



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

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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LDABC News

On behalf of the staff and Board at LDABC, we hope you had a wonderful holiday with family and friends, and hope that 2019 is filled with possibilities. If you have kids, we hope they had a chance to recharge over their time off, and that this new year brings exciting opportunities at school, home and in the community.

LDABC Is Growing!

Two new part-time staff members joined our LDABC team at the beginning of January.

We are excited to welcome Erika Longman, our new Reading Rocks Program Coordinator to the LDA Wellington County family! Erika's commitment to public service is exemplified with her non profit experience and lifelong love of working with children. As Everdale Farm's Children's Programs Coordinator, Erika worked extensively with area schools and teachers from both the public and separate school boards, and a number of private schools. Erika is eager to work on the Reading Rocks program and can be reached at (519) 837-6075 or by email at LDABCRR@gmail.com.

We are also excited to welcome Cathy Harding as the new part-time Executive Director. Having lived in Guelph for nearly 30 years, Cathy is proud to call Guelph home. She has considerable experience teaching and tutoring students of all ages - children, teens, and adults - including those with special needs such as learning disabilities - in local public and private schools. She holds a Specialist in Special Education as well as qualifications to teach French as a Second Language and English as a Second Language. She looks forward to coordinating the many exciting goals of LDA Wellington County and serving the individuals and families in our community who benefit from our programs. Cathy can be reached at (519) 763-1557 or LDABCED@gmail.com.



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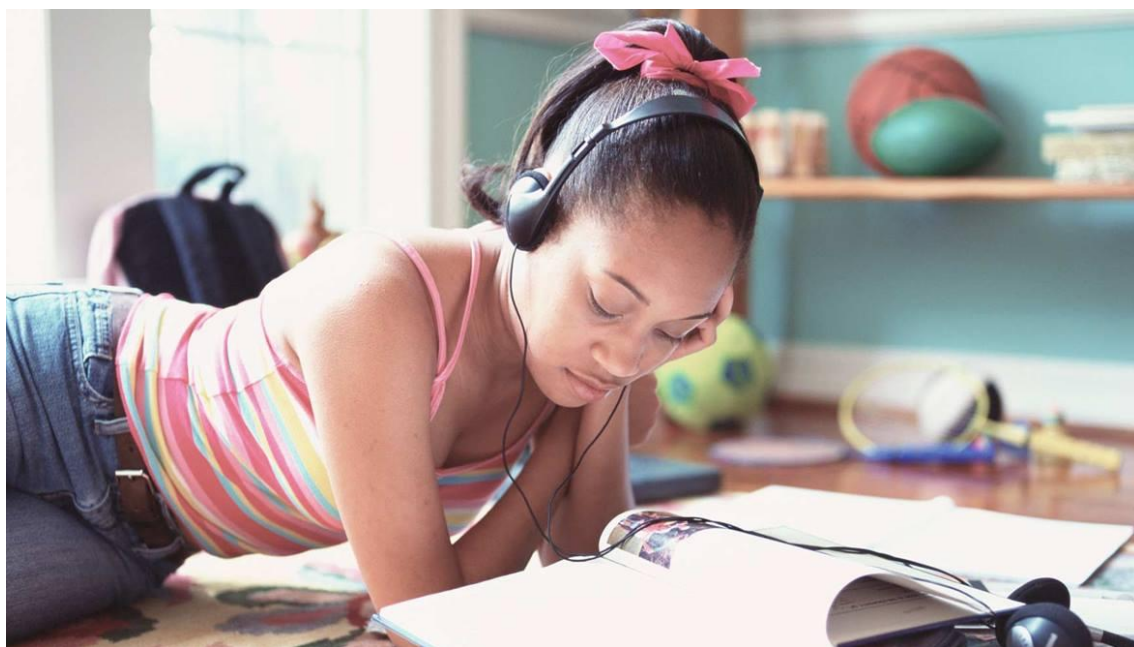


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Articles – LDs and ADHD

Types of Music That May Help Kids with Learning and Attention Issues

By Kate Kelly



At a Glance

- Different kinds of music may help different kinds of learning.
- Calm, predictable Baroque music may help kids concentrate.
- Fast, upbeat music may help lower stress.

We all know that music can influence how we feel. Who hasn't gotten a lift from cranking some tunes? But research shows that music can also affect people in many other ways. It may even help them learn and perform certain tasks better.

Most of this research has been done with adults. But some educators have tried using music to help kids.

Chris Brewer, M.A., is the author of *Soundtracks for Learning: Using Music in the Classroom* and a former instructor at Fairhaven College of Western Washington University. She's worked for more than 20 years helping teachers (including special education teachers) use music in their classrooms.

