



# Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

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## LDawc News

October was another active month at LDawc. We launched the second Reading Rocks program of 2018, on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Students and volunteer tutors paired up based on their interests and met for the first time that evening. The pairs continue to meet each week, make exciting progress, and appreciate the opportunity to learn from each other. Both parents, children, and tutor feedback tell us that it's time well spent. Parents report that their children are feeling much more confident, internally motivated, and look forward to Reading Rocks, each week.

We held our Annual General Meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and enjoyed a delicious potluck before the meeting. Be sure to take the time to read our new action plan for the coming year in our latest Annual Report. The Report also

includes a summary of LDawc's activity for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The report is available on our homepage, half way down on the right: [www.ldawc.ca](http://www.ldawc.ca).

Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Conference was a huge success, with almost 100 parents in attendance. A record number! The highlight of the day was our keynote speaker, Dr. Peg Dawson. Her presentation entitled, "*Lazy and Unmotivated*": Why Parents and Teachers Need to Know about Executive Skills" resonated well with our parents of children with LDs and ADHD. The keynote gave the audience some real practical advice on how to handle day to day issues coupled with inspiring messages on how much Executive Skills can be improved upon and managed with the right approach.

A heartfelt thank you to the afternoon breakout presenters who volunteered their time and were instrumental in making the conference a success.

- 5 Steps to Becoming An Effective Parent Advocate (twice) – Sue Shaw

- How to Help Kids with LDs Navigate the Online World/Social Media – Dr. Adelle Pratt & Dr. Laura Brown
- Growth Mindset – Cheryl Vrkljan & Suzan Grace
- How to Support the LD Math Learner – Jacquie Weresch & Patricia Josephson
- ReadABILITY: Home-based, Foundational Literacy Strategies – Susan Slack Miller
- Bridging the Gap with Google: Tools to Support Learning for All – Leanne Husk
- Psychosocial Well-being: Social Relationships and Self Perceptions – Dr. Michèle Preyde

Many of our parents won door prizes at the end of the day including different executive skills books by Dr. Peg Dawson and her colleague Dr. Richard Guare, and a very unique ReaderPen that reads text. Thank you to Scanning Pens for this generous donation.



*Reading Rocks pair Elliot and Raf work on their board.*



*Keynote Peg Dawson at our Family Conference.*

## Articles – LDs and ADHD

*On September 2, 2018, the chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission wrote the following – about Ontario’s Education System and exceptional students. It’s a hard look at the way students with special needs are treated in schools.*

### All Children Should Feel Like They Belong In School



**Ontario  
Human Rights Commission**  
**Commission ontarienne des  
droits de la personne**

By Renu Mandhane – Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission

*Article originally published in the Toronto Star (September 2, 2018).*

The first day of school is a time to reconnect and arrive recharged and ready to learn. But for students with disabilities and their families, it is often a day that is filled with anxiety. Will they be accepted by their peers? Will they get the support they need from educators? Will they meet their full potential?

All children want to be included, both at home and at school. And students with disabilities have a legal right to be included in all aspects of the education system. Inclusion has a positive impact on cognitive and social development.

Unfortunately, Ontario’s current approach to “special education” is premised on exclusion. It labels students with disabilities as “exceptions” before meeting their needs. Ironically, the “exceptional” label excludes many common mental health, intellectual and learning disabilities altogether, making it even harder for students to get help. Families find the process for identifying and supporting students with disabilities bureaucratic, confusing, alienating, unnecessarily adversarial and exhausting.

To cap it off, Ontario’s legislation gives principals wide discretion to refuse to admit students whose presence “would be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of pupils.” In a recent survey of parents of students with intellectual disabilities, ARCH Disability Law Centre found that many students are literally being excluded from school and denied their right to education, with no official tracking or due process. A quarter of parents reported being told not to bring their child to school, while more than half (54 per cent) said their child had to leave school early on a regular basis.



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How did we end up here? Part of the problem lies with the Education Act, which views disability as an anomaly to normalcy rather than an inherent and expected variation in the human condition. The legislation reinforces ableism — the negative attitudes, stereotypes and stigma that people with disabilities face every day.

And it undermines social inclusion. At an impressionable age, students with disabilities learn that they are not “normal,” that they will have to navigate adversarial and bureaucratic processes just to be included, and that there is always a looming risk they will be excluded from mainstream society altogether. It’s not surprising that people with disabilities have lower educational achievement levels, higher unemployment rates, lower incomes and file the most human rights claims.

