

LD Connections

November 2015

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.ldawc.ca

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learning disabilities
different paths....same destination

Welcome

It's November already and we are looking forward to providing a bigger presence in our community.

Hopefully many of you will have connected with our new Program Coordinator, Cheri! Please note Cheri is available through the days Monday – Wednesday. Unfortunately, we have had a glitch with our voice mail and apologize to those whose messages went unanswered for a couple of weeks. We are working with our service provider to find the solution and ensure it doesn't happen again. If you haven't received a response within a few days of your phone call, please email us and we can call you back.

Our first event of the Fall was our Family Conference. Even though we didn't have the registration numbers we had hoped for, with the support of many community experts and some awesome volunteers it was a great success.

Once again, we are selling Guelph Storm hockey tickets for some games in advance of our 50/50 game! Tickets are going fast, so be sure to contact us to get some at this great rate! And remember, we are doing this in conjunction with a fundraiser for United Way!

The fall is full of upcoming events – see a few listed at the end of this newsletter and watch your email for further details. We are holding a workshop in Fergus this month.

Our board of directors is made up of an amazing group of volunteers. We are always looking for interested people to join our board and help contribute to making a difference. If you are interested please contact us at info@ldawc.ca or 519-837-2050.

Help Support LDAWC and The United Way!

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.

Tickets are \$17.50 each and \$1 from each ticket will be donated to the United Way.

Game dates are as follows:

- Dec 6, 2015 2:00pm vs. London
- Jan 13, 2016 7:00pm vs. London
- Jan 17, 2016 2:00pm vs. Peterborough

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



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Creating an Advocacy Binder on Your Child

<http://www.idao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadhd/ldsadhs-in-depth/articles/about-education/creating-an-advocacy-binder-on-you-child/>

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 an 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 Records Section:** 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:

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- 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.

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

Peer Support Network



Peer-support networks for families of children with disabilities can be a valuable resource for parents. Parent groups support each other, share information, and work together to create meaningful change. Parents facing opposition from school boards on accommodating children with special needs are encouraged to contact these groups for advocacy strategies and support.

LDAWC is planning to implement a program that will match up interested parents with volunteers who can provide support for families whose child has been diagnosed with a learning disability. These contacts will be willing to connect with other families to act as a mentor or guide in assisting another family with navigating the path of getting support. There will be a social event component to this program to help foster the sense of community and connection while reducing stigma and a sense of isolation.

Watch your email and our website for more information as this program takes shape!

Nancy Wise - French Immersion Educational Consulting Inc.

Nancy Wise provides consultation services to assist parents who are either considering a French immersion placement for their child or questioning whether or not to keep their child in a French immersion program. She can also serve as a dual-language education advocate for children with learning challenges who are enrolled in French immersion schools. Individual consultations can be arranged in person, by phone, or via Skype. Nancy is committed to working with families to get students with learning challenges equitable access to support services in French immersion schools. Canadian Parents for French Ontario has listed her services on their website under FSL Resources for Parents, French Tutors and FSL Education, Consultants

Email: nwise@frenchimmersionconsulting.com Tel: 416-566-4553.

Website: www.frenchimmersioneducationalconsulting.com

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LDAWC 2015 Family Conference

On October 24, 2015 LDAWC hosted their first Family Conference. The day was a great success with a combination of parents and professionals attending the event. The structure of the day was a key note speaker, Lesley Andrew, followed by a choice of various breakout sessions. The day concluded with Susan Dafoe-Abbey.

We wanted to thank all that were involved in making the day a success:

- Norfolk Psychological Services – Paula Cerveny, Allison Singh, Gwen Dutrizac, Deborah Szymanski-Potts, Rose Freigang, Linda DiNardo
- Wellington Catholic Public School – Mary Beth McCuen
- Upper Grand District School Board – Dr. Sean Cameron, Lesley Anne Jordan
- Guelph Community Christian School, Arrowsmith Program – Jan Klassen, Jenny Lillie
- University of Guelph – Dr. Michele Preyde, Athol Gow
- Moving Beyond OK – Susan Schenk
- Dream in Progress Productions, Lesley Andrew
- Metamorphosis Learning – Janet Ragan
- Eric Gillis, Professional Marathoner and Olympian
- Grand River Hospital – Dr. Alexandre Tavares
- Susan Dafoe-Abbey
- Parent Reps – Sue Shaw & Kristina Campbell

We would also like to acknowledge our sponsors that allowed us to host this event:

Hammond Power Solutions Inc.

