes on any meetings you attend, noting the names and positions of the attendees and the highlights of the meeting. Be sure to include the following information:

- Who was present at the time?
- When exactly did it occur?
- Why did it take place?
- Where did it happen?
- How was it resolved?

The school will have a similar communications log as part of the IEP. You should be sent the IEP every reporting period, and you can check your communication log with the one in the IEP. If there are contacts that you think should have been reported in the IEP, ask to meet with the teacher who wrote or updated the IEP, usually the classroom or special education resource teacher.

Guelph Storm Tickets!

Help support LDAWC and the United Way! Tickets are \$17.50 each

By purchasing tickets to these Storm games we are able to run our 50/50 draw. This is a significant fundraiser for us every year so help us be able to participate. \$1 from each ticket sold will be donated to the United Way.

Game dates are as follows:

Friday, January 6, 2017 7:30pm vs. Windsor

Friday, February 17, 2017 7:30pm vs. Barrie

Sunday, March 12, 2017 2:00pm vs. London

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





ADVOCACY COURSES

<http://www.ldao.ca/ldao-services/workshops-courses/>

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario has a number of courses related to advocacy. See if one appeals to you!

Self-Advocacy for Youth

Have you ever felt that someone didn't understand you or that you were treated unjustly because of your learning disability (LD)? Have you needed help and did not know how to ask for it? Did you ever try to explain what your learning disability is and the person didn't understand?

Becoming an effective self-advocate is a key to success in all areas of life. An advocate is someone who sticks up for someone; lawyers in court advocate for the prosecution and defense. So when we talk here about being an effective self-advocate, we mean being a person who can explain to others how their LD affects them, and what they need in order to compensate for it.

Self-Advocacy for Adults

Have you ever felt that someone didn't understand you or that you were treated unjustly because of your learning disability? Have you needed help and did not know how to ask for it? Or asked for help a little too late to benefit you? Did you ever try to explain what your learning disability is and the person didn't understand?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, this workshop can help you develop the skills and strategies you need to be successful. Becoming an effective self-advocate means that you know how to explain to others what your learning disability is and are good at asking for what you need. The first step in learning how to be an effective self-advocate is being able to talk about your learning disability.

Partnering with Schools for Student Success: Effective Parent Advocacy

LDAO, in partnership with the Integra Program of the Child Development Institute, is presenting an online workshop for parents and those who are helping parents navigate the school system. The course promotes a collaborative approach to advocacy, based on knowledge and understanding on both sides.

The seven units explore perspectives of parents and schools, promote an understanding of the needs of students and of special education and behaviour management processes in schools, and teach strategies for successful negotiation. Scenarios will be used to help illustrate the ideas presented.



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Self-Advocacy in High School and College

www.healthcentral.com

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, advocacy is “the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea or policy.’ For people with ADHD or learning disabilities, advocacy becomes an important issue. Parents stand up for their children, attending parent teacher and IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) meetings in school. They talk with psychologists, educators and medical professionals to make sure their child receives the best care and the best education possible. College students advocate for themselves, talking to professors and school administrators to receive accommodations to help them succeed.

In order to best advocate for yourself, or for your children, you must first understand ADHD and/or learning disabilities and how it impacts your life. You must acknowledge your own needs and determine ways in which those needs can be met. Advocacy helps you to become self-sufficient and allows you to depend on yourself rather than those around you. Advocacy helps you to find ways to improve your life. Advocacy helps you to control your own destiny and continue to move toward your goals.

Self-Advocacy in High School

High school students are new at self-advocacy. In elementary and middle school, it was probably their parents that attended all of the meetings a school and talked with medical professionals. But as teenagers, they are not very far from having to take over the job themselves. The high school years are a good place for parents to begin teaching self-advocacy skills. These skills will help them throughout their lives, at college, in the workplace and in relationships.

The following tips can provide a starting place for teaching your teen how to stand up for themselves:



1. **Have your children attend any IEP or other meetings you may have with school personnel.** In the beginning ask them to watch what happens in the meetings and take notes that you can discuss later. It may be several meetings before your teen feels comfortable enough to speak up. That’s okay, you want them to start to understand the process.
2. **Talk to your teen about their diagnosis.** Discuss how each diagnosis impacts their education and their lives. Have them think about how they best learn: do they need visual cues, do they learn best by writing everything down, and would they benefit from taping a

class and listening to the tape again later? Understanding this can help them both in college as well as in work. Some children benefit from keeping a journal of what learning strategies they used and what results they achieved. Looking back at this may help them to discover how they best process information.

3. **Talk to your teen about their goals in life.** Ask them to be as specific as possible and to write them down. Goals should not include things such as “I want to do better in math class” but should include specifics such as “I want to pass every test in math” or “I want to get an 80 this quarter in math.” Your teen can break down goals if they tend to lose interest quickly. They can create weekly or even daily goals to begin with. In addition to writing down the goals, your teen should write down what steps they are going to take to achieve the goal and what parents, teachers or doctors can do to assist them. Have your teen discuss these goals with you and if necessary, request a meeting with teachers to discuss how they can help.
4. **Just as important as short-term goals are long-term goals.** Teenagers need to have a sense of what they want to accomplish in life. Are they looking to go to college? Do they intend to begin working right out of school? Do they know what career they would like to enter? Writing down long-term goals helps your teen put their life in perspective and helps them tailor their education and teen years around accomplishing these goals.
5. **Talk to your teen about their strengths and weaknesses.** They will benefit from understanding what they are good at. This might help them to shape their long-term goals if they are not sure what they want to do in life. Discussing their weaknesses is not to point out what they do wrong but to help them understand how learning disabilities and other conditions might impact their lives. Ask which of their weaknesses they would like to work on to develop it into a strength.
6. **Help your teen write down their suggestions on what will help them to achieve both short-term and long-term goals.** Listen to their ideas and try to incorporate some of them into your daily lives.



