

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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#### In our August 2018 Issue:

LDAWC News - 1-2

Articles – LDs and ADHD
Good Stress vs. Bad Stress in Kids with
Learning and Attention Issues – 2-5
A Teacher's Journey with Student SelfAdvocacy – 5-8

Assistive Technology That's Built into Mobile Devices – 8-11

*Upcoming LDAWC events*Family Conference – 12
Sept. IEP 101 – 13

Sept. Peer Support Network – 14

Nov. The Myth of IQ – 15

Dec. Non-Medication & Medication

Interventions for ADHD – 16

LDAO Membership Application – 17

### **LDAWC News**

It's hard to believe we're half way through the summer. With just over a month until school starts up again, we have some exciting events and programs in place to help support families and children.

Registration for our family conference opened last week. We're delighted that this is our fourth annual conference, and even more thrilled to be offering such an incredible keynote speaker. Dr. Peg Dawson's expertise is executive functioning skills – which is a skill set that most kids with exceptionalities have deficits in. The title of her keynote address is Beyond "Lazy and Unmotivated" – Why Parents and Teachers Need to Know about Executive Skills, and this is something you won't want to miss. We also have a broad range of breakout session topics offered in the

afternoon, with inspiring professionals delivering these. If you haven't registered yet, you'll find a registration link later on in this issue.

Our fall workshop lineup is complete, and we're delighted with some of the speakers you'll have access to. Our September 19 workshop features parent advocate Sue Shaw with *IEP 101*. Our November 28 presenter is Dr. Sean Cameron, speaking on *The Myth of IQ*. He'll be covering lots of ground, including myths surrounding learning disabilities, IQ and how students with LDs can reach their full potential. The December 6 workshop features Dr. Alexandre Tavares speaking on *Non-medication and Medication Interventions for ADHD*. And of course, you won't want to miss the *Peer Support Network* on September 26, as this is a great opportunity to meet and brainstorm with likeminded parents. Please keep reading this issue for more details, including registration links.

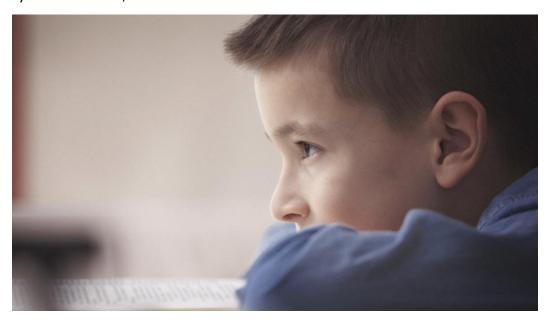
We're thrilled to be offering Reading Rocks again in the fall for children aged 6-12. The next session begins October 1, and runs on Mondays & Wednesdays for 8 weeks, from 6:30 – 7:30 PM at St. James Catholic High School in Guelph. Registration will open mid-August. For details about Reading Rocks, visit our website: <a href="http://www.ldawc.ca/reading-rocks.html">http://www.ldawc.ca/reading-rocks.html</a>

Looking to volunteer? We need approximately 20 volunteer tutors for Reading Rocks. The time commitment is the same as above, plus a 3-hour training session the last week of September. If you're dedicated and want to have a huge impact on a child, we'd love to have you! Please contact Jen Paterson, Resource Coordinator, at (519) 837-2050 or <a href="mailto:info@ldawc.ca">info@ldawc.ca</a>

## **Articles – LDs and ADHD**

# Good Stress vs. Bad Stress in Kids with Learning and Attention Issues

By Jerome Schultz, Ph.D.



#### At a Glance

- Not all stress is bad. There's good stress, too.
- Ongoing challenges and fears can create stress in kids with learning and attention issues.
- Remembering past successes can help your child feel more confident and in control.

When someone says they're stressed, it's usually not a positive thing. But stress isn't always bad. There's good stress, too. And it can help kids with learning and attention issues rise to challenges, resolve problems and build confidence.

Learn about the difference between good and bad stress, and how each can impact your child.





#### Types of Stress: Good, Tolerable and Bad

Nature gave us the ability to spot danger and respond to it. When faced with dangerous situations, our bodies and brains kick into "fight or flight" mode. But we don't like to stay in that state for long. We like to deal with danger quickly so we can feel safe again.

