

Speak Up for Ability 2022: Online Parents Forum - Program Schedule
Building Children's Literacy Skills at Home and School
Saturday, April 23, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm ET on Zoom (join anytime)

Schedule:

Please Note: Registrants can use the Zoom link to join the forum anytime for the sessions you are interested in. If you have not yet registered, be sure to **sign up here:** <https://buff.ly/3uj1itY>.

Time	Session	Speaker
10:00 - 10:10 am	Introduction	Helen Simson (LDAK) & Lawrence Barns (LDAO)
10:10 - 11:15 am	Keynote Presentation: OHRC on the Right to Read Inquiry	Nika Farahani & Reema Khawja (OHRC)
11:15 am - 12:00 pm	Parents as Advocates: Supporting children's literacy learning in the early primary years	Kristy Timmons (Queen's University)
12:00 - 12:30 pm	Lunch and transition to local sessions	N/A
12:30 - 1:15 pm	ALCDSB presentation: Language and learning disabilities	Chichi Mgbemena (ALCDSB)
1:15 - 2:00 pm	LDSB presentation: Phonemic awareness and phonics skills	Shamaila Aslam & Jamie Lloyd (LDSB)
2:00 - 2:15 pm	Break	N/A
2:15 - 3:20 pm	Panel Discussion	Sara Thomas Lindsay Heggie Allie Minuk Julie Goodman (ALCDSB) Stephanie Sartor (LDSB) Kim Lockhart (moderator)
3:20 - 3:30 pm	Closing Remarks	Helen Simson (LDAK)

Session Descriptions:

1. The Right to Read Inquiry & Report – Ontario Human Rights Commission

(10:10 – 11:15 am)



"On February 28, 2022, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released its [Right to Read inquiry report](#) on human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities, calling for critical changes to Ontario's approach to early reading, in areas such as curriculum and instruction, screening, reading interventions, accommodations and professional assessments. The inquiry found that by not using evidence-based approaches to teach students to read, Ontario's public education system is failing students with reading disabilities such as dyslexia, and other students. *Right to Read* includes recommendations to the Ministry of Education, school boards and faculties of education on how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn to read." – *Ontario Human Rights Commission*

Join Nika Farahani and Reema Khawja, senior counsel on the Right to Read Inquiry, for a presentation and Q&A about the key inquiry recommendations and why they are important to implement. This session is designed with attention to parents/caregivers and is open to registrants across Ontario.

2. Parents as Advocates: Supporting children's literacy learning in the early primary years - [Dr. Kristy Timmons](#) (11:15 am – 12:00 pm)



This presentation will discuss reading models that parents should advocate for in school. Dr. Timmons will highlight the importance of phonological and phonemic awareness and ways to support foundational literacy skills in the early primary years. This presentation will highlight concerns from parents about the impacts of COVID-19 on literacy and language skills and what parents can do to support these areas of concern.

Kristy Timmons is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. She completed her PhD in Developmental Psychology and Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Kristy's teaching experience spans the early years, elementary, undergraduate and graduate levels. Her research interests centre on the processes that influence young children's learning, engagement, and self-regulation. She has carried out research with children, families, and pre- and in- service educators.

3. Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board: Language and Learning Disabilities - Chichi Mgbemena (12:30 – 1:15 pm)



We cannot understand in print what we do not understand in spoken language. A key element to building proficiency in reading is to have well developed language comprehension skills. Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), a brain difference that makes talking and listening difficult, affects approximately 1 in 14 children. DLD is associated with risk for dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Join me for a brief session on how language and learning disability interact.

Practical strategies to support children and youth with language weaknesses will be provided.

Chichi Mgbemena is a Speech Language Pathologist at the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

4. Limestone District School Board: Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Skills - Shamaila Aslam and Jamie Lloyd (1:15 – 2:00 pm)



Phonemic awareness and phonics skills pave the way for students to develop strong literacy skills. Students benefit from explicit instruction as they learn to manipulate sounds (phonemes) and learn letter-sound correspondence. Using Dr. Kilpatrick’s Equipped for Reading Success resource and LDSB phonics resources (developed in collaboration with The

Reading Clinic), engaging students in learning is a blast!

Shamaila Aslam is an Innovation and Technology-Enabled Learning Support Teacher and Jamie Lloyd is an elementary educator at the Limestone District School Board.

