



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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LDAWC News!

This last month has been a busy yet rewarding one for us at LDAWC. On May 16, we held a Mental Health and LDs workshop, with speakers Rose Freigang and Linda DiNardo of Insight Psychology on Norfolk. One of the messages of the evening was that if your child is experiencing stress or symptoms of mental health conditions, always look to see if overall health is in place first. For example, is s/he sleeping well? Eating balanced meals? Getting enough exercise? Does s/he have down time to relax? And of course, seek help when needed.

We also had a very successful Peer Support Network meeting on May 23 with 9 parents in attendance. It was an evening where parents could share similar stories, share advice and also just have a place to get issues of their chest. Thank you to all the parents who made this a great evening.

We also have been working on a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant application that, if approved, will go towards funding our 4th Annual Family Conference on Saturday, October 20. We're super excited to be bringing in a high profile speaker who will be delivering important messaging to any parent who has a struggling student. Keep reading to find out who our keynote speaker is!

If you happen to be at the Fergus Sportsplex, check out our new rink board sign! We're hoping that some new families learn about LDAWC and access our supports.



Our new rink board sign at Fergus Sportsplex

Articles – LDs and ADHD

6 Ways to Avoid Summer Trouble Spots for Tweens and Teens With Learning and Attention Issues

By Lexi Walters Wright



When school is out, tweens and teens may have to adjust to new experiences and expectations. Parenting Coach (www.understood.org/en/tools/parenting-coach) has tips for helping with social, emotional and behavioural challenges. Check out these strategies for common summertime trouble spots.

1 - Too Much Screen Time

Problem: Since school let out, your child is never without his phone in his hand! He's endlessly texting or watching videos, and just can't tear himself away from it.

What you can do: Be a technology role model. At the pool, let your child see you reading a book. On vacation, encourage him to help you put together a thousand-piece puzzle. If you need to, consider creating a social media "bank" to help manage the amount of time he spends online. Summer is also a good time to remind your child to do some social media pruning.

2 - Long Lonely Days

Problem: Your child's closest friend is gone for the summer, and he has trouble making new friends.

What you can do: Use hobbies to find kids who share your child's interests. Role-play how he might start a conversation, and consider looking up which summer movies are coming out soon and

other pop-culture news that could help him take part in group discussions. It may also help to talk about fears of social rejection. But aim for empathy—share stories about how you’ve dealt with your own fears about this.

3 - Stressful Summer Job

Problem: Your child’s summer job is harder than he expected—and doesn’t leave much time for having fun.

What you can do: Brainstorm ways to make the job situation better. Use role-play to prepare to talk with his supervisor and coworkers. Work together on time management. Look for ways to help your child prioritize. Suggest making a list of all the things he *needs* to do and in which order they need to be done. Then help him come up with a schedule to stay on track so he can also get done the things he *wants* to do.

4 - Late Nights

Problem: Your child complains constantly that his friends get to stay out later than he does. He seems to find all the house rules “unfair” and can’t let the subject drop.

What you can do: Let your child help set his curfew. Negotiate—and compromise! Kids with learning and attention issues who get to weigh in on rules are more likely to follow them. Helping make these kinds of decisions can also have a positive impact on your child’s self-esteem. Be clear about the rules and consequences for breaking them. Write them down so your child can review them.

5 - Anxiety About Camp

Problem: Your child is anxious about fitting in at sleepaway camp. But when you ask why, he replies, “I don’t know. I just am.”

What you can do: Give your child the lay of the land. Go over schedules and maps. Talk through what he’ll experience in as much detail as you can. Also, if your child is allowed to take a cell phone to camp, set specific days and times to talk. As you’re setting these limits, remind him that everyone feels nervous in the beginning and that calling home sometimes makes kids feel even *more* homesick.

6 - Risky Behaviour

Problem: Your child has started hanging around kids you don’t know very well. A parent in the neighbourhood has warned you they’ve been caught drinking before.

What you can do: Talk openly with your child about risky behaviour. Instead of setting ultimatums or using scare tactics, try to connect what he does now to how it might affect his future. This can help him feel more accountable for his decisions. Help him set reasonable limits, work together on

predicting what might happen in social situations, and use role-play to come up with ways to deal with peer pressure.

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childrens-challenges/simple-changes-at-home/6-ways-to-avoid-summer-trouble-spots-for-tweens-and-teens-with-learning-and-attention-issues?view=slideview>

Ten Things to Help Your Struggling Reader

By Joshua Jenkins

I am eager for the parents of my students to understand that their children can and will learn to read—that their children have strengths, not just weaknesses.



