



# LD Connections Newsletter

## March 2017

### Learning Disabilities and Teens

The recent warm weather has been a welcome break to the winter cold. It is a strong reminder that spring is just around the corner.

March welcomes a break for our children and teens from the busyness and stress of school. Often our newsletter focuses on children in elementary school and how parents can support their little ones with LDs. This month we have focused on the next step of the journey and included articles and resources focused on teens with LDs.

Our Reading Rocks program is in full swing and students have shared their excitement to attend

twice a week and work with their student volunteer to continue to make progress with their reading ability. We are very excited to see the results of our assessments at the end of this 8 week program and fully understand the impact this program has had.

We would also like to thank everyone who purchased Storm tickets to help us reach our goal. We appreciate your support.



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## Expectations: A Delicate Balance

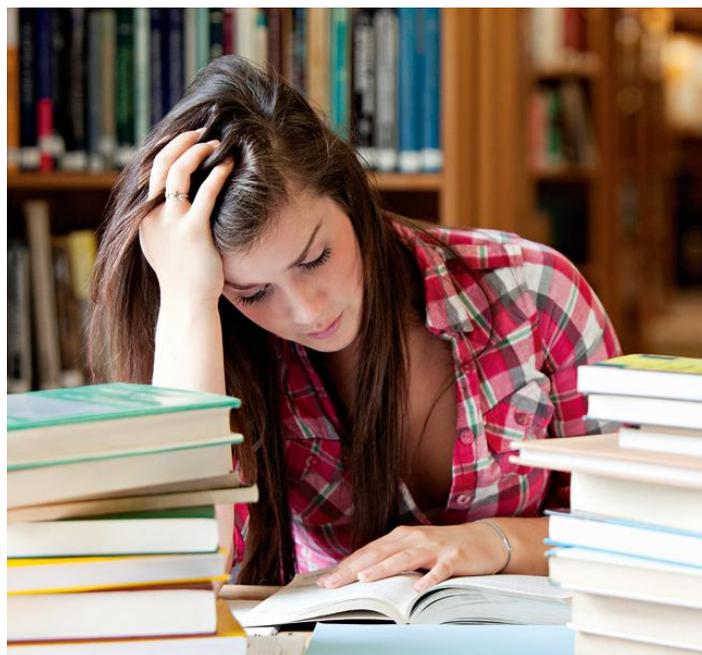
<http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadhd/articles/about-parenting/expectations-a-delicate-balance/>

Parents of teenagers with learning disabilities are frequently plagued by the question of how many expectations to place upon their sons and daughters. How much is it reasonable to expect? This can be very confusing, especially since learning disabilities are so often 'invisible.' On the one hand, adolescence is an age when teenagers are expected to take on more initiative, responsibility and independence. Typically, this is evident in areas such as school work, hygiene and contact with peers. On the other hand, these parents know that, in spite of their chronological ages, their sons or daughters are not equipped to take the initiative, act responsibly or be independent in a consistent or reliable fashion. Many parents recognize that if their children are left to learn from their 'mistakes' or 'failures,' what they will likely learn is that they are 'failures.' Consequently, parents realize that their children need help in order to have successful experiences and build confidence.

A puzzling factor in all of this is that teenagers with learning disabilities often appear to be, and are, quite capable in some areas. This may lead to the false conclusion that when these teenagers don't act capably or responsibly, this is primarily due to a lack of motivation. Adding to this predicament are pressures that come from the adolescents

themselves and from society. Although they may not have taken on the responsibilities of adolescence, the teenagers don't hesitate to ask for the rights and privileges of adolescence. This understandably frustrates their parents.

The 'invisibility' of learning disabilities may lead other interested and well-intentioned adults (for example, relatives, friends, teachers and other professionals) to caution parents that if they do not insist on their sons or daughters becoming more responsible for their actions, they will be encouraging dependency. The message is clear: if the parents continue to 'do' for their teenage children, they will not be helping them develop into well-functioning adults. It is important to place this dilemma in the context of our society in which independence and autonomy are considered signs of good health. Recently, some groups have criticized this basic belief because it is not found in all cultures and societies. But, if a teenager is not able to assume independence and all that goes with it in our society's expected way and time frame, the



child and his/her parents may face significant negative judgments.

