



Idawc • Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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LDAWC News

November has arrived and LDAWC has been very busy. We held our 5th Annual Family Conference on October 19th – another successful event! Thank you to all our presenters who donated their time to help educate parents and caregivers (see page 9). This year's family conference included a silent auction which raised \$1,150 that will be put towards programs and workshops. Thank you to all businesses that supported this initiative (see page 10).

LDAWC's SOAR (Some Assembly Required) program is focused on Transitions to High School. This program began in October and will be offered again in 2020.

If you're not already following us on social media, it's a great place to get updates, interesting articles and ideas:



facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty



twitter.com/lda_wellington

Another offering of our Reading Rocks program is up and running – we will be starting the next offering in January 2020. We are always looking for volunteers for this program – contact us if you are interested.

Help support LDAWC and the United Way by purchasing tickets to select Storm games. Selling these tickets is a significant fundraiser for us every year. \$1 from each ticket will be donated to the United Way. See page 8 for game dates.



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Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Creating an Advocacy Binder on Your Child

Adapted from *Partnering with Schools for Student Success* LDAO online course

LDA Ontario www.LDAO.ca

<http://www.ldao.ca/introduction-to-ldsadh/articles/about-education/creating-an-advocacy-binder-on-you-child/>

As an effective advocate for your child you need to back up and support what you know about your child with written proof and store it in a Advocacy Binder. First you have to construct the system for long-term use.

Begin with the storage organization. You may want to have a dual system which involves your computer as well, but you should start with a portable system with hard copies. The most flexible and versatile system employs a 2 to 3 inch loose-leaf binder which has colour-coded sections for easy access. Build in large envelopes to store tests, report cards, commentary of any kind, and any other relevant material sent home by the school.

Always date everything and write a brief note attached with a paper clip so you can separate it easily from the original. The note should outline the significance of the document.

Never give away original documents — always make

copies if the need arises. Also, do not mark the original in any way. Keep records in chronological order from the most recent to the earliest material you have.

The **Table of Contents** or sections of your Advocacy Binder should include, but not be limited to, the following entries:

- **Profile of your Child:** This contains developmental, psychological/emotional, family and home life, medical and educational information. The purpose is to have a complete picture of your child, so that you can decide what relevant information to share.
- **List of Professionals:** This contains the full names of all professionals your child has had contact with, including telephone, email, fax, cell phone and address. Include therapist, doctors, counselors, and specialists of any kind and indicate the date your child was seen.



- Who was present at the time?
- When exactly did it occur?
- Why did it take place?
- Where did it happen?
- How was it resolved?

[illegible]



Right to Read Public Inquiry

The OHRC wants to hear from Ontario public school students, parents and educators about the experiences of students who have or may have reading disabilities.

Please contact us at:

legal@ohrc.on.ca

416-314-4547

1-800-387-9080



Ontario
Human Rights Commission
Commission ontarienne des
droits de la personne

The Ontario Human Rights Commission launched a Right to Read inquiry. LDAO has been at the table as this project was being planned and you will see a supporting quote from us on the webpage:

http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-launches-right-read-public-inquiry

The Media press conference is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yM5ljFi1hkU>



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Why is it Important to Build and Support Resiliency Skills for Students with LDs?

<https://www.ldatschool.ca/ate-support-resiliency/>

This question was received during the LD@school webinar, At the Heart of the Matter: Creating Classrooms and Schools that Support Well-being; click here to view the webinar recording.