As a special education teacher who teaches struggling readers with different disabilities, I'm often crafting mental lists of things I wish parents knew about their dyslexic children. Most important, I am eager for the parents of my students to understand that their children can and will learn to read, but it will take time. In the process, it is important to recognize their many strengths and accomplishments in spite of their weaknesses in decoding, spelling or handwriting. I want parents to know that preparing their children to deal with their disability can inspire confidence and enable them to look forward to a proud future in which they understand their disability as well as their strengths, self-advocating for their unique learning style.

1. Notice Your Child's Strengths

Your child has many abilities and strengths. Maybe he can draw beautifully or has an amazing vocabulary. Maybe she has great listening skills or is an incredible athlete and team player. Be sure to notice those talents and tell them you see them excelling at something.

Often, I feel like my students' parents are so consumed by their kids' deficits in reading that they forget the things their children can do well. (Teachers are guilty of this, too.) If your child is artistic, use that talent at home as a way for your child to show understanding of a story you read aloud; draw a picture of the problem in the story or draw the main character. Just because your child has a

word decoding weakness or messy handwriting or poor spelling doesn't mean you can't push him or her to achieve their best through a variety of venues. Allowing, and encouraging, your children to use their strengths will boost their confidence.

2. Celebrate Every Success

Celebrate every success with a good job or a high five. Every single one. Don't rely on report card grades to be the judge of your child's progress. Celebrate his or her reading a singular word correctly. Meet your child on his/her reading level and celebrate the successes at that level. If your child is a beginning or practically a non-reader, celebrate decoding the word "at" or using a picture to solve an unknown word. If your child is beginning to read more fluently, celebrate when they self-correct an error. In my daily small group reading class, I find myself giving praise constantly; it's because I want them to know that I notice their progress and the things they do well. If what we're reading is challenging, a smile and a "good job" can turn the whole lesson around. When I hear parents of my kids fussing at them about grades, I immediately find myself telling the parent about a small, but wonderful, success his/her child had reading or writing that school day. Harassing the students over report card grades isn't going to boost their confidence. Struggling readers need to know what they're doing right, not just their mistakes.

3. Be Honest with Yourself: Set Realistic Goals

A child who is struggling with reading will not get on grade level overnight. You need to be honest with yourself and your child about his or her progress while setting realistic goals.

An easy way to deal with the very, very long road (did I mention it's long?) to on-level reading is to set some very short-term concrete goals. As a teacher who uses a reading-assessment system and leveled books, my goal for students often is to move up a single reading level. At home, you might set a goal even to just practice reading every day. For example, you might suggest that your child read a certain number of leveled, independent books in a month (leveled books are books that your child can read independently or with only a little help), or you might set a goal of reading an interesting chapter book with your child. Make a countdown and cross out each book or chapter, respectively, until you reach your goal.

Remember: you're setting a goal that is achievable for you and your child that will positively affect his/her reading. ***What the goal really does is allow them to see that they're capable of reaching a goal, that they can be successful. You're giving them a chance to develop another strength.***

4. Don't Let Poor Spelling Stop Your Child

If your child has a learning disability, there is a real possibility that he may really struggle with spelling and remembering even very basic word patterns. Here's the secret: *That's okay*. Teach your child to cope. Even if your children can't spell, they still have thoughts and creativity that they need to express. Don't let poor spelling make your child mute. Be sure to acknowledge their good ideas. Encourage them to use a dictionary, spell-check or text-prediction software. Have your children

start their very own personal word dictionary as a tool to use when they write. Talk to your student's teacher. Look into what technology or other strategies there might be to help your child become more successful. There's a lot out there, but you won't find much if you're too busy pointing out that your kid can't spell.

5. Share Your Own Difficulties with Your Kids

Show your child that you still work at things that are hard for you, too. Admitting that you also have things you wrestle with can provide support and help your struggling reader understand that people have different strengths and weaknesses. An anecdote I often share with my frustrated readers is how I have always had terrible hand-to-eye coordination. And as an adult, I even maintain a joke with the people I interact regularly: "Do not throw anything to me or expect me to throw something to you." That's right; I am terrible at nearly every sport. However, I'll always give it a shot, and I try. When I'm on family vacation and it's time for some beach volleyball, you'll find me flailing beside the net or nose-diving into the sand. The moral: kids (and adults) should try things they're not great at, and it is helpful to see role models working on things that don't come easily to them.

When it comes to reading, bear in mind that when something is difficult and doesn't come easy, you generally just flat out don't want to do it! What makes struggling readers even more anxious about reading is the pressure they're getting both at school and at home to learn to read. (This is yet another reason why setting goals and celebrating every small success are so important.) So when they know that you are working on things that are hard for you, it helps take the pressure off them and makes their struggle less lonely.