Our body's ability to deal with stress helps us do just that. Our stress response system gets our brain and body ready to solve problems and tackle challenges. And when we overcome the problem, our brain "feels good" and remembers our successes.

**Good stress** happens when we confront a situation we believe we can manage or control. Here's an example:

A child is coasting down a hill on a bike with just one hand on the handlebars. When she sees a pothole up ahead, she feels stress and instinctively puts her other hand on the bars.

In less than a second, her brain goes in to survival mode. It tells her heart to pump blood to her legs, her vision gets a little better because her pupils open to take in more light, and she's ready for evasive action. She guides herself around the hole and continues safely down the slope.

In this case, she quickly handled the danger without a problem. It was good stress that helped her meet the challenge, because she believed she could do it.

The brain loves success, and will store the memory of this event. The next time this child faces such a dangerous situation, this positive memory will help her deal with it. Good stress makes us stronger, ready to take on new challenges.

Soon, however, she's faced with a new danger. It suddenly starts raining hard, and big puddles form on the bike path. She grips the handlebars tight. This time she's feeling a greater level of stress because the danger has increased and is lasting longer. Still, she believes she'll make it home safely.

Why is that? She's been in situations like this before and succeeded. She knows she has the skill to do it again, and that gives her confidence. She's experiencing **tolerable stress**. And the next time she faces such a challenge, it's more likely she'll be ready for it.

But now, her situation is changing again—for the worse. The rain is coming down harder now. Lightning is flashing, she's having trouble seeing, and she takes a wrong turn.

She's never ridden in such terrible conditions, so she's never had the experience of getting through them. She doesn't feel capable, and she doesn't feel safe. In fact, she's overwhelmed by fear.

This is **bad stress**—and it's toxic. It happens when we're in a threatening situation that goes on and on, and we don't feel like we're able to get through it.

Bad stress erodes confidence and makes us question our ability. At this point, the girl lets the bike drop in the mud and she runs, as fast as she can, toward her home. A similar kind of thing can happen to kids in school.





#### **Kids With Learning and Attention Issues and Bad Stress**

Kids with learning and attention issues often face ongoing challenges they can't quickly resolve. Because of that, the fear of failure can go *on and on*. And that can put them at risk for bad stress.

Imagine a high school student with dyscalculia (LD in math). She's required to take chemistry this year. But given her prior struggles, she feels that it's way beyond her ability.

Faced with this ongoing "danger," she's in a state of chronic stress. Instead of saying "I know I can" or "I think I can," she's saying "No WAY I can."

This kind of situation can create a fear reaction that sets off all kinds of survival bells in the brain. Fear kicks in, she becomes overwhelmed, and she tries to escape. Like the girl who abandoned her muddy bike, this math student shuts down in class, stops doing her homework, and doesn't ask for help.

It doesn't have to be that way, however.

#### Why Support Means the Difference Between Good and Bad Stress

When kids believe they can handle the task of reading, a new book can be like an adventure. They may encounter new words, or the book may be longer than usual. But confident readers see these stressors as challenges that they can and will master.

But what about the student with dyslexia or ADHD who's been assigned to take "Great Literature"? She knows it's probably going to be a long and challenging journey.

That doesn't necessarily mean she'll experience bad stress. The level of stress she feels depends on her past experience.

If she's had support and gotten through similar challenges, she might experience tolerable stress, instead of bad stress. She's likely to think, "I've done this well before and I can do it again."

This student knows from experience that she can go to the special education teacher for help. She might be able to use recorded books, or even watch film versions of the books.

Having had supports that helped her through similar challenges, she's pretty sure she'll be able to get through this course and learn a lot. Maybe she can even enjoy it! And if she does, her success will carry over to the next challenge.

#### **How You Can Help With Bad Stress**

The more support your child has, and the more she learns how to support herself, the better able she'll be to handle challenges. The more successes she has, the more confident and in-control she'll feel. When kids are feeling successful, they don't experience bad stress.





Here are some things you can do to help your child feel successful and avoid bad stress:

- Help her fill out self-awareness worksheets. Being self-aware can help her see the
  "potholes" in the road ahead and be ready for them. If she can describe her challenges, she
  can also say what she's learned she can do to be successful.
- Understand common stress factors kids with learning and attention issues often face.
   Knowing where and how your child is struggling can help you anticipate what the challenges will be and come up with strategies for handling them.
- Learn how anxiety is different from stress. Chronic stress can lead to anxiety, which is fairly common in kids with learning and attention issues. Get to know signs of anxiety. Don't hesitate to reach out to your child's doctor if you have concerns.

