



Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston
 417 Bagot St., Kingston ON K7K 3C1
 (613)545-0373 (phone) (613)549 -7855 (fax)
 Website: www.ldakingston.com
 E-mail - ldak@ldakingston.com
 A United Way Member Agency



ldao

Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Winter 2008 Newsletter

Changes at LDAK

Please note the changes to our *email & website*:
 New email address - ldak@ldakingston.com
 New web address - www.ldakingston.com

Important General Meeting Notice

Parent workshops will replace our general meetings for January, February and March. See page 2 for details.

“Roast & Toast” Annual Roast Beef Dinner

The Learning Disabilities Association is sponsoring a **Roast Beef Fundraiser Dinner** on **Saturday February 9th, 5:30 pm** at **Christ Church Parish Centre, 990 Sydenham Rd.**



Cost: Adults: \$15.00 Children 6 - 12 yrs. \$7.50 Under 6 free Family ticket - \$35.00
 For tickets call the Learning Disabilities Association at 545-0373 or Donna at 549-7468.

Turning Blue Bluegrass Concert Series

LDAK will be holding a mini *Bluegrass Concert Series* at the *Christ Church Cataraqui*, 990 Sydenham Rd. for the months of February, March and April.

Musicians include:

February 20- *Newfound Road* March 12- *Alecia Nugent*

April 23- *Doerfel Family*

For additional information contact LDAK 545-0373.

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PLEASE POST UNTIL MARCH 28, 2008

GROUPS AND MEETINGS

Parent Workshops

Please note there will be no general meetings for the months of January, February and March. LDAK will be running a series of workshops for parents of **Secondary school students** from **January - March 2008**. These workshops will give parents the opportunity to network, discuss problems, problem solve and offer informational support.

Session One: **Monday January 28, 2008**

Topic: *“Time Management & Organizational Skills for LD & AD/HD Secondary Students”*

Speaker: *Linda Williams*

Session Two: **Monday February 25, 2008**

Topic: *“Behaviour Strategies at Home & at School for Parents of Secondary School Students”*

Speaker: *Dr. Sheelagh Jamieson*

Session Three: **Monday March 31, 2008**

Topic: *“How to Teach Students with LD & AD/HD to Self-Advocate”*

Speaker: *Marie Gavan-Knox*

The sessions will take place from **7 - 9 pm.** at **St. Lawrence College** on Portsmouth Avenue.

Cost: \$5.00 per person per session or \$8.00 per couple per session.

Please call the office at 545-0373 to pre-register.

*Special thanks to St. Lawrence College
for
providing the venue for these workshops.*

Annual General Meeting

on Monday April 28, 2008

417 Bagot St. 7 p.m.

Everyone welcome! No fee.

Topic:

***Become a Word Detective!**
Make Sense of the Spelling/Meaning
Connections through “Word Structured Inquiry”*

Speaker:

Peter Bowers: Teacher, Researcher & Trainer

Peter’s spelling training has taken him across Canada and the globe. He and his wife Sus Bowers, who is also an experienced teacher, started up WordWorks Literacy centre to help teachers and students enjoy investigating how the written word works. Come and find out a new method for teaching students spelling.

How many word families do you find in this set of words? misshapen, mishap, happen, perhaps, shapely, happily. Did you know that the way the words sign, does and business are spelled is logical and helpful for understanding how the spelling system works? This workshop investigates questions like these. This method, teaches you an alternative approach to learning spelling.

This workshop is designed for both teachers and parents. It has been widely recommended by teachers and psychologists.

What’s New at “The Reading Clinic”

Evening Hours

Second Location in the Township

Contact us for details:

jan@thereadingclinic.ca 613-547-5179

www.thereadingclinic.ca

Using the Research Getting the Results

A Tale Of Two Children: From School-age Struggles To Adult Success

Over seventeen years ago, just a week and a half into kindergarten, my bright, sweet five-year old daughter Dria told me she had “failed seven times, once each day” for failing to follow her teacher’s directions. By first grade, she had fallen into the lowest reading group and was misbehaving in class, to the extent that her teacher had begun sending home a daily report card stating, “I was good today,” “I was bad today,” or “I was fair today,” which I had to sign each night and return.

Based on Dria’s troubling school behaviour, our pediatrician recommended she be evaluated for attention deficit disorder. On the day of the assessment and diagnosis, I asked Dria if she knew why we had gone to see the doctor. Her reply was, “Yes, Mommy, because I am stupid.”

Dria’s younger brother, Jonathon, was also diagnosed with AD/HD and a learning disability when he had trouble learning to read in second grade. Nevertheless, over the years, both Dria and Jonathan have flourished academically, emotionally and socially. Today Dria is a senior honors student and student leader at UCLA and plans to go on to law school next year. Jonathan is a freshman in computer science engineering at UC Davis. Following is the story of how our children moved from school-age struggles to adult success.

Strategies for Success

Many parents and teachers have asked my husband and me what we have done that enabled our kids to become confident and happy achievers in spite of their disabilities. **While there have been bumps and uncertainties along the way, a key factor was that we consistently dealt with our children’s situations in a straightforward positive, problem-solving manner.** Neither of us was defensive or tried to assign blame. Together, we focused on what we needed to do to help them.