6. Read Aloud to Your Child. It's Fun and Helpful

Your dyslexic reader can do more . . . if you help. Read to your child every single day. Hearing someone else read has the amazing possibility of sparking creativity and interest and also offers a chance to work on comprehension without the battle of decoding the text. A struggling reader may only be able to read short books with scant interest or depth, which offer little motivation to continue to work on reading. When you read aloud or have a program such as an iPad app that reads books aloud (call it old-fashioned, but a real human reading to children is better), your child has the opportunity to focus on the meaning of the words and content. They develop background knowledge and it allows them to use their imagination. Reading books to your child (or listening to audio books) allows him or her to get into books that his peers are reading and holds interest because they are age-appropriate. The additional bonus to reading with your child? You can offer explanations and further detail when needed.

7. Kids Feel Supported When They See Parents and Teachers Working Together to Help Them

Your child's education is not a private matter that excludes your child. It's the child's education! He or she needs to know what's going on; otherwise, it's a lost opportunity for learning self-advocacy. She's not going to learn anything when you tell her to go somewhere else while you and the teacher tell each other secrets about her. Do your kids a favour and tell them where they stand

academically, what their talents are, what they need help with and the plan for helping them learn. Remember: you, the parents, will have a plan and a goal in mind! Also remember that your child's teacher will have a plan as well. Kids feel supported when they see parents and teachers working together to help them instead of being shuffled off into a corner.

8. Small Steps Can Bring Big Improvements

The list of enrichment activities for boosting language and reading skills could go on and on, but there is one more important thing to remember: *It doesn't need to be complicated*. If your child is just beginning to read or is a very slow reader, go over the alphabet and letter sounds. Break apart short CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words (sit, hat, log and so on), and blend these sounds together (/j/ /o/ /b/; job). For more ideas, see this article, *Developing a Foundation for Reading* (<http://dyslexia.yale.edu/resources/parents/what-parents-can-do/developing-a-foundation-for-reading/>)

If your child is a little more independent, sit with her, help her with hard words as she reads, maybe read aloud a chapter of a fun book to her every night before bed. Talk about what happened in the story, the characters and the setting; what's the problem in the story? Read a nonfiction book and talk about what you all learned from the text.

If your struggling child is older, let her be the teacher and read her books to siblings. Or, in our tech-obsessed culture, teach your child to grab a camera or recorder and record videos or audio notes of herself reading, then follow along with them to check for errors. For more ideas to share with your child, see Tips from Dyslexic Students for Dyslexic Students.

9. It's Okay to Read Slowly

Most dyslexics will be slow readers for life, and that's okay. They have many more talents to offer, and their reading will improve in other ways with proper interventions. If your child is reading below a mid-second grade level, don't worry about fluency or speed. Focus on accuracy, or reading the words correctly, and don't pressure him to read faster. Instead, give him strategies to help him remember what he read, such as writing a sentence or two or drawing a picture of what happened on each page (or in each chapter). Your child is going to live with a learning disability as an adult. Teach him how to deal with it now, so he'll be better able to navigate the world later.

10. Teach Them How to Help Themselves

If your child has been diagnosed with dyslexia, he or she will not outgrow it, but that doesn't mean your child won't learn how to read or be successful. If you teach your child how to cope and deal with his/her disability now, you're doing your child an incredible favour. Teach your children to advocate for themselves. Teach them how to ask for help. Teach them how to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Teach them about available resources and how to ensure they receive the accommodations they need for success. If you teach your children to do this at school, they're going to go into the world feeling confident and expecting success; they'll know how they fit in and

what they need to do to keep up. And that's worth more than being able to read 180 words per minute.

Source: <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/resources/parents/what-parents-can-do/the-a-to-z-of-teaching-beginning-reading/>

13 Tips for Getting More Sleep

By Lexi Walters Wright



Sleep helps our ability to think critically, retain information, manage emotions, control behaviours and stay healthy. How can you and your child get more of the sleep you need? Here are some tips for better sleep.

1 – Know your number.

Before you start adjusting your nightly routine, it helps to know how many hours of rest to aim for. Here's how much sleep most people need at different ages:

- Infants: 9-10 hours at night, plus three or more hours of naps
- Toddlers: 9-10 hours at night, plus 2-3 hours of naps
- School-age children: 9-11 hours
- Adults: 7-8 hours

2 – Break a sweat.

Daytime exercise can help children and adults fall asleep more easily at night. When possible, encourage bike rides, long walks, karate lessons or exercise classes right after school or on weekend mornings or afternoons. That way, they'll be less likely to interfere with bedtime wind-down.

3 – Get outside.

During the day, aim for at least 30 minutes of exposure to sunlight. You might walk the dog with your child or bike together to the store. If possible, try to get an hour of bright morning sunlight. This can help regulate sleep patterns. At night, turn down the lights before bedtime.

4 – De-stress with relaxing activities.