All of this may serve to deflate and shake the confidence of parents. They may feel frustrated, inadequate and guilty when they provide assistance to their teenage sons and daughters; angry at their sons or daughters for not being more independent or autonomous; and confused when they can't sort out this issue. An additional pressure relates to parents' natural desire to decrease their parental responsibilities as their children grow up. This is a developmental stage for parents that typically coincides with the adolescent stage.

Due to the nature of learning disabilities and individual differences, these teenagers often need considerable support to accomplish certain tasks and to reach developmental milestones. Their parents can, with good will, feel free to lend a hand. This must be coupled with encouragement and expectations which will contribute to the teenager assuming greater responsibility. This is a difficult, delicate and worthwhile balance to determine.



## Friendship Struggles of Teens with Learning Disabilities

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-friendship-doctor/201304/friendship-struggles-teens-learning-disabilities>

Dear Dr. Levine,

My 16-year-old daughter has learning disabilities. Most people don't notice this until they really start talking to her. She grew up in a closely-knit neighborhood and she had the same friends since preschool.

As she has gotten older, the differences have become more apparent and her friends began to spend less and less time with her. She has a difficult time finding anyone to hang out with on the weekend and is really upset by this and can't understand why.

Her very best friend has completely cut her out since eighth grade and will not even return her texts. She has made a few new friends in high school but they don't seem to have a lot of time for her outside of school either. None of these girls are mean to her; they just don't call her up or make plans with her.

I don't know how to help her out. She babysits in the neighborhood all the time and all the parents rave about how wonderful she is. She is really a lovely girl, dresses and looks the same as the other girls, but she has a sweet naiveté about her that doesn't seem to mesh with the other teens. I think she has trouble keeping up with their conversations, inside jokes etc.

How can I help her out with this? I am heartbroken watching her feel heartbroken. I would really appreciate your advice.

Signed, Heartbroken Mom

## ANSWER

Dear Heartbroken Mom,

It is not uncommon for teens with learning disabilities to have problems making and keeping friends. Of course, the nature of these problems varies widely depending on the individuals and their disabilities.

For example, teens with learning disabilities are more likely to lack self-confidence—or may have a hard time reading social cues, such as knowing when to speak and when to listen.

Given that I don't know your daughter's precise situation, here are a few thoughts:

1) Teens have a hard time accepting people who are different, with or without learning disabilities. It is also natural that friendships change as children enter adolescence. Bear in mind, as long as your daughter has one or two friends in high school, she doesn't necessarily need to be "popular" or have a circle of friends.

2) Be a good listener. It sounds like you are very sensitive to your daughter's feelings; continue to allow her to vent her problems and frustrations.

3) Apropos of these conversations and your own observations, can you identify the specific social deficits that seem to interfere with her friendships?

If so, you can role-play and coach her so she can learn new skills.

4) To help nurture after-school and/or weekend friendships, are there any areas (e.g. in sports, arts of crafts, theater) in which your daughter excels? If so, encourage her participation in some planned activity or non-academic class so she has opportunities to meet new friends in a small setting.

5) If you aren't sure what is interfering with your daughter's friendships, if she seems depressed, or if you don't feel comfortable addressing these problems on your own, you might want to speak to a counselor who specializes in learning disabilities. Such an individual can work with you and your daughter to assess her specific deficits and identify strategies to overcome them.

6) Finally, although you might feel like you are the only one with this problem right now, you are not alone. It might be helpful to find a family support group in your community with other parents who are struggling with similar problems. The guidance counselor at school may be able to help you find such a resource.

Hope this is helpful. It sounds like your daughter has so many nice qualities that these high school years may turn out to be the worst.

Best regards, Irene





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

**Join us for our Peer Support Network sessions.  
Rotating topics and open forum.**



**When: Wednesday's @ 7:00pm**

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**April 26<sup>th</sup>**

**May 24<sup>th</sup>**

**June 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Come when you can by registration is required**

**Where: RLB Guelph, 197 Hanlon Creek Blvd Unit 103**

If you're interested in attending, please register by email at [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca) or by calling 519-837-2050



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# If your teen has a learning disability, self-awareness and self-advocacy are keys to her future success.

by: *GreatSchools Staff* | October 14, 2016

<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/self-advocacy-teenager-with-ld/>

The ability to self-advocate is important for kids to learn in order to be successful at all stages of their lives. In the past, self-advocacy was a term applied mostly to adults with disabilities, but recently more focus has been placed on teaching this skill to preteens and teenagers.