Ontario’s special education system is nearly 40 years old and its core premise around “exceptionalities” stands in direct contrast to progressive shifts in society and law that embrace inclusion and universal design. It’s time we rethink how we can truly support and include all children, while maintaining positive learning and working environments.

In our new policy on accessible education for students with disabilities, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) lays out students’ and educators’ legal rights and responsibilities and puts forward recommendations to create an education system that starts with real inclusion.

We call for system-wide barrier prevention and removal, and universal design. We call on all the players to put students with disabilities at the centre of decision-making and to remove barriers in the accommodation process, including persistent delays in professional assessments and ineffective dispute resolution processes. We call for training that equips educators to meet the needs of diverse students. We call for better accountability. And we call for an end to the punitive practice of excluding students with disabilities from school.

Leading community and advocacy groups support the OHRC’s recommendations. Implementing them would help address the growing number of requests for individualized accommodation, reduce the administrative burden on educators, and restore public confidence in the system. It would signal a shift away from Band-Aid solutions towards proactive responses that allow students with varying abilities and needs to succeed.

Kids going back to school shouldn’t have to worry about whether they will receive the support they need for the coming year. And families shouldn’t have to wait years for assessments and take time off work to navigate bureaucracies. All children should feel like they belong. We call on the government, school boards and educators to implement our recommendations.

Source: [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/all-children-should-feel-they-belong-school](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/all-children-should-feel-they-belong-school)

# Can We Talk About Sleep?



By Peg Dawson

When parents bring their children to me for an evaluation because they are concerned about possible executive skill weaknesses, I spend the first part of the assessment process interviewing them about their child. Parents know their children better than any teacher, psychologist, or therapist ever will, and I get a great deal of useful information from that interview.

That said, it took me longer than it should have to realize that one of the questions I need to ask parents is about sleep. First of all, I didn't learn about sleep at all when I was in graduate school, so maybe that's my excuse. But once I realized I needed to ask about sleep, it began opening windows for me. I had no idea how many children can't fall asleep at night without a parent lying down with them, or how many kids crawl into bed with their parents in the middle of the night, or may even sleep in their parents' bedroom. More recently, I've come to understand that way too many children have technology in their bedroom—televisions and computers that are too tempting to set aside even as the lights should be turned off. And too many teenagers are bringing their smart phones to bed with them, remaining engaged with social media far into the night.

And then there's the whole issue of sleep disorders, which I believe are probably under-diagnosed in children. These include sleep apnea (where the child stops breathing multiple times per hour and has to wake up in order to start breathing again), restless leg syndrome (which may be misdiagnosed as ADHD), and a circadian rhythm disorder called delayed sleep phase syndrome (which means the body is not ready to fall asleep at the normal bedtime). The prevalence rate of delayed sleep phase syndrome in teenagers is about 7 percent: it's almost as common as ADHD, yet nobody knows about it.

But what does this have to do with executive skills? Just this: when the brain is deprived of sufficient sleep, executive skills are the first brain functions to suffer. Research indicates that a number of cognitive skills are diminished when individuals lack sufficient sleep on a regular basis. The impacts of sleep deprivation include: 1) daytime sleepiness (which is most problematic during periods of low stimulation); 2) tiredness or fatigue (which makes it difficult to initiate or persist at certain types of behaviour, especially tasks deemed boring or tedious); 3) emotional factors (which can include depressive symptoms, low tolerance for frustration, as well as increased irritability); and 4) changes in attention and performance (which can produce ADHD-like symptoms and which can have a particularly negative effect on an individual's ability to performance complex tasks or those requiring divided attention).

Given the symptoms of sleep deprivation described above, there's not one of the 11 executive skills we write about that aren't impacted. If parents are serious about helping their children improve executive skills, the first step they should take is ensuring that their children are getting an adequate night's sleep on a consistent basis.

So how do we do that? The American Pediatric Association developed some guidelines for parents to help them improve sleep hygiene in the home. For youngsters who resist going to bed or who need the presence of adults in order to fall asleep, pediatricians generally recommend the following conditions be put in place (adapted from an article that appeared on the Medscape website):