Confident kids don't feel anxious about schoolwork. They get ready for it and say "bring it on!"

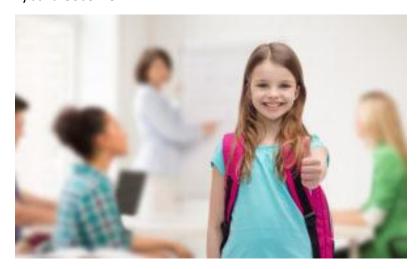
#### **Key Takeaways**

- The more support your child has, the more she'll feel like she can handle challenges.
- Bad stress happens when kids think they can't figure out a problem and succeed.
- Success breeds more success, and makes your child feel in-control.

Source: https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/managing-feelings/stress-anxiety/good-stress-vs-bad-stress-in-kids-with-learning-and-attention-issues

# A Teacher's Journey with Student Self-AdvocacyA Strategy for Parents

By Julia Osborne







"When you are on the very long journey that is life, always keep in mind your aspirations because they are your destination."

My journey with student self-advocacy began on rocky terrain; it was a new concept for me, and one of the key missing pieces for my students. Throughout my years of teaching, I listened to my students get upset when a teacher was asking something of them that felt impossible. I realized that, too often, I was having the difficult conversations with teachers about my student's needs, when I should have been empowering my students to speak for themselves, and to communicate their needs.

At first, I had no idea where to begin. After creating a video of my students speaking out about what they needed in order to succeed in the classroom, I realized that I needed to create something that would help students capture everything they knew about themselves and their needs on paper. It was evident that students had some good ideas about what they needed as learners and how we as teachers could support them; but they had no idea what to do with this information, let alone how to share it.

I introduced student self-advocacy cards as a means for students to communicate their needs as learners and also to support their communications with teachers. The goal was to create something meaningful and useful for both students and teachers. I learned many lessons along the way as I began introducing the cards; for example, at first, I approached self-advocacy with the idea that my lesson about how to create the cards would be the same for every student, but I very quickly learned that each student required a different starting point based on their individual needs. Once the cards were created, I learned that teaching students HOW to use their cards was as critical to their success as creating the cards. Teaching students how to use their advocacy cards is a process of continuous growth for me, as each year brings new learners and a new set of challenges to help them understand how they can best use their advocacy cards to support their success.

The pay-off has been incredible, both for students and for teachers. Seeing my students grow from role-playing advocacy conversations in our classroom, to watching their interactions with teachers, has been an honour. By the end of the school year I found that, often, these conversations no longer required the physical presence of an advocacy card; just the information on them, because students were now able to independently speak to their needs. I also noticed that these conversations became less frequent, as teachers anticipated their students' needs and began making the accommodation available without the students having to ask. This progress, when teachers began anticipating the students' needs, made my students realize that their needs mattered and that self-advocacy could really work!

In my experience, the use of self-advocacy cards helped teachers provide accommodations and implement strategies that allowed students to focus on what they are good at. In other words, self-





advocacy cards helped make practical my philosophy that we need to, 'Focus on what students CAN do, not what they CAN'T!'

Now, a year later, the positive outcomes of using student self-advocacy cards are obvious: students are empowered to find their voice and to realize their needs are important. Self-advocacy focuses students' efforts in learning more about themselves and their needs. It bridges the gap between student and teacher to allow students to communicate what they need. It increases students' confidence and self-esteem because they are more aware of their strengths and they have been given the tools they need to be successful.

#### *Message to parents:*

Although this was a strategy initially designed to be used solely within the school environment, this is a great activity that you as a parent can do with your child. The benefit of this approach is that your child will begin to understand themselves as a learner and it will push them to find their voice. Although parents are essential in the advocacy journey of a child, it is also crucial that students begin to learn how to advocate for their own needs. By supporting your child in their growth and self-advocacy, you will help your child to develop into a strong, confident young man or woman who will gain perspective about everything they can accomplish!



Interests: playing sports, reading, being outside

#### This is how I learn..... my strengths

- Organized I always write in my agenda so that I can remember my due dates and complete homework on time
- Attention I am able to focus on lessons. especially if they interest me
- Independence I enjoy getting started on a task and working to complete it
- Real world application I learn better when subjects or concepts are applied to the real world
- Visual learner I am excellent at remembering things when I am able to see it
- Hands-on lessons I learn best by doing
- Leadership I am a strong leader
- Perseverance I never give up!