Even though there aren't many directly relevant studies, Brewer has seen what tends to work for kids. We asked for her thoughts on how music might help in four areas that can be tough for kids with learning and attention issues.

These suggestions are just a starting point. "Everyone is different. Watch your child, see how she responds, and experiment," says Brewer. "If a piece of music doesn't evoke the right mood, try something else."

Keep in mind that some kids may find music distracting. And if your child has sensory processing issues or is sensitive to sound, let her take the lead. "Ask her how loud or soft she wants the music—or if she wants it at all," says Brewer.

Your Child Needs to: Focus

She's got facts to memorize, vocabulary words to learn or chapters to read.

Music to try: Baroque music. Try the slower movements in works like Handel's *Water Music* or Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

Why it may help: A three-year study from 2006 found that college students enjoyed math more and retained it better when music of the Baroque era played during class. They also got better grades.

Other studies have also linked Baroque music to improved learning. Brewer says the music's slow, steady pace may help kids focus. It's also predictable. There are no sudden changes in rhythm or volume, and the harmonies aren't dissonant. These features work together to create a background that may help some kids absorb information.

Keep in mind that if your child is hyperactive, she may need a transition. Start by playing something lively to match her energy level, Brewer advises. Once she's engaged with the music, switch to the more sedate Baroque movements.

Your Child Needs to: De-stress

Maybe she's tense after a tough day at school. Or maybe her stress is more high energy—she's feeling anxious or just had a tantrum.

Music to try: Depending on which kind of stress your child is feeling, you might try either soft, slow melodic music, such as any of the songs from Daniel Kobialka's *When You Wish Upon a Star* or Louis Armstrong's soothing "What a Wonderful World." Or you might play fun, gently upbeat music like the Beatles' "Octopus's Garden."

Why it may work: Research suggests that relaxing music may help ease some people's physical and emotional responses to stress. If your child just needs to wind down and get her mind off her day, says Brewer, something slow, soothing and familiar may make her feel more centred. But if her energy's high, fast, fun upbeat music could distract her and change the mood.

Your Child Needs to: Get It Done

She has to get through a tedious task. Think emptying the dishwasher, folding laundry or making her lunch in the morning.

Music to try: Energetic music with a strong beat like *Earth Tribe Rhythms* by Brent Lewis or marching band performances. Your child's favourite upbeat music can also be effective, as long as the lyrics are positive.

Why it may help: Since at least the 1970s, studies have been showing that music can boost adults' productivity and efficiency as they do routine work. In Brewer's experience, music might also help kids perform rote tasks. "Say your child's energy is low but she has things to get done," says Brewer. "Music with alternating fast and slow parts and strong rhythms may make her want to move to the music, which livens up her mood."

Your Child Needs to: Generate Ideas for Papers and Projects

She's trying to generate ideas for a paper or write a story for English class.

Music to try: Free-flowing contemporary instrumental, light jazz, New Age, or easy listening music such as solo piano pieces like "Autumn" by George Winston, Pat Metheny's jazz guitar music, or selections from Enya.

Why it may help: In 2011, Finnish researchers found that processing the timbre (or sound quality) of a song may encourage "mind-wandering," which can be linked to creativity. Brewer suggests looking for music that feels spontaneous, meandering in different and surprising directions. Music that's unpredictable encourages the mind to wander. It can help kids see things from different perspectives. And it may trigger those "aha" moments that seem to come out of nowhere.

Key Takeaways

- There's little direct research about music's effect on kids. But there are techniques that may be worth a try.
- Slow music may help some kids with hyperactivity calm down. But they may need to start with fast music and transition to more soothing options.
- Certain kinds of music may help kids focus.

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childrens-challenges/simple-changes-at-home/types-of-music-that-may-help-kids-with-learning-and-attention-issues>

7 Tips for Caregivers on Supporting Children with Learning Disabilities and Anxiety at Home

Blog by the Child Development Institute (Toronto)



Tip #1

Listen to your child or youth's worries before jumping into problem-solving or giving advice. Normalize his or her experience (e.g., "everyone worries from time to time"); maybe even share a personal story.

Tip #2

Take your child or youth's concerns seriously while at the same time expressing confidence in his or her strengths. Remind your child or youth of times they have been resilient, the coping skills they used, and praise their accomplishments and successes (even the small ones).

Tip #3

Use empathy and stay calm in the storm. Listen to your child's worries without minimizing or trying to invalidate the concerns. Reflect and label what you think might be the feeling and validate the feeling.

Tip #4

Be open to listening to your child or youth ("ask and hear" instead of "talk and tell"). At times we forget how to listen with children. We lecture, give advice, or tell our own stories ("talk and tell") as opposed to just asking, hearing what they have to say, and validating how they feel.