1. Establishing a consistent bedtime routine. A regular and well-structured set of pre-bedtime activities usually helps settle children and promote sleep onset. This may include bedtime stories and being "tucked in." Stimulating activities, such as vigorous play or watching cartoons, should be avoided due to their potential alerting effect. Keeping the routine quiet and regular helps young children achieve a quiet, relaxed state more conducive to sleep onset.
2. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule. Consistent bedtime and waking time 7 nights a week is usually helpful. Eliminating late sleeping and any daytime napping that is inappropriate for age may increase the chance that a child will be tired at the usual bedtime. In addition, regularity of sleep schedule may help promote the stabilization of biological rhythms that will make sleep onset come more quickly.
3. Maintaining a sleep environment conducive to sleep. Quiet, dimly lit environments make it easier for children to fall asleep than noisy, brightly lit environments (although nightlights can be appropriate for children who are afraid of the dark). Experts generally recommend that children be put to sleep without a parent remaining in the room since this provides the child with an opportunity to learn to fall asleep independently and to minimize dependence on parental presence. Another reason for this is that it helps children learn to confront their fears or anxieties and learn to "self-soothe" rather than rely on external supports for this.
4. Using limit setting. Children who stall, cry, or leave the room at bedtime in an attempt to stay up later will sometimes repeat this behaviour to the point where a parent or caregiver "gives in"



and allows the child to stay up. For some children, this pattern of behaviour may be repeated nightly to the point of causing consistent delay and disruption of sleep onset. Setting and enforcing appropriate limits on inappropriate bedtime behaviour are crucial for the effective treatment of limit-setting sleep disorder. Limits must be enforced consistently by all caregivers, usually for periods of days or weeks, for maladaptive bedtime behaviours to subside. Parents should be aware that temperamental and agitated behaviour often transiently worsen during the first days of treatment before gradual improvement becomes evident, making the initial days of treatment the most difficult.

In September of this year, the American Pediatric Association addressed the issue of school start time for the first time. As children enter adolescence, their sleep patterns change. Now, the typical teenage body wants to fall asleep around 11. Sleep experts state that teenagers still need 8-9 hours of sleep a night, which means that too many high school students are living with chronic sleep deprivation because early start times at most high schools don't permit them to get their full ration of sleep. They accumulate sleep debt as the school week progresses and then they try to catch up on weekends by sleeping in. While this may address the problem of sleep debt, it exacerbates the problem during the school week because on Saturday and Sunday, they're often sleeping until late morning and on Monday they have to wake up very early to go to school. Some sleep experts have described this as similar to what it would feel like to fly from Hawaii to New York every weekend.

Where schools have addressed this problem and pushed school start times back, they see immediate gains in all kinds of ways: fewer school absences, better report card grades, higher standardized test scores—and even lower incidents of unwanted pregnancy and delinquent behaviour (since it turns out these problems typically occur during after school hours before parents get home from work).

Influencing school boards to look seriously at the issue of high school start time is a worthy endeavor. But for individual parents who can only control what happens within the walls of their own homes, ensuring that their children get a good night's sleep will reap dividends in many domains—including executive functions.

Source: <http://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com/blog/can-we-talk-about-sleep/>

## 7 Terms to Know If Your Child Struggles with Nonverbal Learning Disabilities



By Erica Patino, M.A.

The lingo that learning specialists use when describing nonverbal learning disabilities can be confusing. Here are some key terms and phrases to help you understand nonverbal learning issues.

### **Nonverbal communication**

Forms of communication that aren't just words. They include facial expressions, body language and tone of voice. Kids with NVLD often miss or misread these cues. They tend to have trouble with playful or non-literal uses of words and get tripped up by things like sarcasm, puns or irony.

### **Social competency**

The ability to fit in socially and bond with other people. Social competency depends on having a strong set of social skills, including initiating conversations, taking turns and accurately reading social cues.

### **Developmental delays**

Reaching milestones—such as taking a first step or speaking clearly—late. Delays in reaching early milestones are often correlated with delays in the development of future motor, cognitive (thinking) and language skills.

### **Abstract reasoning**

The type of thinking that helps to process, analyze and draw conclusions from information. Kids who are weak in this area may be able to successfully read a paragraph out loud but have trouble explaining what it means.



**Motor skills**

The ability to coordinate and carry out movement. Activities that require fine motor skills (small movements) include handwriting, typing and cutting with scissors. Activities that require gross motor skills (large movements) include kicking, throwing, catching and running.

**Spatial skills**

The ability to understand where two things are in relation to each other in a physical space. Spatial skills help with tasks like reading maps, telling time, understanding abstract concepts in math and science and sensing physical proximity (such as knowing how close to get to a soccer ball to be able to kick it and how close to stand to a classmate without making him feel uncomfortable).

**Auditory retention**

Your child's ability to remember what she's heard. Kids with NVLD have a sharp memory for spoken information and a large vocabulary. But they may not discuss it in a socially appropriate way or know which parts to share. Social skills classes may help your child learn to sort through information and only share what's relevant and appropriate.