5. Panel Discussion on Literacy and the Right to Read (2:15 – 3:20 pm)

In this open session, panelists will dive deeper into the theme of this year’s forum, “Building Children’s Literacy Skills at Home and School.” Topics include resources and strategies parents/caregivers can use at home to support children’s literacy skills development, key recommendations of the Right to Read Report for students with learning disabilities, and collaboration between parents/caregivers and educational partners in the new environment to promote positive outcomes for students with learning disabilities and/or reading difficulties. Question prompts have been developed with the participation of registrants. The audience will be invited to share additional questions with the panelists in the Chat and during the Q&A period.

Panelist profiles below:



Sara Thomas

An entrepreneur, business leader and mom, Sara's passion for advocacy started when her daughter's struggles with literacy became evident as early as Junior Kindergarten. Despite supportive, understanding staff and teachers nothing seemed to be working to help her daughter learn to read. After five years struggling to appreciate how best to support her daughter, a well-timed virtual workshop shone light. Finally, progress. The workshop was using a science based approach to reading. Sara finally understood the barriers to her daughter's education and has since shifted focus from her daughter to the wider community and system, realising the change she needed is needed for many and beneficial for all. A LDKA board member since March, Sara hopes to help spread awareness to other parents and find ways to support each other as we navigate these tricky systems. Telling our stories normalises our experiences and creates a sense of belonging. It isn't our fault. It isn't their fault. It's the system and change is coming.

Dr. Lindsay Heggie



Lindsay Heggie holds graduate degrees in Linguistics and Education, earning her PhD (Cognitive Studies in Education) in 2017. Her extensive background in the Science of Reading (SoR) extends over 15 years, from her time as a Knowledge Officer with the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network (CLLRNet) to her doctoral work on word reading and the component skills that make children successful readers. In her current role at Queen's University, Lindsay mentors and supports post-secondary students' academic skill and strategy development; she supports students who have learning disabilities and those who are typically-achieving, focusing on a wide range of topics including self-regulation skills and reading comprehension strategies.

Allie Minuk



Allie Minuk is a PhD student at Queen's University in the Faculty of Education, and Language and Literacy instructor in the Bachelor of Education program for Primary/Junior teacher candidates. Allie's doctoral work is focused on classroom placement as the underlying mechanism of inclusive education, but Allie is actively involved in all facets of literacy learning at Queen's. Allie is an active member of the Literacies Research Group, and has also contributed to several studies focused on different facets of literacy education. Drawing on relevant research and her own experiences as a classroom teacher of students with dyslexia and other diverse needs, Allie aims to equip teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students' literacy development in scientific and systematic ways.

Dr. Julie Goodman (ALCDSB)



Dr. Julie Goodman completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Dalhousie University in 1999 and has been a registered psychologist for more than 20 years. Since coming to the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board in 2004, Dr. Goodman has developed expertise in the assessment of children and youth with learning disabilities and other complex learning and mental health problems. Evidence-based approaches to screening, assessment, and remediation of reading problems are special areas of interest. Dr. Goodman is a parent to four grown children. Her youngest son experienced significant difficulties learning to read and was eventually diagnosed with a Learning Disability. Her experiences navigating the school system as a parent of a child with reading problems further emphasized the need for effective, evidence-based approaches to reading instruction and remediation.

Stephanie Sartor (LDSB)



Stephanie Sartor is an Associate Superintendent for Limestone District School Board. She has worked in 3 different school boards throughout her career as an elementary educator and administrator. Stephanie currently has responsibility for elementary literacy, which includes English as a Second Language programming and support.

Kim Lockhart (Moderator)



Kim Lockhart is a classroom teacher with specialized reading remediation qualifications. She has earned her Orton-Gillingham classroom educator certificate and works in the public education system. Kim is a Literacy Coach with the International Dyslexia Association Ontario, and has facilitated workshops for educators and parents of dyslexic children across Ontario. She also volunteers with the Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston. Kim earned her Master of Education degree from Queen's University, where she focused her research on instructional practices that support students with reading difficulties in French Immersion. Kim also has her FSL AQ qualifications.

Supporters:

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For Right to Read resources from the LDAO, visit: www.ldatschool.ca

