



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

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3rd Annual Family Conference a Success

After months of planning, our 3rd Annual Family Conference took place without a hitch! We had 75 parents and caregivers attend the conference. Thanks to everyone who attended!



Registration – at St. James Catholic High School in Guelph

We had some wonderful feedback about our speakers. John McNamara spoke about the reading program that he and Hilary Scruton developed, called Reading Rocks. Reading Rocks was developed based on the latest research around the reading process and supporting vulnerable readers. For the past several decades, researchers, practitioners, and concerned stakeholders have worked to establish effective interventions for vulnerable readers. Reading Rocks is designed to focus on three foundational literacy skills; sight word vocabulary, phonics, and fluency – all skills recommended by the National Reading Panel. In addition to foundational literacy skills, Reading Rocks is an intervention approach that uses motivational tactics to engage children in the reading process.



John McNamara, presenter and founder of reading program, Reading Rocks.

Our key note speaker, Michael Reist, gave an engaging, inspirational talk on Boys and Girls Learn Differently. He outlined the three fundamental differences between boys and girls: a year and a half developmental difference; the need for movement and space; and preference for actions over words. Boys prefer one task and one instruction at a time. Also, boys don't transition as well between tasks, so give warnings, allow for delays.



Michael Reist, conference keynote speaker

After the first two speakers, parents went to their choice of breakout sessions, and then went to another breakout after lunch.

We want to thank all of the breakout presenters who volunteered their time and were instrumental in making our conference a success.

- IEP 101 – Sue Shaw
- Benefits of Peer Networking – Gabriele Wright
- LD & Anxiety (twice) – Rose Freigang, Linda DiNardo, Dianna Gamble
- Chromebook 101 – Janet Ragan
- Current Trends in Math – Cathy Chaput
- Orton-Gillingham Method – Kristina Campbell
- Special Education Tools – Wendy Donaldson

Our day ended with a presentation by Integra's Hayley Stinson called Walk A Mile in My Shoes. She used different practical exercises with the audience to demonstrate how different types of LDs feel to the person who has it. Parents learned more about LDs and what it really felt to have one.

Surviving Homework: An Overview



Homework can be a daunting task for children with learning disabilities (LDs) and their parents. After working and learning all day, spending more time practicing algorithms and perfecting prose is not what many of us envision as quality family time. In fact, homework can be quite frustrating and challenging for parents and children with LDs. LD@home has listed general advice as a starting point to help alleviate some of the stress and challenges families face during homework.

1. Parents' role

Parents should aim to motivate and monitor their child's progress during homework (Kids Health, 2015), and provide additional support to accommodate their child's specific learning needs, where required. To achieve this, it is important to understand your child's LD and familiarize yourself with their IEP, if they have one. For example, you may help them break a task into manageable chunks if they struggle with retaining information (working memory), or write *their* ideas down for them if they struggle with hand-eye coordination (visual-motor skills). **The idea is not to do the homework for your child, but rather be available, supportive and accommodating.** Also, remember to be kind to yourself. Sometimes homework is not going to go as planned, it's ok to revise your goals for that evening and call it quits if needed. Worry less about the immediate results; focus on your child's progress overtime.

2. Environment

Children with LDs may require specific environmental strategies to facilitate their learning. These may be found in their IEP, if they have one. You may also speak with your child's teacher about environmental strategies that could be adapted at home. **Also, involve your child in creating their work space. Let them decide where they feel most comfortable doing their homework and what they may need to achieve the task at hand.** Ensure that the works space is well-lit, supplies are within reach and there are few distractions (Kids Health, 2015).

3. Time management

Coming up with a consistent homework schedule with your child may also alleviate some of the stress and set clear expectations. With your child, decide on a time that will be committed to homework everyday after school. This may be right when they get home, or after a snack and break. Also, set a time limit. Homework should not eat up your entire evening. It is important to decide when homework no longer adds value. On weekends, you may select a day or two as homework free. Do what works for your child!