Answered by Dr. Sue Ball, Chief Psychologist, York Region District School Board

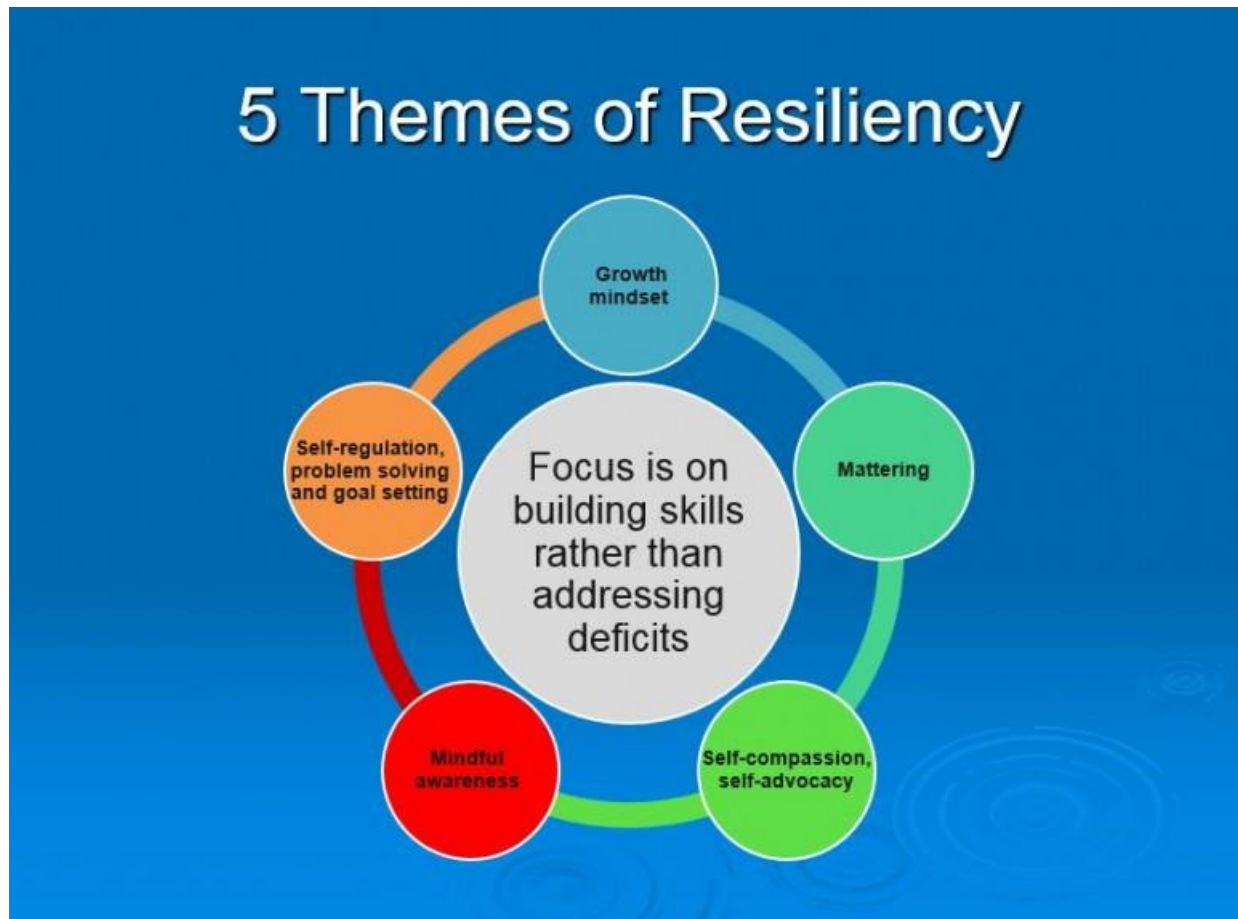
Resiliency is a key skill for everyone, not just for students with learning disabilities (LDs). The ability to overcome adversity, manage setbacks, and be adaptable to the new or difficult situations one is faced with, are central to success for everyone. It is even more essential that students with LDs develop resiliency. It is often much more difficult for students with LDs to show what they know and the strengths that they have. They also need to be able to advocate for themselves in order to access the accommodations, resources, or strategies that will help them to be successful.



Often, what makes it hard to be resilient is if students do not have the executive functioning skills that allow them to be adaptable, develop goals, resolve conflict, and regulate stress levels. If they are able to develop the skills to support themselves in these situations then they can be adaptable, they can learn, and they can access supports as they need them.