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/>

## ***Guelph Storm - Help Us Fundraise!***



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

Help support LDAWC and The United Way! By purchasing tickets to these Storm games we're able to run our 50/50 draw. This is a significant fundraiser for us every year - please help us to be able to participate!

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

Game dates are:

**Friday, December 28, 7:30 PM – Guelph vs. Hamilton Bulldogs**

**Friday, January 4, 7:30 PM – Guelph vs. Windsor Spitfires**

**Sunday, January 20, 2:00 PM – Guelph vs. Niagara IceDogs**

**Sunday, February 10, 2:00 PM – Guelph vs. Kingston Frontenacs**

***For tickets, contact Jen Paterson at [info@ldawc.ca](mailto:info@ldawc.ca) or (519) 837-2050.***



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# Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops

## *LDAWC Peer Support Network – November 15, 2018*



### **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

**When:** Thursday, November 15, 7-8:30 PM

**Where:** Eramosa Engineering, 650 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

**Cost:** FREE

**Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-september-peer-support-network-tickets-46892074457> or at our website at [www.ldawc.ca/events](http://www.ldawc.ca/events)

## ***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/](http://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: [www.drtavares.ca](http://www.drtavares.ca)

**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:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-non-medication-and-medication-interventions-for-adhd-tickets-48444676331> or on our website at [www.ldawc.ca/events/](http://www.ldawc.ca/events/)

## Other Agency Events

### ***Waterloo Region Family Network (WRFN) Family Conference***

Please join us for the WRFN Family Conference. This is a free event for parents to connect and learn together.

When: Saturday, November 3, 9:30 – 3:30

Where: 425 Bingemans Centre Dr, Kitchener

Childcare provided (4+).

#### **Keynote address: Connecting with Nature - Rob Klea**

In the morning presentation you will learn about the benefits to health and wellbeing, particularly for those with disabilities, associated with being connected to nature, how to become connected to nature and what to do if it is challenging to get outside.

About Rob - Rob Klea is the founder and Executive Director of New Trail Edventures Inc. / New Trail Forest Therapy.

For more information or to register please contact Krista McCann  
[Krista.McCann@wrfn.info](mailto:Krista.McCann@wrfn.info) or 519-886-9150 ext. 2. Registration Deadline: October 27, 2018





## ADHD Community Workshop

Understanding ADHD in the Home,  
School and Workplace

### PRESENTERS:

**Dr. Megan Smith, Ph.D. in Child Clinical and School Psychology**, has worked with diverse client populations in community, outpatient, residential, and inpatient settings at Youthdale Treatment Centres, the Toronto District School Board, and in private practice.

**Heidi Bernhardt RN**, Founder, and President of CADDAC and past Executive Director of CADDRA, has over the past 25 years helped raise awareness and understanding of ADHD among parents, educators, health care professionals, industry leaders, and government officials through presentations, conferences, media interviews, and advocacy work.

**COST: \$20:00 –Bring your own Lunch**

**For more Information and to Register**

[www.caddac.ca](http://www.caddac.ca)

Kitchener/Waterloo Workshop

**Sunday Nov 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**9am to 4pm**

Rockway Community Centre  
1405 King St E. Kitchener

**This workshop is geared to:**

- **Parents and Educators**
- **Adults and Adolescents with ADHD and their families**
- **Employers & HR**
- **Health and Medical Professionals**

### Topics:

- Executive Functioning and ADHD: Keeping the Balls in the Air
- Self-Regulation and ADHD: From Chaos to Smoother Sailing
- ADHD Goes to School
- ADDventures at Home
- Understanding ADHD's Impact on Adult Relationships
- Understanding ADHD in the Workplace

**Lunch Discussion on School Advocacy for those who wish to bring a packed lunch**



CADDAC would like to thank our sponsor Shire Canada for generously supporting this educational event





## Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Membership Application

### Membership:

- Member fee rates to LDAO programs and services, including some online workshops/courses
- Member fee rates to all chapter programs and services, where available
- Two issues of the LDAO digital magazine LD@Ontario, sent biannually through email
- Chapter newsletters (frequency varies from chapter to chapter)

We're going **paperless**! Please provide us with your email address to receive your copy of LD@Ontario!

\_\_\_\_\_

### Required Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Type:

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 ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV #: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all cheques payable to **LDAO** and forward to **365 Evans Avenue**  
**Suite 202 Toronto ON M8Z 1K2**