Tip #5

Don't try to reason through what may sound like an unreasonable worry and resist asking too many why questions. Your child or youth might not know why they are feeling a certain way or how to explain it.

Tip #6

Figure out strengths – when does your child feel better, what helps, who helps, when is it best to talk.

Tip #7

Engage in self-care and recognize your child or youth's anxiety may pose challenges to the whole family.

If you feel your child or youth's feelings of anxiety extend beyond the norm and are seriously interfering with their ability to do the tasks of everyday life, consult your family doctor or seek support from a trained mental health professional.

Source: <http://childdevelop.ca/7TipsforCaregivers>

Championing Children's Success

Debbie Phelps reveals her secrets, from raising a superstar swimmer to inspiring middle-schoolers to follow their dreams.

by Kristin Stanberry



Though the image of her cheering her son Michael Phelps from the stands may have made her famous, Debbie Phelps isn't one to watch life from the sidelines. A dynamic parent, educator, author, and public speaker, Phelps has helped not only her own children succeed but also countless others.

In her recent memoir, *A Mother for All Seasons* (William Morrow), Phelps recounts her dual life as a parent of three and an educator, pursuing a career that began with teaching home economics and led to cofounding a public school, Windsor Mill Middle School in Baltimore, where she still serves as

principal. Michael, her youngest, presented special challenges because he suffered from attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

As a devoted single mom — she divorced when her children were teenagers — Phelps has much to say about parenting. But it is the stories of how she lives her life that lend her memoir special resonance. GreatSchools recently had the pleasure of interviewing Phelps about her famous son, her guiding principles as a parent, and her secrets to instilling great expectations in her students.

GreatSchools: You and Michael are very open about the fact that he has AD/HD. How did raising a child with AD/HD influence your attitude toward students with similar challenges?

Debbie Phelps: My philosophy has always been to recognize each student's learning style, strengths, and needs — whether or not he has a diagnosed disorder. I believe in drawing out the special gifts each child possesses. As a school principal, I expect the teachers I supervise to do the same.

GreatSchools: How did you work with Michael's teachers to help him succeed in the classroom?

Phelps: I believe being a partner with your child's schools is very important at every level: elementary, middle, and high school. Having teachers who understood Michael's personality and learning style helped him focus in the classroom. Even so, there were some teachers I had to conference with to help them understand and adapt to his learning challenges. While Michael can hyper-focus on subjects and activities he finds interesting, with other subjects, he tunes out, drifts off, or becomes restless. An observant teacher will notice that and help him stay on task using simple techniques. And when a child needs to move around or wiggle, as is true for many kids with AD/HD, there are ways to accommodate that. After all, how many of us adults can comfortably sit still at a desk for long periods of time without taking a break to stand up, stretch, and walk around?

GreatSchools: Over the years, how have you helped Michael stay grounded and focused outside of the classroom?

Phelps: I was able to provide the structure and routine Michael needed at home. I always appreciated his high energy level and tendency to hyper-focus on what fascinated him — both of which served him well as a competitive swimmer.

GreatSchools: The medications used to manage AD/HD have evolved a great deal since Michael was growing up. If you were raising your son today, would you still give him medication?

Phelps: I would consult a doctor, but most likely yes, now that longer-acting medications are available [eliminating the need to visit the school office to take a lunchtime dose, which Michael loathed], I'd definitely have him try taking medication on school days. That said, I'd still make sure his teachers understand what classroom accommodations and teaching methods work best for him. All parents should know what their children need and communicate that to teachers.

Having kids with AD/HD take medication in middle and high school makes total sense, because at that level they're dealing with several teachers (and teaching styles), classrooms, and academic subjects as well as organizational challenges. Expecting several teachers to adapt to your child — and your child to manage those challenges if he needs medication to focus — isn't always realistic.

GreatSchools: What have you found are some of the most effective things parents can do to bolster their kids' success in school and life?

Phelps: I understand parents today have many responsibilities — including their jobs — so they can't always be at school to volunteer. At my school, parents and grandparents have an open invitation to visit the school to touch base. For example, some of our students' fathers work in law enforcement and drop by school on their way home after a night shift. This atmosphere creates for our kids a united front: parents, teachers, and principal all working together.

I firmly believe parents and kids should communicate with each other through eye contact and their voices. I encourage parents to have their kids unplug from their iPods, disengage from [instant messaging] etc., and then talk to — and listen to — them. Parents and educators need to set a good example for kids — in the way we dress, talk, and behave. We need to be honest and accountable for our own actions. You are your child's first teacher and role model.