The York Region District School Board undertook a project to increase resiliency and well-being for all students, but there was a particular focus on students with LDs and mild intellectual disabilities. The five themes of this project came out of research, literature, surveys, and what our students, parents and guardians, staff and community members told

us that they felt were essential components of resiliency to be addressed. Overarching everything that was done was a focus on building skills rather than just addressing deficits. Through this Resiliency Project, we actually found that **students who have learning disabilities were more resilient in a way, because they knew who they were as learners**. Understanding who we are as learners is essential to developing resiliency. When we know who we are, what our strengths are, what our areas of need may be, and the strategies that help support us to become successful, we are able to build a sense of self-efficacy, confidence and competence because we know we can actually activate strategies and put things in place that will make a difference for us.



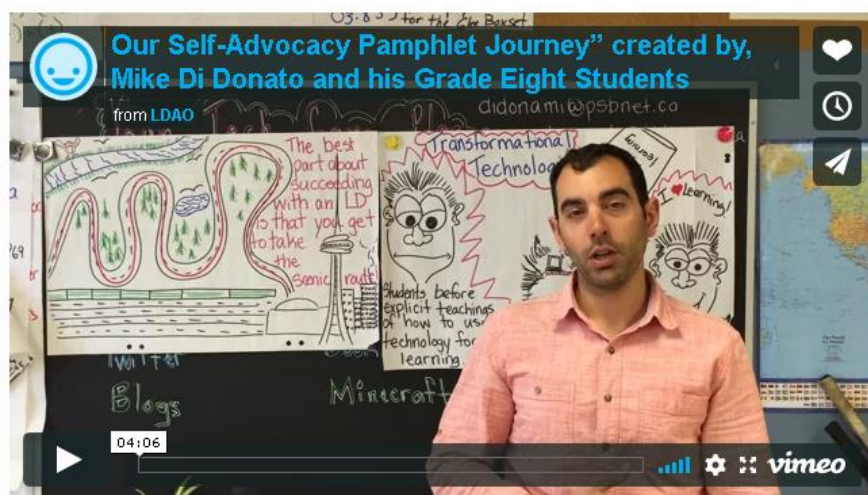
As part of the project we developed advocacy cards, which are essentially a student-friendly version of an IEP, for each of the students with LDs so that they knew their strengths, their areas of difficulty, and the strategies that allowed them to be successful. The strategies were applied specifically to their unique, individual profile and they were able to carry that advocacy card with them wherever they went and their teachers had a copy of it. These advocacy cards allowed us to support students in knowing who they were and in advocating for themselves. We found that these cards made a significant difference in their ability to approach situations in which they were not sure of how to proceed. It also helped

them develop a sense of competence and self-efficacy because they had strategies to help themselves.

Another big focus we had was a transition project from grade 8 to grade 9. We had our students in grade 8 go to their future high school and introduce themselves, using their advocacy card, to their new secondary team. That made a significant difference for our students in terms of their reported sense of confidence going in to grade 9, it lowered their levels of stress and our students reported a greater sense of their ability to transition successfully. It also helped the educators at the high school build a relationship with their incoming students and created a point of contact for welcoming them in the fall. We found that the educators and students who participated in the transition project reported that it made a significant and positive difference for all.

By the end of the Resiliency Project, our students had a sense of who they were, how they could advocate for themselves and had learned strategies that would help them be successful. Because we focused very much on strengths and on building skills, we also supported the development of executive functioning skills, stress management skills, self-compassion and a growth mindset perspective that we know are very important for developing resiliency.

Overarching all of these skills, was a focus on mattering, to give our students a sense that they mattered, that they were significant and had meaningful connections with others. We know from the research that **students' sense of mattering to others at school is associated with student success**, motivation and a greater sense of overall well-being. A sense of mattering is key because it acts as a protective factor and is fundamental to wellbeing for all students but particularly for students with LDs.



