

A Mom's Story of how LDAWC helped her Teen:

From Grade 9 School Problems to Success as an Adult

Ann's Story

When my son was in Grade 9 and in French Immersion, he told me that he thought he had ADHD. I brushed his comment aside and thought to myself that with his mild hearing loss, and unwillingness to wear his glasses, that those really were the problem. If he only took his time to fix his punctuation and spelling errors, he would get better grades. I had previously tried to reward him for getting better grades, but he was never really able to achieve any 'A's. And then there was the friend of his that had been diagnosed with ADHD and that was likely where he had got this idea from. But then there was his grade 4 teacher who said he was nothing like his sister, but wouldn't really explain what that meant.

I decided that we needed to look into it. I contacted the Learning Disabilities Association and they said that a Psycho Educational assessment done by a psychologist or psychological associate would assess for a learning disability and ADHD. Once we had the assessment and its recommendations for accommodations in the classroom, we could approach the school to have his learning needs accommodated. They also suggested that a letter requesting an Identification, Placement and Review Committee meeting be submitted to the Principal. We had employee benefits that would cover part of the cost of the assessment, and since my son was also saying that he saw his future as earning a minimum wage job and living in a basement apartment, I felt there was no time to waste. I have to admit that my husband was not in favour of the testing.

Over that summer we had several appointments with the psychologist. My son was surprisingly willing to participate. The results were reviewed with him and we discussed that his brain was wired differently, and therefore he learned differently. We brought the report to the school, and his learning needs were identified at the IPRC meeting. He had regular meetings with the resource teacher and was allowed extra time to complete assignments and tests, and in a quieter room if he wanted. He didn't really want the accommodations, I think because he didn't want to be noticed by the other students. However, I saw that my son's self esteem improved and I know that his knowing about his learning style gave him hope.



In the end, after doing a victory lap, he did get his Grade 12 diploma. He had changed schools to get his last few credits and the teachers there encouraged his interest in business and accounting. After taking a year off and doing some travelling, he applied to a Business Program at Conestoga College. Again, I spoke to the Learning Disabilities Association who said that his learning needs could be accommodated at college if he spoke to the guidance department and presented to them his Psycho Educational Assessment. My son did so and although it was not an easy time, he did complete the 3 year program.

Throughout this time I attended the various workshops presented by the Learning Disabilities Association. I subscribed to their newsletter and armed with their information was better equipped to support my son through the education system and his teenaged years. I particularly remember hearing a neurologist discuss the male brain which was very interesting.

I am happy to say that my son graduated from Conestoga College and has been gainfully employed in his field of work for a number of years now. He and his fiancé have purchased a house, have a lovely dog and love to travel. He is an aspiring entrepreneur and he continues to shine at everything he sets his hand at. He is happy within himself and I truly believe that the information we received from the Learning Disabilities Association is behind this happy ending. I am so happy to have found out about the Association and do not hesitate to let others know about the support and programs that they provide.