When it comes to school projects that require more time and organisation, take the opportunity to teach your child some time management skills. **Set a timeline, break up the task into manageable chunks, set weekly goals and work towards the due date together.** This may also be an opportunity for parents to set an example for their child. Perhaps, demonstrate how you apply time management skills in your daily life (e.g. paying bills on time, planning home renovations, etc.). In the end, your child may develop their executive functions and acquire some valuable life skills.

4. Parent-teacher communication

An open and continuous communication with teachers is important in **understanding expectations and setting realistic goals for the child during homework.** For children who are older, you may also keep them involved during these communications (e.g. copy them in an email communication), allowing their self-advocacy skills to flourish and giving them a sense of responsibility. This may also be an opportunity to explore some of the accommodations used in the classroom and how they may be useful at home. Perhaps, if homework has become too stressful, it is time to consider foregoing the practice entirely. Talk to your child's teacher about your experience at home. They will surely provide you with the support you need to help you child during homework and may even share a tip or two!

Homework should be a time to practice new skills and review concepts that were learned at school. Consider homework a time where you touch base with your child's learning and witness their progress. Take the opportunity to celebrate the small victories and empower them to acknowledge their abilities.

References

"Top 10 Homework Tips". *KidsHealth*. Nemours, January 2015. Web. 30 May 2017. <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/homework.html>

Article from: <https://www.ldathome.ca/2017/09/surviving-homework-overview/>

Executive Function and LDs

'Executive function' is a term used to describe the many different cognitive processes that people use to **control their behaviour** and to **connect past experience with present action.**

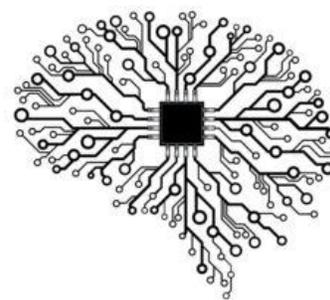
We rely on executive functions to perform activities such as planning, organizing, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space.

Executive function skills can include:

- **Impulse Control** — the ability to stop and think before acting
- **Emotional Control** — the ability to manage feelings by thinking about goals
- **Flexibility** — the ability to change strategies or revise plans when conditions change

- **Working Memory** — the ability to hold information in mind and use it to complete a task
- **Self-Monitoring** — the ability to monitor and evaluate your own performance
- **Planning and Setting Priorities** — the ability to create steps to reach a goal and to make decisions about what to focus on
- **Task Initiation (Getting Started)** — the ability to recognize when it's time to get started on something and then to begin without procrastinating
- **Organization** — the ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials; time management

Difficulties in executive functioning tends to become more apparent as students move through the early elementary grades into intermediate grades, with the increasing demands of completing schoolwork independently and juggling assignment deadlines for different subjects.



Many students with LDs have difficulties with executive functions, as do many students with ADHD.

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Parents can use many strategies that help their children improve executive functions, such as checklists and step-by-step “how to” lists. They can also help their children learn to break long school assignments into chunks, and teach the use of visual calendars, time organizers, and other organizational tools.

Some examples of strategies (adapted from *Executive Function in Education: From Theory to Practice*, editor, Lynn Meltzer, 2007):

- **Memorization** — when using acronyms to help with the memorization of information, the “crazier the phrase,” the better. If someone is a visual learner, make a cartoon.
- **Prioritizing** — teach children to highlight the most important ideas in a text in one color and details in another colour.
- **Note-taking** — to help prioritize and remember information when taking notes from text, teach the use a 2-column approach. In the first column, have your child ask themselves questions about the text and put the answers in the second column.
- **Self-Monitoring and Self-Checking** — to help your child check their work, provide explicit checklists for assignments, so they know what to check for, and help them develop personalized checklists, so they become aware of and check for their most common errors.

Article from: <https://www.ldathome.ca/what-are-lds/executive-function-and-lds/>

Are you an adult with a LD? Have you thought about Disclosing your LD in the Workplace?

Article by James A. Cincotta, MA Ed

Disclosure refers to telling a supervisor, co-worker or others about your learning disability. Disclosure is one of the most difficult decisions you can make. It's a personal decision that requires a lot of thought and planning. You need to carefully plan how you wish to disclose and think about the possible implications this action has for everyone involved.