<https://vimeo.com/149441382>

Guelph Storm - Help Us Fundraise!

***Tickets are \$17.50 each
(adult regular price \$26)***

Help support LDAWC and The United Way! Get your Guelph Storm tickets from us!



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

Game dates are:

Friday, December 6, 2019 7:30 PM – vs. Barrie Colts

Friday January 3, 2020 7:30 PM – vs. Peterborough Petes

Wednesday February 5, 2020 – vs. Erie Otters

Sunday, February 23, 2020 2:00 PM – vs. Niagara Ice Dogs

To order tickets, contact us at info@ldawc.ca or (519) 837-2050.

2019 LDAWC Family Conference

LDAWC had a successful Fifth Annual Family Conference. Over 85 parents spent their day at St. James Catholic High School to learn and share. They left the conference with information and practical strategies on how to best advocate and support their children with learning disabilities. We would like to thank the following individuals for their time and expertise donated to this event:

- Dean Huyck
- Dr. Rose Freigang
- Dr. Sean Cameron
- Matthew Goetz
- Leanne Husk
- Valerie Marks
- Melissa McDowall
- Nadia Tonin
- Jacquie Weresch
- Cathy Chaput
- Sue Shaw
- Dr. Marian Mainland



Breakout topics included ADHD and mental health, IEP's, transitioning to high school, talking to your kids/teens about their LD, math tricks, parent self-care, how challenges make kids stronger and the newest tech options for students. This event is always a great way to mark October as learning disabilities month.

LDAWC was able to provide this event to participants for FREE due to the support of the following sponsors:



This year we included a silent auction as part of the family conference. We raised \$1,150!
Thanks to all attendees who bid.



Thank you to all organizations that donated.



ELLI BEL PHOTOGRAPHY



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November 2019 Peer Support Network



Come join our Peer Support Network and meet other parents on a similar journey. 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: November 27 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: Eramosa Engineering, 650 Woodlawn Road W, Block C Unit 4, Guelph, ON N1K 1B8 Canada

Cost: FREE

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ldawc-november-2019-peer-support-network-tickets-78884923931>

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT LDAWC!



facebook.com/LDAWellingtonCounty



twitter.com/lda_wellington



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The Importance of Self-Advocacy for Kids who Learn and Think Differently

By Andrew M.I. Lee <https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/self-advocacy/the-importance-of-self-advocacy>

At a Glance

- Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for what you need.
- Being a good self-advocate can help your child academically and socially.
- You can help your child develop the skill of self-advocacy at any age, but it's good to start early.

When your child faces challenges, you advocate. You talk with teachers, family members, and others about your child's needs. And you help your child get support in and out of school.

Part of being an effective advocate is teaching kids the skills they need to speak up for themselves. It's something you can start working on early with your child—and continue to work on over time. You can build the foundation for self-advocacy when your child is young and then teach more complex skills to grade-schoolers, middle-schoolers, and high-schoolers.

What Self-Advocacy Is

Self-advocacy is a skill that enables kids to understand their strengths and weaknesses, know what they need to succeed, and communicate that to other people.

Self-advocacy can be broken down into a few key elements:

- Understanding specific needs. (This is part of self-awareness.)

- Knowing what help or support will address those needs, like tutoring or classroom accommodations.
- Communicating those needs to teachers and others.

Let's say your child struggles with writing. A history class requires taking a lot of notes for homework. Without some kind of writing support, this is going to be difficult for your child.



Here's an example of self-advocacy in action:

Your child understands that taking notes is going to be a challenge and knows that technology can help with note-taking. So your child communicates to the teacher that writing is a challenge and asks to use a note-taking app.

If the teacher says yes, your child's needs are addressed. If the teacher says no, your child understands to talk to another person, like the special education case manager.

The Benefits of Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy helps kids learn by creating solutions for challenges in school. In the note-taking example above, the child would do better in class by using technology.