Too many parents try to be their children's friends. You have to draw the line and be the parent, the authority figure. Deep down, kids don't really want their parents, teachers, or principal to be their pals. They want the security that comes from having strong adults in their lives.

GreatSchools: Now that your own kids are adults, do you find it difficult to let go?

Phelps: I tell other parents "Don't completely let go of your children's hands. They may not directly ask for your advice, so just be there for them, keep the door to communication propped open, and listen between the lines." And, yes, it's possible to do that without being a helicopter parent!

GreatSchools: In your book, you describe the philosophy of the swimming club where your kids trained from a young age and how the rigorous training members went through could ultimately lead them down one of three paths: recreation, collegiate swimming and competition, or world-class Olympic swimming. Each road was considered as worthy as the others. Has that philosophy helped you understand your children and students?

Phelps: It's important that we inspire children to work hard, to strive for excellence, but also to be true to themselves and have some fun. Every student has goals. Some students will aim higher, but I want every child to have the goal of being successful at whatever level is right for him. All goals are worthy.

Parents and teachers should honour the dreams children have and involve them in setting their own goals — then help make them happen. No one learns the same way, so every child should feel free to ask adults for help mastering certain skills or taking steps toward a particular goal.

GreatSchools: What do you expect from the students at your school?

Phelps: I tell my students, "Someday you will run our country. You'll take care of us — your parents and teachers." Students are often stunned by that statement. I reassure them by saying, "Your parents and teachers are investing in your future. Coming to school is your job; we're preparing you for the world." Our school family embraces each student. That's the way it should be. Kids need to know that the adults in their lives believe in them.

GreatSchools: What opportunities do you offer students so they can practice that kind of adult responsibility?

Phelps: One example is the principal's advisory board called Student Choice/Student Voice. It's a student roundtable we convene to discuss school rules and practices. When you open your heart, mind, and ears to students, it's amazing what you learn from them and the ideas and insights they have to offer.

Source : <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/debbie-phelps-interview/>

Guelph Storm - Help Us Fundraise!



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

Help support LDAWC and The United Way! By purchasing Storm tickets, we're able to hold a significant fundraiser every year - please help us to be able to participate!

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

Game dates are:

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

Friday February 22, 7:30 PM – Guelph vs. Erie Otters

Friday March 1, 7:30 PM – Guelph vs. Windsor Spitfires

Sunday March 10, 4:00 PM – Guelph vs. Kitchener Rangers

For tickets, contact Jen Paterson at info@ldawc.ca or (519) 837-2050.

Upcoming LDAWC Events & Workshops

LDAWC Peer Support Network – January 23, 2019



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

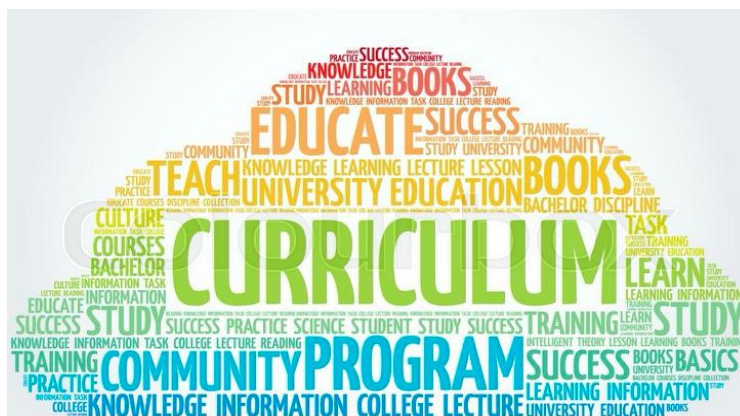
When: Wednesday, January 23, 7-8:30 PM

Where: Eramosa Engineering, 650 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph

Cost: FREE

Register: At our website at www.ldawc.ca/events or call (519) 837-2050.

LDAWC - Guide to the Ontario Curriculum – January 31, 2019



About our Workshop:

The Ontario curriculum is a complex document that is comprised of all subject area covered in public and catholic education. The document regulates what students are taught throughout each level of their schooling. The curriculum is made up of knowledge expectations, skills expectations, as well as values and attitude. Come to an engaging workshop to learn more about how the curriculum shapes your child's education and how you can help from home!

About our Speaker:

Mary is a current student at Nipissing University studying in the Concurrent Education program. Mary is completing a placement with the LDAWC and will use her knowledge on curriculum methods to help parents better understand the Ontario curriculum documents that guide their child's education.

When: Thursday, January 31, 7 – 8:30 PM

Where: Community Living Guelph (2nd floor); 8 Royal Road, Guelph

Cost: FREE

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-guide-to-the-ontario-curriculum-tickets-54653585345> or at our website <http://www.ldawc.ca/events/>



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

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