**Self-advocacy is understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others.** Because your child lives with his learning struggles on a daily basis, he must learn how to maneuver through life's challenges and obstacles to make sure his needs are met.

Until now, you've been your child's best advocate — protecting him from life's harsh realities. But the earlier you teach him to advocate for himself, the more prepared he'll be for life ahead — no matter what path he takes after high school. Whether in the workplace or on a college campus, your child must understand his strengths and limitations, know how they affect his performance, and be able to communicate this to other people.

## Tips for developing self-advocacy skills

### Understanding his learning problems

Young people say they need to understand how they learn and be able to express this information in "plain English." Your teenager must be aware of his strengths and needs in the learning process, strategies that help him succeed, accommodations that bypass limitations, and the type of environment that facilitates learning. To gather this information, he should review assessment results with the specialists who tested him; talk to his teachers and/or tutors; and reflect on his own learning challenges, successes, and preferences.

### Practicing communication

A key component of self-advocacy is knowing how to communicate this self-knowledge about the learning process to others. Your child must be clear in his requests and prepared with explanations. The manner in which he communicates can either get others on his side or push them away. To many, what he's asking for may be new. Your teenager may need your help preparing ahead of time, planning what he will say, and making notes to take with him. Role playing is a great way to practice communication skills. By helping him anticipate different situations, you can raise his level of confidence.



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## Identifying supporters

It's important to help your child identify his support system early on. Whom does he trust and feel comfortable talking to — parent, relative, teacher, administrator, counselor, mentor, tutor? He needs to have people he can turn to for help, especially once he leaves home. This way he won't have to feel alone as he navigates through life.

## Meeting with teachers

High school is a great place to begin practicing communication with teachers and other school staff. Encourage your child to set up conferences with his teachers. This gives him an opportunity to discuss what's going well and what isn't, to get feedback, and to work out a plan to do better. After all, once he leaves high school and enters the workplace or college, he'll have to do this for himself. You won't be able to call his professor or boss; you have to pass on the advocacy baton.

## Knowing his rights (references are U.S. laws but similar laws exist in Canada)

If your child has been formally identified with a learning disability (LD) or diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), he may be protected under federal law. Your teenager should learn whether he is covered under any of these laws and, if so, what his entitlements may be.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an education law guaranteeing special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a disability in programs that receive federal monies.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and accommodations.

If he's eligible under any of these laws, your child has certain rights and responsibilities. A child with a learning disability who has an IEP and receives special education services is protected under IDEA until he graduates from high school with a diploma. Section 504 and ADA may protect him in college by providing "reasonable accommodations." In the world of work, an adult with a disability is most likely protected under ADA.

## Participating actively

A great way for a teenager to build self-advocacy skills is for him to attend and participate in meetings to develop his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. He'll learn how the school plans to help him succeed and hear the reasons behind their recommendations. These meetings give him an opportunity to share his own goals and have them included. With you present, these meetings can be a safe testing ground for discussing his strengths, interests, talents, and needs with school staff.

## Preparing for the Future

By age 16 (if not before), a child who receives special education services will be invited to attend his IEP meeting to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). He'll have an opportunity to express his future interests and goals. The transition plan is designed to help him move smoothly from high school to his next adventure — whether that's work, college, or another area of interest — and may include making connections with other community agencies and representatives or gathering tools to plan for college.

## Educating others

Throughout high school and beyond, your child will face many situations where he'll be required to educate others about his learning disability. Peers will ask questions about his "special attention" at school. Teachers unfamiliar with his needs must be taught more about how he learns. On the job, he may require a specific work-related accommodation. At times, these situations may feel uncomfortable for your child. But the more self-knowledge he has, the better he'll be at advocating for himself.

## Ongoing evaluation

By empowering your teenager to self-advocate, you'll help him develop skills necessary for success in learning and life. Encourage him to take time regularly to reflect on what's going well for him and what isn't. Making a list of "positives" on the left side of the paper and "improvables" on the right side can help him put things in perspective. If something isn't going right, he can decide what action to take next. After all, self-evaluation often is where the greatest learning takes place.