#### This is what I have difficulty with.....

- Confidence I don't always believe that I can do the work (sometimes I get very nervous because I'm afraid I won't do it right)
- Processing speed I need a little longer to think about what I want to share
- Following instructions I have a harder time remembering the steps when I'm given instructions
- Asking for help sometimes I am not sure how to ask for help or I'm not sure what might
- Taking notes I have a harder time when I have to write my own notes
- Working memory I do not always remember everything we learn each day





## This is what helps me...

#### In class:

- Please seat me closer to the board because I can get distracted
- I need photocopied notes from the board
- Check in with me to make sure I understand
- Work with me as a small group
- Break down instructions into I will need you to help me smaller chunks and make sure I understand them
- Keep one of my pencils in your drawer for emergencies
- Remind me of due dates
- Provide me with visuals to support what you are saying •

#### For homework & assignments:

- · I will need to break long, written assignments into smaller sections
- I may need more time to complete my work
- · I will need reminders for assignments and homework
- I will need to use my computer whenever possible
- manage my time on a big assignment
- · Please stay positive with constructive feedback
- If my work is incomplete, please don't assume I am being lazy
- Being able to use my script or cue cards so that I do not have to memorize

#### For tests:

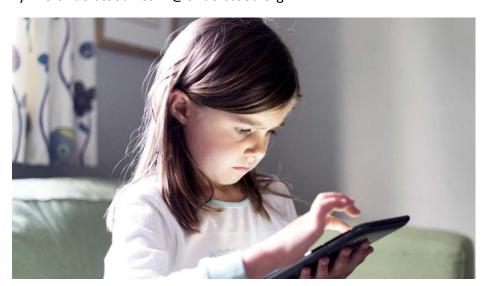
- I will need a study guide to know what to focus on
- Please provide a word bank whenever possible
- Check in during the test to make sure I'm on the right track
- Make sure the first few questions on the test are questions I'll be able to answer
- When the test has been marked, please celebrate my accomplishments
- · For math tests please give me an example of how each type of question is done
- Let me use a calculator when you're not assessing my addition/subtraction skills

## **Pursuing Potential**

Source: https://www.ldathome.ca/2017/01/a-teachers-journey-with-student-self-advocacy-astrategy-for-parents/

## **Assistive Technology That's Built into Mobile Devices**

By The Understood Team @Understood.org







#### At a Glance

- Most mobile devices come with assistive technology (AT) that can help with reading, writing and organization.
- Common built-in AT features include text-to-speech and dictation technology.
- Built-in assistive technology features vary among mobile brands.

Did you know that most smartphones and digital tablets have built-in assistive technology (AT) that can help with learning and attention issues?

The range of AT features varies depending on the device's operating system. But iOS devices like iPhones, as well as Android devices like Samsung Galaxy phones, all have built-in AT tools. So do less common mobile devices, like Microsoft Windows phones. You don't need to buy special apps to use these built-in AT features.

Here's how some of the more common tools can help your child.

#### **Built-In Accessibility Features in iOS**

iOS is the operating system for iPhones, iPads and iPod Touch. Unless stated otherwise, the AT features below can be activated on iOS devices through Settings > General > Accessibility.

**For reading issues:** iOS has two text-to-speech (TTS) options that are useful for kids with reading issues. Speak Selection lets your child select blocks of text to be read aloud. And Speak Screen reads entire pages of text.

For both TTS options, your child can choose to have the words highlighted as they are spoken. This feature can help your child follow along with her eyes as she reads.

The voice and reading speed for the TTS can also be changed. If a word isn't read correctly, the way it's said can be adjusted using the Pronunciations feature.

**For writing issues:** There are several iOS tools that can help kids with writing. The first is the built-in Dictation (speech-to-text) feature. You can activate it by pressing the microphone button on the bottom-left of the onscreen keyboard. This feature lets kids write with their voices instead of typing.

There's also built-in word prediction called QuickType in the onscreen keyboard. As kids type, it suggests words to use in their writing.

Both Dictation and QuickType are active by default. They can be turned on and off by going to General > Keyboard.