One of the best ways to keep stress at bay is to do more of the things that keep you calm. Laughing with friends, exercising, listening to music, practicing yoga, meditating, journaling, organizing your personal space—you name it. Assess what works for you and your child.

5 – Watch your diet.

What your family eats can affect your sleep. Try to avoid heavy or spicy foods four hours before bedtime and caffeine four to six hours before bedtime. If you're still hungry after dinner, consider eating a light night-time snack within two hours of bedtime.

6 – Develop a knack for naps.

Napping can be a relaxing way to improve your and your child's mood, alertness and mental performance. But napping for too long or too late in the day can lead to grogginess or trouble falling asleep at night. It's best to take naps that are:

- In the mid-afternoon (2–3pm)
- 10 – 30 minutes long
- In a dark, quiet, distraction-free space
- Followed by a period of gradual wake-up

7 – Set a schedule.

All children can benefit from having parents take the guesswork out of their daily routines. This is even more important for kids with learning and attention issues. Choose a bedtime and wake-up time for each member of the family. Stick to it as best you can—even on weekends and holidays.

8 – Create a sleep routine.

Many families abandon the nightly bath-books-bed sequence when children grow out of toddlerhood. But there's much to be said for these nightly pre-sleep rituals. They help you wind

down, no matter your age. (In fact, people who take hot baths before bed actually have an easier time falling asleep.)

9 – Eliminate electronics at night.

TVs, cell phones, computers and other electronic devices can sabotage sleep. The light from these electronics might disrupt the production of a hormone (melatonin) that governs sleep and wakefulness. Being constantly available to friends who want to text, chat or email doesn't help either. Before bedtime, move electronics to a central location to charge, like the kitchen or hallway.

10 – Get cozy.

Is the bed comfy? Is the room cool enough? Do your child's pajamas fit well, without any irritations? A comfortable bedtime setup encourages sound sleep.

11 – Treat the senses.

Scents like lavender and chamomile are proven sleep-inducers. Try a pillow spray or scented body lotion. Light music, nature sounds or white-noise machines can block intrusive sounds and lull the body to sleep. Consider earplugs if noise is really bothersome.

12 – Create contingency plans.

There's nothing less relaxing than worrying about falling asleep. Still not able to fall asleep after 15 minutes of lying quietly? Try getting out of bed and doing something quiet and peaceful—like reading or listening to light music—until you feel sleepy. (Help your child figure out what activities those might be.)

13 – Seek help.

If you or your child consistently has trouble sleeping, you might want to talk to your doctor. Be sure to discuss all medications you're taking. If your child is taking a stimulant to help with attention issues, that medication could cause sleeping problems. Ask your child's doctor about taking the medicine earlier in the day or switching to a shorter-acting formulation.

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childrens-challenges/simple-changes-at-home/13-tips-for-getting-more-sleep?view=slideview>

Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops

4th Annual LDAWC Family Conference

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, October 20, 2018

**St. James Catholic High School,
Guelph**



This event is intended for parents and caregivers of children with learning disabilities. The focus is providing parents with tools and strategies to aid them in supporting their children.

The day will include a keynote speaker and choice of break-out sessions lead by inspiring professional speakers.

We are thrilled to announce that this year's speaker is Dr. Peg Dawson, internationally acclaimed psychologist and co-author of the 'Smart but Scattered' series. Her keynote address is *Beyond "Lazy and Unmotivated" – Why Parents and Teachers Need to Know about Executive Skills*. Learn more about Peg at www.smartbutscatteredkids.com

Registration is FREE and will open shortly.

Watch your email or get updates on our website at www.ldawc.ca

Other Community Events

LDA Peel Region

“Introduction to Executive Functioning and Emotional Regulation”

Presented by Integra

Monday, June 18, 7 PM

Chinguacousy Library, Brampton

Cost: FREE

Register: Lilia at (905) 272-4100 x 203 or lmastrocola@ldapr.ca

This workshop provides participants with an understanding of the nature of executive functioning (higher order thinking skills including organization and problem solving) for youth with LDs and/or ADHD. Practical strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills and self-regulation in youth will be shared.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM



**Idao • Learning Disabilities
Association of Ontario**

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Date: _____

Name: _____ Member #: _____ Chapter #: _____

Address: _____

City/Province/Postal Code: _____

Email address: _____

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

Type of Yearly Membership (please check one)

Family/Individual ☐ \$50.00 Professional ☐ \$75.00
Institutional ☐ \$125.00 Student ☐ \$20.00 (ID # Required) _____

Type of Payment

☐ Cash (only if paying in person) ☐ Cheque ☐ Money Order ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card
Card # _____ Expiry Date: _____

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

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

Benefits of Membership for all members:

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

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

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

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

LDAO Membership Coordinator
365 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
Phone: 416-929-4311, Fax 416-929-3905



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