### How can I get free money for my kids?

#### Get the Canada Learning Bond!

This is a Government of Canada program that provides **\$500** in education money to children born on or after January 1, 2004 whose families receive the National Child Benefit Supplement. And, the Government will add **\$100 more every year** your child is eligible, up to age 15. Your child could get up to \$2,000.

### What do I need to do to get the Canada Learning Bond?

- 1** Visit a Service Canada Office to get your child a Social Insurance Number (SIN).
- 2** Start a Registered Education Savings account (RESP) that is right for you. Make sure the provider you choose signs you up for the Canada Learning Bond. Visit [SmartSAVER.org](http://SmartSAVER.org) for our list of no-cost, no-risk plans.
- 3** Grow your child's savings. Even if you can't contribute, the Government will deposit the Canada Learning Bond in your account.

### Canada Learning Bond Facts

- All eligible children receive at least \$500
- No family contribution is required to start an RESP or to receive the Bond
- If you do make a contribution, the Government's Canada Education Savings Grant will add up to 40% more
- Some RESP providers charge fees. Visit [SmartSAVER.org](http://SmartSAVER.org) for our list of no-cost, no-risk plans.
- Act now and you can get your additional Learning Bond payments. When you apply you will receive \$500 plus \$100 for every year your child was eligible

#### What's the catch?

The Canada Learning Bond can only be used for your child's education after high school or later on. Your child has up to 36 years to use it. The Canada Learning Bond can be used for part-time or full-time studies at college, university or other qualifying schools in Canada or outside the country.

SmartSAVER

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

with help from Canada



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

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

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## **Upcoming Workshops- Winter/Spring 2017**

### **March 27<sup>th</sup> 2017- You and Your School- Building Healthy Relationships**

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships is a huge bonus when working with your child's school, come and learn some new skills around supporting this process!

Fergus Sportsplex 550 Belsyde Avenue East- 10:00am- 12:00pm

### **April 12<sup>th</sup> 2017- Success Today! Simple Interventions to Allow Children to Succeed**

With so much technology available come and learn what may be the best intervention for your child, and how you can best support their success.

Community Living Guelph 8 Royal Road- 7:00pm-9:00pm

### **May 31<sup>st</sup> 2017- Transitions to Secondary and the IEP process**

Navigating the IEP process sometimes raises questions, come and learn how this process may look different as your child enters secondary school.

Community Living Guelph 8 Royal Road- 7:00pm-9:00pm

### **June 14<sup>th</sup> 2017- Supporting Summer Learning through Tutoring**

Schools almost out but children still need some support over those summer months, come and learn how to support your child and keep them engaged during those summer months.

Fergus Sportsplex 550 Belsyde Avenue East- 10:00am- 12:00pm

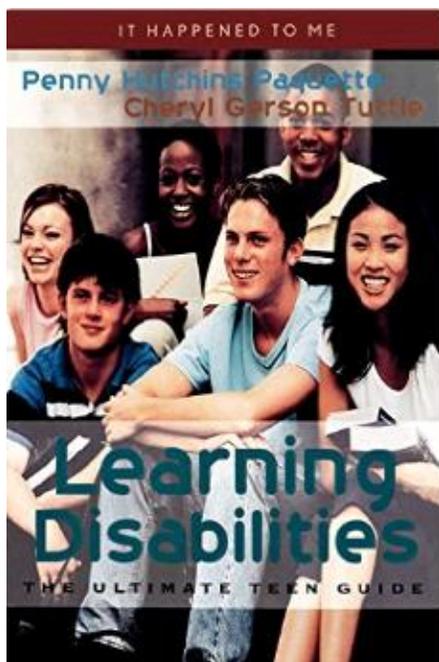
*\*Fees for our workshops are \$10 for members of LDAO and \$15 for non-members, to register as a member please refer to page 15 of this newsletter.*



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## Learning Disabilities: The Ultimate Teen Guide