**For motor skills issues:** Some iOS features may be helpful for kids who have difficulty with fine motor skills. For instance, Dictation may help kids who struggle with keyboarding. There's also a feature called AssistiveTouch that lets your child customize hand gestures (such as gestures for zooming in and out).

**For attention issues:** iOS devices come with a built-in web browser app called Safari. If your child is easily distracted, the Safari Reader feature can remove ads and visual clutter from the web browser. To activate Safari Reader, press the paragraph symbol (¶) in the upper-left corner of the browser.

Guided Access is another accessibility feature that can help with attention issues. It allows parents and teachers to disable the device's Home button so kids get "locked" into a certain app. Guided Access can even disable specific parts of an app that may be distracting to kids.

**For organization issues:** iOS devices also come with a built-in calendar app that can help kids remember important dates. Using calendar reminders is one of the ways your child's phone can help her get organized.

Apple laptop and desktop computers use an operating system called macOS. It has many of the same built-in AT features as iOS.

#### **Built-In Accessibility Features in Android**

Mobile devices powered by Google's Android operating system come with some AT features similar to those in iOS. These can be activated in the Android device's accessibility settings and apps.

**For reading issues:** TalkBack is a screen reading feature of Android that uses TTS technology to read aloud text from websites, email and more. The tool's voice can be changed, and the reading speed can be adjusted.

**For writing issues:** Like iOS, Android has built-in dictation. By pressing the microphone button in the onscreen Google keyboard, kids can type with their voices into any app. The keyboard also has built-in word prediction, which is active by default. It suggests words that kids might be trying to write as they type.

**For motor skills issues:** Assistant Menu is a feature that displays an onscreen menu of actions that require motor skills (like adjusting the device's volume or taking a screenshot). It then offers easier onscreen gestures (usually just a tap or small finger swipe) to complete those actions.

**For attention issues:** If your child is easily distracted by an app's bells and whistles, the accessibility feature called Interaction could help. This tool lets you disable certain app features so your child won't be tempted to use them.





**For organization issues:** Like iOS, Android devices also have a built-in calendar tool. This tool can help kids remember important dates and tasks.

#### **More About Assistive Technology on Mobile Devices**

In addition to the built-in AT features on smartphones and tablets, your child can also download mobile apps to get more features. These apps can help with various learning and attention issues. They can also help manage specific challenges your child may have.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- Apple (iOS) and Android devices have built-in AT features.
- These built-in AT tools come with the device. You don't have to buy special apps to use them.
- If you want more AT functions, you can download specific apps.

Source: https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/assistive-technology/assistive-technology-thats-built-into-mobile-devices





## **Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops**

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Conference

# REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Saturday, October 20, 2018
St. James Catholic High School,
Guelph



This FREE 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 breakout sessions led by inspiring professional speakers.

We are thrilled 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 the keynote address and breakout sessions on our website:

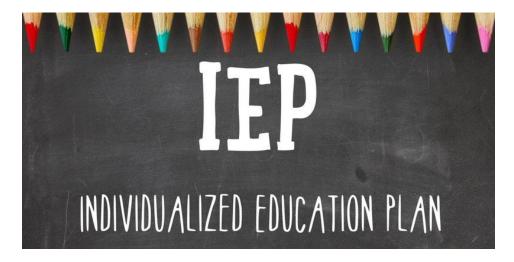
http://www.ldawc.ca/annual-family-conference.html

Register here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-familyconference-2018-tickets-47086361575





## Preparing for the School Year - IEP 101 - Sept. 19



#### **About our Workshop:**

IEPs are complicated, whether you are new to the special education world or not. There are many tips and strategies that can help. Parents need info to collaborate effectively with teachers and administrators and minimize intimidating situations. Learn exactly what information should be in an IEP, and some ideas to be able to craft an effective document to support your child's education goals. Bring your child's IEP along to the workshop!

#### **About our Speaker:**

Our speaker, Sue Shaw, is a parent advocate and teaching innovator who has been working to provide education and training opportunities for over 10 years. Sue supports many different entities including parents, administrators, teachers, government and service agencies, and especially people living with special needs. Come find out how you can improve your communication and writing skills to be part of the solution.