Reasons Why Adults with LD Keep It To Themselves.

- May not know much about their LD and how it affects them at work
- Had an unpleasant experience in the past, and do not want to repeat that experience
- Fear that disclosing will lead to prejudice, discrimination or rejection
- May think that a LD will be seen as a weakness
- Feel they should not disclose their LD unless it is absolutely necessary. They prefer to work around the problems.
- Do not know when or how to disclose their LD .

Some Reasons Why you Might Decide to Disclose:

- Because the requirements of your job have changed due to organizational growth, restructuring or technological changes, and you can no longer “hide” your learning disability
- Because clear-cut issues have arisen that allow your supervisor to gain a better understanding of your situation
- Because you want to explain why you have not always met expectations or requirements of the job.

Some Situations When You Might Decide to Disclose

- Before a job interview, or before you accept a job or a promotion so you can discuss the accommodations you require
- During a job evaluation
- When your LD begins to hamper your work performance

- At other times, when you think your employer and/or co-workers are receptive to your disclosure.

When Not to Disclose

- When companies recruit people with LD but lack a supportive environment allowing people with LD to excel.
- When you believe that a person or the company will use the information to prevent your success
- When you feel that people will make you feel bad about your LD
- When you are at a job interview, because there is a risk of not being selected for the job due to your LD or the focus is put on your LD, not your skills

To Whom Do You Disclose?...

To read the remainder of this article, click here: <http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadhd/articles/about-lds/disclosure-in-the-workplace/>

Courses for Adults with LDs

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) offers two different online courses for adults: one on Learning Styles and another on Self-Advocacy. Courses are only \$25 each.

The units on the Learning Styles course include:

- What Are Learning Styles?
- What's Your Learning Style?
- Strengthening Alternative Ways of Learning, and more.

Units of the Self-Advocacy course include:

- About Self-Advocacy
- Disclosure in the Workplace
- Strategies to Help Adults with LDs, and more.

To learn more about these courses, or to register, click here: <http://www.ldao.ca/ldao-services/workshops-courses/adult-workshop-series-learning-styles-for-adults/>

Guelph Storm - Help Us Fundraise!

**Tickets are \$17.50 each
(reg. adult price \$26)**

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.



\$1 from each ticket will be donated to the United Way.

Game dates are:

Sunday, November 26, 2:00 PM – Guelph vs. Barrie Colts

Saturday, December 16, 4:00 PM – Guelph vs. Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds

Thursday, December 28, 7:00 PM – Guelph vs. Peterborough Petes

Friday, January 5, 7:30 PM – Guelph vs. Owen Sound Attack

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

Upcoming LDAWC Workshops

ADHD and Mental Health – Nov. 29, 7-9 PM



About our Workshop:

ADHD can be a difficult thing to understand. There are four main differences in someone with an “ADHD brain”. Join speaker Lauren Stein, who has ADHD herself, learn more about ADHD, and find strategies and accommodations that are a good fit for your child or client. Also learn how anxiety and depression, two mental health conditions, are often linked with ADHD, and ways to address them. Come with lots

of questions together help de-stigmatize and find strategies for ADHD and Mental Health.

About our Speaker:

Lauren Stein MA specializes in ADHD & Asperger's and has a Master's degree in Expressive Arts Therapy from the European Graduate School in Switzerland, as well as many certifications in a variety of therapeutic modalities. She was diagnosed with ADHD herself in grade 4, with an additional unofficial diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome in adulthood, and is grateful to her conditions for her endless creativity, silly sense of humour, and... she forgets what else. Implementing her background in improv theatre, she has been working with ImprovAbility to deliver Social Improv workshops to teens and young adults with autism. Laura works at the Guelph ADHD and Asperger's Centre.