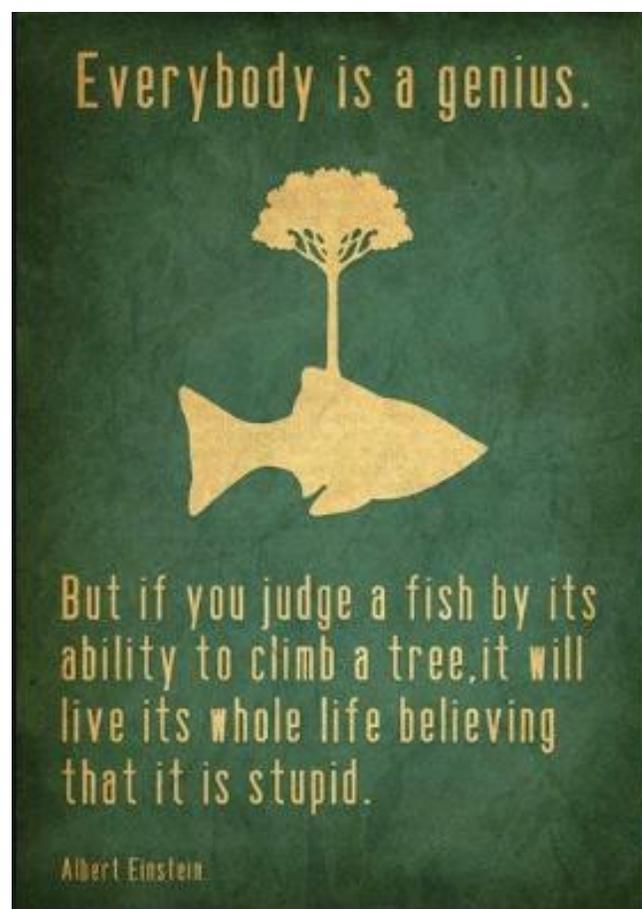
[https://www.amazon.ca/Learning-Disabilities-Ultimate-Teen-Guide/dp/0810842610/ref=tmm\\_hrd\\_swatch\\_0?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.ca/Learning-Disabilities-Ultimate-Teen-Guide/dp/0810842610/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)



Exclusively written for teenagers and young adults dealing with a wide variety of learning disabilities including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia, and dyslexia this accessible

resource offers the tools for taking a proactive role in identifying, understanding and overcoming the obstacles facing teens with learning disabilities. Learning Disabilities provides a clear and informative overview of the most common disabilities. Appealing to teenagers with its easy-to-read format and positive tips for success, the book also teaches students how to advocate for themselves, informing them of their rights under law both during the school years and after high school graduation. Assistive technology that can help students improve their learning abilities such as Optical Character Recognition (OCR) systems, screen reading software, books on tape, electronic notebooks, and other tools that aid student learning

are covered. The most recent research on brain structure and function, and the role they play in learning disabilities is presented, as well as a step-by-step guide to test reports, so that teens can understand how their disabilities are diagnosed. Gathering information from students, high school guidance counselors, and from medical and other professionals, authors Paquette and Tuttle also show teens they are not alone in their struggles, profiling famous people that also have learning disabilities



## Useful Links

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

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

People for Education

<http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/profile/child-advocacy-project-cap/>

LDA Ontario

<http://www.ldao.ca>

Special Needs Ontario Window (SNOW)

[www.snow.idrc.ocad.ca](http://www.snow.idrc.ocad.ca)

Totally ADD

<http://totallyadd.com/>

The We All Learn Differently Organization

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

Learning Potentials

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

Family Anatomy

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

## Contact us

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Email address: info@ldawc.ca

Website: www.ldawc.ca

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



*You can also find us on Twitter!*

*@lda\_wellington*



## Events

See page 12 for LDAWC's current events. Upcoming events for other organizations are listed below:



Workshop: "Executive Functioning Strategies"

LDA Milton

**March 29 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Free**

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/workshop-executive-functioning-strategies-milton/>

Workshop: "Surviving After School Homework at Home- Strategies and Tactics"

LDA Burlington

**April 25 @ 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Free**

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/workshop-surviving-after-school-homework-at-home-strategies-and-tactics-burlington/>

Parent Tool Kit Workshop: "Organizing the Disorganized Learner"

LDA Oakville

**May 17 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Free**

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/parent-tool-kit-workshop-organizing-the-disorganized-learner-oakville/>

Workshop: "Investigating ADHD"

LDA Hamilton

**June 14 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Free**

<http://www.ldao.ca/event/workshop-investigating-adhd-hamilton/>

LDAWC Family Conference

Guelph

**October 21, 2017**

Watch your email and [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca) for further details.

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



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