7. **Set up periodic meetings with your child’s teacher to discuss their progress and to modify plans if needed to help keep them on track.** Encourage children to attend these meetings on their own.

8. **Discuss with your teen the importance of self-advocacy** and how they can use these skills in college and work.



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

The right to learn, the power to achieve

**Are you looking to meet other parents and
share your experiences?**



**If you answered YES our upcoming Peer Support
Network is just the program for you**

If you're interested, we would like to hear from you!

info@ldawc.ca or 519-837-2050



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The Importance of Self-Advocacy for Kids with Learning and Attention Issues

By Andrew M.I. Lee <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/self-advocacy/the-importance-of-self-advocacy>

At a Glance

- Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for what you need.
- Being a good self-advocate can help your child both academically and socially.
- You can help your child develop the skill of self-advocacy at any age, but it's good to start early.

As a loving parent, you care for your child. You think about her needs. You talk with teachers, family members and others about those needs. And you help your child get support in and out of school.

But as part of taking care of your child, you may want to encourage her to speak up for herself. You may want to teach her a powerful skill called “self-advocacy.”

What Self-Advocacy Is

Self-advocacy is when your child understands her strengths and weaknesses, knows what she needs to succeed and communicates that to other people.

“At its heart, self-advocacy is your child’s ability to speak up for what she needs.”

The skill of self-advocacy can be broken down into a few key elements:

- Your child *understands* her needs. (This is part of self-awareness.)
- Your child *knows* what help or support will address those needs, like tutoring or a classroom accommodation.
- Your child can *communicate* her needs to teachers and others.

For example, let’s say your child has a writing issue like dysgraphia. And she has a history class that requires taking a lot of notes for homework. If she doesn’t get some kind of writing support, she’ll struggle.

Here’s an example of self-advocacy in action. Your child understands that taking notes is going to be a challenge. And she knows that voice recognition software helps her take notes more easily. So she explains to her teacher that she has trouble writing and asks to use voice recognition software. If the teacher says yes, your child’s needs are addressed. If the teacher says no, your child understands she can take her concerns to another person.

How Self-Advocacy Helps Kids Learn

Self-advocacy helps kids learn by creating solutions for challenges in school. In the note-taking example above, your child is going to do a lot better in class if she has voice recognition software to help with writing issues.



Of course, a parent who advocates for that child could also ask for voice recognition software. But self-advocacy has some extra benefits. A child who exercises self-advocacy can:

- Find solutions to challenges her parents may not be aware of
- Build self-confidence in her ability to learn
- Create a sense of ownership over learning
- Develop independence and self-empowerment

These extra benefits can make a big difference in your child's long-term success. Instead of feeling powerless and dependent on others, she can feel ready to take on life's challenges.

The benefits also extend beyond academics. A child who can effectively self-advocate is a child who can communicate in social situations. For instance, she can explain to her friends why she might need extra help at times.

Promoting Self-Advocacy in Kids

Because self-advocacy is so important, you may want to take specific steps to help your child build this skill. Here are some ways to help your child develop self-advocacy:

- Talk with your child about her strengths and weaknesses.
- Remind her that asking for help is a good thing.
- Praise her for speaking up when she needs help.
- Teach your child about her legal rights and how to talk about them in a positive, constructive way.
- Encourage your child to use the classroom accommodations she's entitled to.
- Consider putting self-advocacy goals into your child's IEP (if she has one).
- Find a role model, such as a mentor with learning and attention issues, for your child.
- When a problem arises, give your child a chance to solve it before stepping in.
- Let your child have a say in decisions about her education.
- If your child has an IEP, invite her to attend IEP meetings.

LDAWC Second Annual Family Conference

LDAWC had a successful Second Annual Family Conference. Over 45 parents spent their day at Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute to learn and share. They left the conference with information and practical strategies on how to best advocate and support their children with learning disabilities. We would like to thank the following individuals for their time and expertise donated to this event:

- Dr. Alexandre Tavares
- Dr. Sean Cameron
- Matthew Goetz
- Janet Regan
- Dr. Patricia Peters
- Rose Freigang
- Dr. Michele Preyde

Parents learned about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and sleep to the learning process. Breakout topics included ADHD and mental health, IEP's, executive functioning, disclosure of diagnosis and the newest tech options for students. We also learned about the importance of social connections. This event is always a great way to mark October as learning disabilities month.

LDAWC was able to provide this event to participants for FREE due to the support of the Ministry of Education through a Parent Reach Out (PRO) grant.





Reading Rocks

Reading Rocks is an individualized, one-on-one tutoring literacy program for children 6 -12 yrs old struggling with literacy skills. Children work individually with a trained literacy tutor on phonics, sight words, fluency, comprehension, spelling and many more through fun, interactive activities.



This FREE program will be starting in February!

We will be hosting two program locations in Guelph and one in Arthur, each session will have ten spots.

Please contact us for more information regarding this upcoming program
info@ldawc.ca or 519-837-2050

Useful Links

Dr. Tavares' presentation at our conference

<https://drtavares.wordpress.com/2016/10/22/healthy-body-healthy-mind-ldawc/>

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

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

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

Family Anatomy

www.familyanatomy.com



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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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