As parents, we found several strategies helpful. We:

- ⇒ **Focused on having realistic expectations of our children.** For example, we didn’t expect them to “behave” when they were overtired.
- ⇒ **Explained their disorders to the children in clear, unemotional terms** they could understand.
- ⇒ **Emphasized their personal strengths** (sports and math for Dria, and music and math for Jonathan).
- ⇒ **Carefully structured their educational environment**, including enrolling them in a year-round (51 weeks per year) private school that had smaller classes than the public school (significantly reducing distractions) and which did not assign homework. We also provided both children with remedial tutoring in reading.

A Tale Of Two Children: From School-age Struggles To Adult Success

Teaching the Teachers

One ongoing task was that of educating teachers, most of whom has a poor understanding of the needs of students with AD/HD and LD. As we discovered classroom accommodations that worked (e.g., seating the child front and centre in the classroom, and providing assignments in writing), we shared them with our children's new teachers. **As the children grew older, they learned to tell their teachers what they needed, thus learning to advocate for themselves.** After a discussion with a supportive teacher, Dria and I even developed a short handout for the high school faculty titled "AD/HD: What is it and so what?" which included the practical tips that we had discovered over the years.

Medication Made a Positive Difference

Perhaps most the important decision we made was to include stimulant medication in both children's treatment plans early on, before their academic challenges became overwhelming and they were self-conscious about being "different" from other children. Unfortunately, in 1988 the landmark Multimodal treatment of AD/HD ("MTA") study—which has since demonstrated that appropriate, monitored stimulant medication significantly improves the behaviour of children with AD/HD—was far in the future. Therefore, immediately following her diagnosis, Dria was not medicated, because her physician did not believe she "needed" medication.

Medication was introduced into the mix when Dria was in fourth grade, when her teacher expressed growing concern about Dria's deteriorating social interactions with her peer group, a common symptom of AD/HD. While no parents wants to medicate a child unnecessarily, we researched the benefits and risks of stimulant medications and decided to start Dria on Ritalin. In the mid-1980's when Dria was diagnosed with AD/HD, there was no negative media coverage that might have influenced our decision. We thoroughly explained the benefits of the medicine to our daughter, and explained it would help her behave as she desired. We compared giving Ritalin to Dria with giving insulin to a diabetic child.

As young adults, both of our children continue to take stimulant medication to manage their AD/HD. To this day, Dria still remembers when she began taking her medication and was finally able to relax and pay attention in class. She could just "be herself." Until then, she had to work very hard to keep from misbehaving. After she started taking Ritalin, her schoolwork and interpersonal relationships improved tremendously; she even began demonstrating substantial organizational and leadership skills.

Dria clearly understood the benefits of the medication (which at that time was not available in extended time-release form), and she took medication three times a day, including mid-day at school. Dria soon took responsibility for reminding her teacher when it was time to take her pill. Dria says now that she felt empowered with respect to her medication, and she always remained in compliance.

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In junior high school, Dria became completely responsible for administering her medication. She was always competitive and wanted to do her best, and she recognized that the medication helped her to be her “best self.” (once time-release meds were available, she made the switch.) Dria understood that she should never “share” her meds with anyone, so we never needed to “lock up the meds” or count pills and we never came up short.

When Jonathan was diagnosed as having AD/HD, we decided to start him on medication immediately. The results were remarkable. His teacher and choir director (neither of whom had been told about his medication) both commented within days on his improved attention and behaviour. While we still had to deal with Jonathan’s reading and writing deficits, his positive outlook soon returned. Jonathan also recognized the benefits of taking his medication and had no compliance or abuse problems. He benefited from the example set by his older sister.

My husband and I firmly believe the decision to give stimulant medication to a child with AD/HD is one that more parents should pursue. Appropriate treatment with medication frees the child from having to expend excessive mental energy just to stay in control without constantly fearing that he will be uncontrollably, unpredictably “bad.” We encourage reluctant parents to reconsider the positive long-term effects of giving children the stimulant medication they may need to enable them to be the “good” children they want to be, so they can succeed to the best of their ability.

Family History and Awareness

Having two children with LD and AD/HD has presented challenges. But it also fostered in us an awareness that led to earlier more effective intervention. For example, had we not been clued into the signs of AD/HD from our experiences with Dria, Jonathan’s condition might have gone undiagnosed for years. This is because his easy-going, less assertive personality made his inattention and impulsive behaviour less disruptive in a classroom. Consequently, teachers were annoyed but not alarmed by his behaviour. In the meantime, we had also discovered an undiagnosed family history of AD/HD and learning disabilities which led us to suspect something was amiss with Jonathan. Therefore, we took action to have him evaluated early on.

Our children have become independent, happy, and self-confident people who are able to fulfill their potential, because we identified and intervened before their self-images were permanently, negatively affected. Parents who intervene **can** influence the outcomes for their children.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships Available to Students with Learning Disabilities

Please visit LDAC's website for a full description of the following four of LDAC's scholarships, criteria and application forms.

www.ldac.ca and click scholarships



Doreen Kronick Scholarship: For graduate studies in a program which will train that student to work with persons with learning disabilities; \$500.00; application deadline is no later than **May 15**.