Of course, a parent could also advocate. But when kids self-advocate, there are extra benefits. Kids who exercise self-advocacy can:

- Find solutions to challenges parents may not be aware of
- Build self-confidence in their ability to learn
- Create a sense of ownership over their learning
- Develop independence and self-empowerment

These extra benefits can make a big difference in the long run. Instead of feeling powerless and dependent on others, kids with self-advocacy skills are prepared to take on life's

challenges. (Read one mother's story of how she learned it was time to empower her son to speak for himself.)

The benefits of self-advocacy go beyond academics. Kids who can effectively self-advocate can communicate in social situations and even explain to friends why they sometimes need extra help.

How to Build Self-Advocacy in Kids

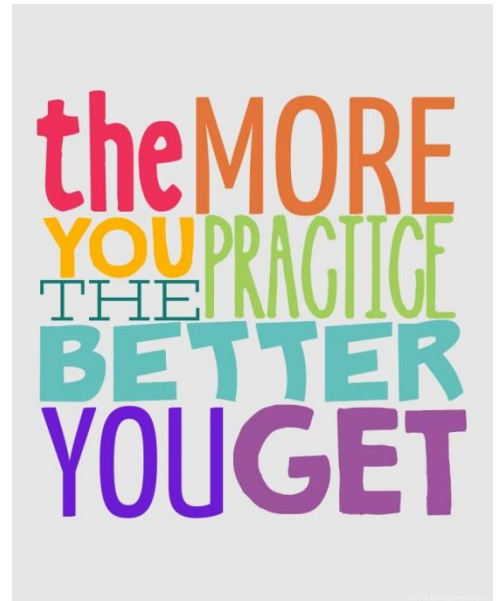
Because self-advocacy is so important, you may want to take specific steps to help your child build this skill. Here are some ways to help your child develop self-advocacy:

- Talk with your child about strengths and weaknesses.
- Have ongoing conversations about learning and thinking differences.
- Remind your child that asking for help is a good thing.
- Praise your child's efforts at speaking up.
- Encourage your child to use classroom accommodations.
- Find a role model for your child, like a mentor who learns or thinks differently.
- When a problem comes up, give your child a chance to solve it before stepping in.
- Let your child have a say in decisions about school.
- If your child has an IEP, encourage your child to attend IEP meetings.
- Consider adding self-advocacy goals to your child's IEP.
- Teach your child about legal rights and how to talk about them in a positive, constructive way.

As with any valuable skill, self-advocacy takes practice. Role-play situations that may come up to help your child feel more comfortable about asking for help.

You can also download a self-awareness worksheet to help your child outline strengths and weaknesses. Or you can fill out a 3x3 card together to give to the teacher.

Self-advocacy isn't easy for many kids. Shy kids, for example, may need different support in learning how to self-advocate. Other kids may feel awkward or even guilty about asking for help or for an accommodation. That's especially true if your child feels embarrassed about challenges in school. (Read one young adult's story of coming to terms with the feeling of "cheating" by using accommodations.)



Teaching self-advocacy can be an important part of your own journey as an advocate. Self-advocacy skills can help your child deal with current challenges and the ones that will arise in the future.

Key Takeaways

- Self-advocacy is an important skill that can help your child do better in school and be more independent in the long run.
- You can take specific steps to help your child learn self-advocacy.
- Self-advocacy isn't easy, but with practice your child can develop this skill over time.

Did you know.... LDAO has online workshops and courses

Online Workshops and Courses:

Select the links below for more information about our courses or workshops.

- [IEP 101 Online Workshop for Parents and Students](#)
- [Parent Workshop Series: Setting Up Your Child For Success](#)
- [Professionals Workshop Series: Introduction to LDs and ADHD](#)
- [Learning Styles & Self-Advocacy for Youth](#)
- [Learning Styles & Self-Advocacy for Adults](#)
- [Partnering with Schools for Student Success: Effective Parent Advocacy](#)



<http://www.ldao.ca/ldao-services/workshops-courses/>



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