When: Wednesday, September 19, 7-9 PM

Where: Community Living Guelph – Boardroom (2<sup>nd</sup> floor); 8 Royal Road, Guelph

Cost: \$15, or \$10 for LDAWC members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

**Register:** <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-preparing-for-the-school-year-iep-101-tickets-46892634131">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-preparing-for-the-school-year-iep-101-tickets-46892634131</a> or on our website at <a href="https://www.ldawc.ca/events/">www.ldawc.ca/events/</a>





## LDAWC Peer Support Network - September 26



#### **About our Peer Support Network:**

Come join our Peer Support Network and meet other parents on a similar journey to yours. 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

Jen Paterson, Resource Coordinator at LDAWC, will be facilitating the evening. She has extensive experience helping parents navigate the special education system, especially when LDs or ADHDs are involved.

When: Wednesday, September 26, 7-8:30 PM

Where: Eramosa Engineering - Boardroom, 650 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

Cost: FREE

**Register:** <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-september-peer-support-network-tickets-46892074457">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-september-peer-support-network-tickets-46892074457</a> or at our website at <a href="https://www.ldawc.ca/events/">www.ldawc.ca/events/</a>





## The Myth of IQ — November 28, 2018



#### **About our Workshop:**

Myths surrounding learning disabilities, IQ and how students can reach their full potential will frame this workshop. The path for a student with a LD from primary to post-secondary can be tricky, so we're pleased to have Sean Cameron return as he leads this discussion and offers tips. Having a long term goal is key, as is knowing the steps to get there. In addition to giving important tips to make a student's path successful, Sean will discuss the myths of IQ and the IQ/Achievement discrepancy. This event will be of interest to parents, teachers and professionals.

#### **About our Speaker:**

Dr. Cameron is a Developmental Psychologist who has worked in the field of education for the past 12 years. He has taught courses on learning disabilities at the University of Guelph for 8 years, and currently works as an administrator in elementary education.

When: Wednesday, November 28, 7-9 PM

Where: RLB LLP Guelph, 197 Hanlon Creek Blvd #103, Guelph

Cost: \$15, or \$10 for LDAWC members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

Register: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-the-myth-of-iq-tickets-48444277137 or on our

website at www.ldawc.ca/events/





## Non-medication and Medication Interventions for ADHD – December 6, 2018



#### **About our Workshop:**

ADHD is a complex disorder that affects every person differently. The decision to 'medicate' or 'not medicate' is a big one, and there are usually strong opinions and arguments on both sides. But non-medical interventions are also available – strategies to cope with inattention and focus difficulties. Come to an engaging workshop to learn more and about both options – from a medical expert who understands attention difficulties on a personal level.

#### **About our Speaker:**

Dr. Alexandre Tavares is a child psychiatrist practicing in Waterloo who also speaks on a wide range of topics. He grew up knowing that he did not have the best attention span, was not a good speller, and was not a fast reader, but had a thirst for knowledge. He was supported by his parents and grandparents since his childhood. They believed in him and never questioned the validity of learning with less formal educational methods used at that time: TV programs, magazines and supported listening. Dr. Tavares uses his personal experiences to better empathize with the experiences of children and teenagers with ADHD and/or learning disorders. To learn more about Dr. Tavares' work, visit: <a href="https://www.drtavares.ca">www.drtavares.ca</a>

When: Thursday, December 6, 7-9 PM

Where: Community Living Guelph – Boardroom (2<sup>nd</sup> floor); 8 Royal Road, Guelph

**Cost:** \$15, or \$10 for LDAWC members

We never want cost to be a deterrent! Please contact us about subsidies.

**Register:** <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-non-medication-and-medication-interventions-for-adhd-tickets-48444676331">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-non-medication-and-medication-interventions-for-adhd-tickets-48444676331</a> or on our website at <a href="https://www.ldawc.ca/events/">www.ldawc.ca/events/</a>





## LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM



Date:			<u></u>	re right to ream,	the power to demeve
Name:			Member #:	Chapter #:	
Address:					
City/Province/Postal	Code:				
Email address:					
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	Type of Year	rly Members	ship (please che	ck one)	
Family/Individual	□ \$50.00	Professional	□ \$75.00		
Institutional	□ \$125.00	Student	☐ \$20.00 (II	□ \$20.00 (ID # Required)	
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Please make all p	ayments payable	e to <b>Learning Dis</b>	sabilities Association	n of Ontario	and forward to:
	LDAO Membe	ership Coordinat	or		

365 Evans Avenue, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2

Phone: 416-929-4311, Fax 416-929-3905

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