Carol Thompson Memorial Fund Scholarship: For students with learning disabilities to pursue college, private vocational school or an under-graduate program at a Canadian University. Value of Scholarship is \$1000.00; application deadline is no later than **May 15**.

The Donald Cummings Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarship for Students with Learning Disabilities: Open to students registered full-time as an apprentice in a program of 6 months or longer. Value of Scholarship is \$500.00; application deadline is no later than **May 15**.

The Joanna Townsend Applied Arts Scholarship - Awarded to a Canadian student with learning disabilities who has an interest in pursuing an education and/or career in any of the various applied arts programs. Value of scholarship is \$1000.00; application deadline is no later than **May 15**.

Other sites of Interest on Financial Assistance Programs and scholarships information for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.ldao.on.ca/landis.html>

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario - Gloria Landis Memorial Bursary

<http://www.neads.ca/en/norc/funding/contents.php>

National Directory of Financial Assistance Programs for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities posted by the National Educational Association of Disabled Students



<http://www.studentawards.com/english/can/>

Canadian database of thousands of scholarships, bursaries, fellowships, grants and other financial awards.

Roy Cooper Scholarship Award 2008: A \$1000.00 scholarship award will be given to a high school student who has a documented learning disability and will be attending University or College during the 2008-2009 school year, majoring in engineering and /or physical sciences discipline. Deadline for submission to local chapter is May 28th. Please contact LDK at 545-0373 for an application.

RESOURCES IN OUR LIBRARY

Behaviour Management & Skills Workshop - DVD

Camp Winston

This workshop video offers positive, proactive and practical strategies and skills to help parents and caregivers to support, understand and respond to children who demonstrate challenging behaviour.



AlphaSmart Keyboard

All ages

The AlphaSmart keyboard is designed to let students take notes, write essays or practice keyboarding without having to use a computer. The text can later be transferred into virtually any application on a computer, or directly to a printer.

The Learning Carpet Book, Carpet & CD - New for Educators

The learning carpet is a permanently gridded, 100 square floor carpet on which children from Kindergarten to Grade 6 and Special Education are able to develop their understanding of mathematics and language through kinesthetic learning. The carpet is used to teach addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, place value, graphing, pattern symmetry and geometry, through the constancy of the numerical squares and the walking and placing of the number cards. Approved by the Ministry of Education for early Math program for all grades JK-6. Lessons, place cards, CD are included.



Bully Dance - Video

This short video deals with conflict resolution and anger. For children in grades 1 to 6.

Hank Zipzer: The World's Best Underachiever - Henry Winkler (Books 1-12)

Henry Winkler struggled to learn in school and at age 30 was diagnosed with dyslexia. He wrote the Hank Zipzer series for children from the third through sixth grades to enjoy. He says children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia will find the books particularly meaningful. Henry Zipzer (nicknamed Hank) is a fourth-grader who is having difficulty learning. The books are about his humorous experiences.

SOAR HS - Some Assembly Required: High School

Learning Disabilities Association presents a down-to-earth guide to learning and learning disabilities for high school students.



The Oasis Guide to Asperger Syndrome

Patricia Romanowski Bashe and Barbara L. Kirby

This updated book includes new information on diagnosis, evaluation, medication, therapies and social skills development.

**L. D. A. K. EXECUTIVE
2007 - 2008**

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RESOURCE CENTRE HOURS

417 Bagot St
Kingston, ON K7K 3C1

**Monday to Friday 11:30 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday Closed**

Resource Centre Co-ordinator

Lana Greenwood

Resource Facilitator

Janice Barling

Disclaimer

THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION does not endorse or recommend any of the facilities listed or any of the methods, programmes, products or treatments offered by such facilities.

Our aim is to keep the community informed about services and facilities that are available to people with learning disabilities.

We urge consumers and service providers to review carefully any programmes and services listed in order to select those which will meet most appropriately the identified needs of the person with learning disabilities.

Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

CITY PROVINCE POSTAL CODE

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____

ANNUAL DUES:(Effective April 2/04)

Family/Individual - 1 Year Fee -\$50

Student (1 Year Fee Only) - \$20

Institutional (1Year Only) - \$125

Professional (Private Practices)
1 Year Fee - \$75

I would like to volunteer to help with:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Membership Advantages:

- ⇒ subscription to Communiqué & National
- ⇒ affiliation with local, provincial and national levels of LDA
- ⇒ free information on learning disabilities
- ⇒ free access to Kingston's resource centre and the lending library of LDA Ontario
- ⇒ discount on LDA conferences

**Your membership is important in providing
a stronger voice within all levels of the
Association.**

Please tear off and mail this form and cheque
(made out to **LEARNING DISABILITIES
ASSOCIATION OF KINGSTON**) to
Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston
417 Bagot St., Kingston ON K7K 3C1.

THANK YOU