Register Here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-adhd-and-mental-health-tickets-35925206259> or find a registration link on our homepage at www.ldawc.ca. \$15 for non-members; \$10 for members

ReadABILITY – Literacy Strategies for Parents – December 7th**About our Workshop:**

Reading and literacy are two aspects of school that children with LDs often struggle with. Finding strategies to help your children can often be daunting. Our workshop's focus will be on understanding the foundational skills of reading (phonological awareness), and how parents can informally build these skills at home. The workshop will be interactive and discussion is a key component. So come with lots of questions about literacy and plan for an evening of learning!

About our Speaker:

Susan Slack Miller is an educator with over 24 years of experience supporting students with special needs (specifically, students with learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, ASD.) In addition to a Master of Science degree and Specialist qualifications in Special Education, Susan taught at a Provincial Demonstration school, instructing students with profound learning disabilities and providing professional development to provincial educators. Most recently, Susan has her own company, Halton Educational Services, providing direct instruction, advocacy and professional development.

When & Where: Thurs, December 7, 7-9 PM; Community Living Guelph; \$15 or \$10 for members

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-readability-literacy-strategies-for-parents-tickets-38880102433> or find a registration link on our homepage at www.ldawc.ca.

January's FREE Peer Support Network

About our Peer Support Network:

The LDAWC peer support network's goal is to provide an informal setting to share experiences, challenges, successes and resources. Living, learning and/or working with a LD, or supporting a family member with LD, has its ups and downs. Come learn from others.

Benefits are:

- Learning about relevant resources, supports and strategies
- Insights into what has and hasn't worked for parents and families
- Learning you and your student aren't alone through shared ideas and experiences
- Reduced stigma and stress



About our Facilitator:

Gabriele Wright is a parent member of the LDAWC Board, and has learned a few key things about LDs from the ground up. From early primary to high school, Gabriele has found that not only reading about her daughter's LD ...but talking with and learning from others was beneficial. As her family is now working on passing the (self-advocacy) torch to their daughter, it's still beneficial to share experiences and resources with others through informal peer networks.

When and Where: Wednesday, January 24, 7-9 PM; RLB LLP; 103 – 197 Hanlon Creek Blvd., Guelph

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/januarys-ldawc-peer-support-network-tickets-38681591682> or at our homepage: www.ldawc.ca

Other Community Events

Workshop at LDA Peel Region

Strategies and Techniques – Reading & Language Disabilities

Presented by C.A.R.E. – Centre for Assessment and Remedial Education

Tuesday, November 21st, 7:00 PM

Mississauga Central Library – Classroom 1

This workshop will cover effective intervention strategies using the Orton –Gillingham approach for those living with a reading and/or language disability.

Positive Parenting Seminars at K-W Counselling

Children and Stress (Free)

Children get stressed, too! Whether it is busy schedules, feeling unable to meet expectations, conflict in relationships, daily worries, or any other challenge, our kids can be affected by stress in the same way we are. This workshop will help you identify signs that your child is feeling stressed and give you strategies to help your child deal positively with stress.

When: Wednesday, November 8, 2017; 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School - 50 Saginaw Parkway, Cambridge

Children and Anxiety (Free)

As parents, we expect that our children will experience fear or anxiety from time to time. Sometimes, though, childhood fears and anxieties are bigger than we expect and leave us at a loss for how to respond. This workshop will help you understand what to do when your child is experiencing fear or anxiety, and how you can help your child to develop skills for understanding and managing these.

When: Thursday, December 14, 2017; 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Where: Doon Pioneer Park Community Centre - 150 Pioneer Drive, Kitchener

SickKids Hospital Research Study

Families needed for SickKids research study on the genetics of reading disabilities

Who can apply?

Children aged 6 to 16 who struggle with reading, and their parents

What's involved?

1. Eligibility screening
2. Eligible families come to SickKids hospital in Toronto for one full day of study participation, involving the following:
 - Psycho-educational assessment for the child
 - Parent interviews and questionnaires
 - Blood sample from child and parents
3. Following participation, families will receive a detailed report describing the results of their child's psycho-educational assessment, which may be helpful with educational planning

How do I apply?

Contact Kirsten Blokland, PhD:

kirsten.blokland@sickkids.ca or (416) 813-8207

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM



ldao • Learning Disabilities
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