Funding for key note speaker



T&M BBQ Catering

Donated lunch for attendees, speakers and volunteers



Pilates in Guelph

Donation of 8 weeks of Pilates classes – valued at \$142



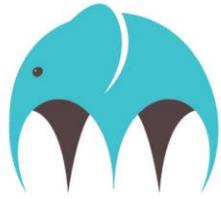
Leah Bruce, Pure Magic Vacations for the coloring books and treats for parents to take home for their children & Chantal Pearce, Jubelbelly Creations for the donation of hand made baby bibs as a door prize.

We hope to see everyone at our Second Family Conference next year!

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Parents for Children's
Mental Health

SUPPORT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Shrug Off Stress to Help Combat Caregiver Fatigue

Thursday, November 19 • 7:30pm–9pm

KidsAbility 500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo



Free! Registration is required as space is limited:
asider@rogers.com or 519-749-8740 ext 212

*Bring a yoga mat or a towel

Facilitated By:



Hosted By:



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Eric Gillis - Finding Your Passion

Eric Gillis shared his personal story of his life with dyslexia at our recent Family Conference. He addressed his school journey highlighting the challenges of his personal academic experience as well as the enjoyment he found in playing all kinds of sports. His story includes a supportive family in sports and school. Eric's presentation discussed how he first became involved in running and how his mother spotted his passion for running before he did and played a positive role in finding that fit. Eric's running career is full of lots of great moments as well as challenges and how he came to be a part of the Olympic team.



Eric recently achieved Olympic qualifying time in the recent Scotia Bank Marathon held in Toronto.

The time achieved hit the Olympic qualifying standard, with Eric finishing seventh in 2:11.31 – easily under the mark he needed of 2:12.50. Achieving standard doesn't necessarily mean a spot on the team; Canada will take the top three men and women with standard. We thank Eric for being part of our conference and pass on our congratulations!

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/more-sports/lanni-marchant-eric-gillis-hit-olympic-standard-at-scotiabank-marathon/article26866387/>

Self-Advocacy in High School

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



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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, Section 504 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 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.

Barriers to Advocacy

http://canlearnsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LC_Self-Advocacy_N2.pdf

Students with learning disabilities and/or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) often lack the ability to articulate personal strengths and needs clearly and appropriately. This may be a result of expressive language difficulties, weak social skills or lack of practice in describing their needs. Students who are not skilled at self-advocacy often say things like:

“You talk too fast,” instead of, “I am finding it difficult to listen in class.”

“You make the tests too hard,” instead of, “I find it hard to show what I know on tests.”

“You say what’s for homework too fast and I can’t get it down,” instead of, “I have difficulty knowing what to do for homework.”

Since they often have limited confidence in their abilities and low self-esteem, they are reluctant to ask questions in class or to request extra assistance. They don’t want to be thought of as “stupid” or “disruptive”.

Programming for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD must support the development of self-advocacy skills.

Strategies

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Below are a number of helpful classroom strategies followed by tools to build awareness, understanding and self-advocacy skills for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD. While this understanding and skills are critical for students with special needs, all students benefit from an increased awareness of themselves as learners.

Three Steps to Self-Advocacy

1. Know yourself as a learner.
2. Know what supports you need to be successful.
3. Communicate your needs appropriately.

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Are you parenting a child diagnosed with ADHD?

The Child Development Research Unit Needs Your Help!

We are starting a new project that examines the street crossing practices of children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) using a fun and innovative virtual reality simulator!

Is your child 7 to 10 years of age?



We need your help!

UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

Call:
519-767-5033
or
Email:
cdru@uoguelph.ca



For more information about our research visit: <http://cdru.psychology.uoguelph.ca/>
OR contact Professor Barbara Morrongiello at bmorrong@uoguelph.ca

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HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THEIR LEARNING STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

- Talk with students about the concept of learning disabilities and/or AD/HD in general and their own strengths and needs in particular.
- Explain to students that everyone has differences in their abilities. Everyone has strengths and needs. Their particular learning disability and/or AD/HD does not define who they are as a person.
- Provide students with resources to view or read that broaden their understanding of learning disabilities and/or AD/HD. Perhaps a research assignment could focus on these topics.
- Empathize with their difficulties. Focus on finding solutions rather than criticizing them.
- Model the vocabulary needed to describe their strengths and needs (e.g. “You seem to remember better when you get a chance to ‘see’ the information”.)
- Provide students with terminology they can use to describe their disability to others.
- Give students a checklist to help them identify their strengths and challenges. They may need your assistance in accurately reflecting their profile.
 - Strengths
 - I am good at expressing myself verbally.
 - I am very artistic.
 - I have good computer skills.
 - Challenges
 - I have a hard time with organization and planning bigger assignments.
 - I cannot screen out sounds and movements around me, like someone moving or a clock ticking.
 - I sometimes have a short fuse, and I often react impulsively.
 - I have a difficult time taking notes.
 - I find it difficult to remember what I heard in class.

Have students prepare a presentation about themselves as learners. This could be particularly effective as they transition to a new school year or setting. It can provide a framework for communicating their strengths and needs (including appropriate supports) to new teachers.

HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE SUPPORTS THEY NEED

- Involve students in identifying their goals. Students’ input and involvement should increase as they proceed through the grades.
- Involve students in selecting and evaluating assistive technology/strategies.
- Provide opportunities for making plans and choices. The following checklist may help students articulate what would work for them.
 - What Helps Me Learn
 - Chunk long-term assignments. I need these “chunks” on a daily and weekly basis.
 - Illustrate information with: charts, timelines and other visuals.

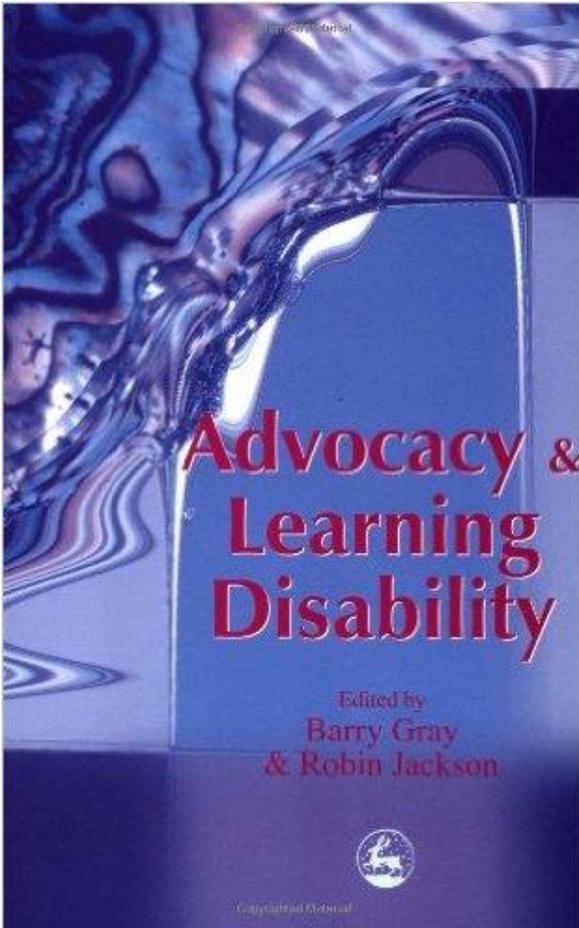
- Give me a reading guide before I start.
- Let me demonstrate my knowledge in ways that work best for me.

HELP STUDENTS COMMUNICATE THEIR NEEDS APPROPRIATELY

- Model and teach appropriate self-advocacy skills. Self-advocacy skills need to be demonstrated, role-played, practiced and evaluated. Extensive guidance needs to be provided in the middle school/junior high years with greater expectations for independence in the high school years.
- Help students to prepare for meetings, conversations with instructors, or other situations in which they may be involved in planning their educational future. Model and role-play appropriate interactions.
- Start with small goals (e.g., asking a teacher for an accommodation) and gradually increase student responsibility as they gain experience (e.g., being involved in setting goals and identifying support).
- A very important part of educational decision making for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD is setting appropriate goals. Students themselves should be actively involved in this process and taught ways to make goals tangible and realistic.

Book – Advocacy & Learning Disability

http://www.amazon.ca/dp/1853029424/ref=rdr_ext_tmb



Advocacy is a critically important element in the development of effective services with a learning disability. It is seen by many as the critical link between theory and practice in creating a truly inclusive society. This text presents an in-depth examination of the historical, legal and philosophical contexts within which advocacy services have developed. The kind of professional and practical issues and problems confronting those running and using advocacy services are discussed, and the role of advocacy is examined. Chapters covering advocacy with families and with people with communication difficulties are included to contain information for practitioners. A survey of the development of advocacy services in the US, Canada, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand provides an international perspective.

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Tech Talk – Websites and On-line Resources

<http://www.ldao.ca/ldadhd-resources/websites-and-online-resources/>

The link above contains an extensive list of available websites and on-line resources. Below is just a sample from that webpage. Check out the entire list by following the link.

- [Ottawa Network for Education – Assistive Technology](#) Free online resources and how-to-videos to help students, teachers and parents use computer-based assistive technology. Links for K-12, Transition and Postsecondary sections.
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#) NCLD.org is a useful American website with articles about LDs at home, school, college or work.
- [PAAC on SEAC](#) The Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC) brings together provincial parent associations to communicate and co-operate on issues pertaining to SEACs, which in turn advise their school boards on special education issues.

Events



November 9, 2015, 6:30pm -8:40pm

RDSP PLN Information Session

Join Planned Life Networks for their latest information session: Registered Disability Savings Plan

Presented by Paul Arsenault, Financial Planner on Monday, November 9th from 6:30-8:40

Space is limited for this session so please pre-register by emailing veryln@plnwwoc.ca or call 519-624-5195

This session will be held at the Zehrs Laurentian Community Room at 750 Ottawa Street

Cost is \$20 per family, \$10 per associate member and there is no charge for lifetime members

November 16, 2015, 6:30pm -8:30pm

PLN Issues of Concerns to Parents of Persons with Special Needs

Join Planned Lifetime Networks as they host an information session with Peter Brennan of Amy, Appleby and Brennan, about issues of concern of parents of persons with special needs. Have your questions answered by an informed lawyer including Henson Trust Wills.

Everybody is a genius. But, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing that it is stupid. ~Albert Einstein.

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November 18, 2015, 7pm -9pm

KW Region ADHD Parent Support Group

These meetings are open discussions, there are no fees associated with attendance. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month, from 7:00pm-9:00pm at the Shepherd Public School, 278, Weber Street East. This casual setting offers information on 'need to know' questions about ADHD. Future meetings are scheduled as follows: December 16, January 20, February 17, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15.

November 19, 2015, 7:30pm -9pm

Shrug off Stress to Help Combat Caregiver Fatigue

Being a Caregiver means a lot of things, but don't let it mean fatigue! Parent's for Children's Mental Health is hosting a Shrug Off Stress to Help Combat Caregiver Fatigue event Thursday November 19th, from 7:30pm-9:00pm. This free event is being held at KidsAbility (500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo). Please register as space is limited, and bring a yoga mat or towel. Email asider@rogers.com or 519-749-8740 ext 212.

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Membership Form

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel: (H) _____ (W) _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues: Family/individual \$50; Student \$20; Professional \$75

I 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 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
Tel: (416) 929-4311 Toll free in Ontario only: 1-877-238-5322
Fax: (416) 929-3905

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