



# Idak • Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

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## Winter 2016 Newsletter

### *LDA Kingston Upcoming Workshops “FREE”*

#### **Accessibilities Workshop Series: (Free workshops)**

#### **Overview of Technology in the Classroom: Connecting School to Home**

**Presenter:** Mark Ryan, Assistive Technology Resource Teacher, Limestone District School Board

**Tuesday January 19th, 2016 Time: 6-7:30 pm Location: TBA (Kingston)**

**Future topics in this series:**

**Accessibility Features on the iPad (Feb 16)**

**Microsoft Office O365 Accessibility Features (April 12)**

**Making it Work: Accessing documents on any Device (May 17)**



**Space is limited. Pre-registration recommended. Info: 613-546-8524**

**[ldak@ldakingston.com](mailto:ldak@ldakingston.com) [www.ldakingston.com](http://www.ldakingston.com)**

#### **Tuesday March 1st, 2016 7-8:30 pm \*Free Workshop\***

Life with a child with AD/HD can be frustrating and overwhelming, but it is important to remember that children with AD/HD can and do succeed. As a parent, you can help your child overcome daily challenges, channel his or her energy into positive arenas, and build strategies for “learning to learn”.

Please join us on **March 1st** for our monthly workshop:

#### **“From Chaos to Calm: Building School Success at Home for a Child with AD/HD”**

**Presenter, Lynn Sadowski** has more than 20 years in the field of education. Her advocacy began as a mother of an LD student, but she has held a variety of roles including Head of Student Services, secondary and elementary teacher and Advocacy and Resource Counsellor for the Learning Disabilities Association.

**Everyone Welcome! Pre-registration recommended. Info: 613-546-8524 [ldak@ldakingston.com](mailto:ldak@ldakingston.com) [www.ldakingston.com](http://www.ldakingston.com) Ongwanada Resource Centre, Board Room (191 Portsmouth Ave, Kingston)**

**PLEASE POST UNTIL March 24, 2016**

Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston 1

# GROUPS AND MEETINGS

## The Reading Clinic

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL, RESHAPING FUTURES SINCE 2001

[www.thereadingclinic.ca](http://www.thereadingclinic.ca)

Specialists in Dyslexia and Learning Disabilities  
Yes! Reading, Writing and Math

**New!** Twice Weekly After School Sessions Available

2 locations: 559 Bagot St 1287 Woodbine Rd

Contact: Jan MacLean 613 547-5179

[jan@thereadingclinic.ca](mailto:jan@thereadingclinic.ca)



## *Quintilian Social Club*

An opportunity to meet new friends and practice social skills in authentic social situations.

Grades 3+ Contact Laura DeSousa, Director of Programming 613-542-0400

[www.quintilianschool.org](http://www.quintilianschool.org)



## KINGSTON'S ADHD PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Our group supports parents who have children with ADHD in the Kingston and surrounding area.  
We are a not-for-profit parent to parent support group.

**OUR MISSION:** *"To better the lives of children and Families living with ADHD"*

**Monthly** Support Meetings (Nov-June)    **Yearly** ADHD Awareness Campaign (June)



[adhpsgkingstonon@gmail.com](mailto:adhpsgkingstonon@gmail.com) 613-389-3894    [www.adhdsupportgroup.ca](http://www.adhdsupportgroup.ca) 255 Kingscourt Ave.

## **The Reading Room: Intervention, Treatment, Success!**

The Reading Room offers school year support for struggling readers. After school and online sessions are individualized to meet the needs of each student using multi-sensory, research based programs.



For more information call: 613-328-0223 or email [info@thereadingroomonline.com](mailto:info@thereadingroomonline.com)

# Nurturing Advocacy in Our Youth: Thoughts for Parents and Helping Adults

## **“They need to learn to advocate for themselves”**

This is a phrase I hear often from parents and teachers in my work with LD kids at a children’s mental health centre in Toronto. Who could disagree with that statement? It is our ultimate goal that youth will be able to communicate their needs effectively. But what we miss is that the act of “self-advocacy” often relies on skills and abilities that are still developing in our youth and we often have higher expectations for our kids with LDs than we do for kids who don’t have learning challenges because there is a higher need for accommodation. Often, the skills needed to advocate actually highlight an area of weakness for a student with an LD. If they could clearly express themselves in a written or verbal fashion, there wouldn’t be a need to do it in the first place!

Research suggests that most students are not ready to independently advocate for themselves until late adolescence. It also shows that self-advocacy skills greatly contribute to successful outcomes in children with LDs and mental health issues. We need to support our kids and nurture their skills and abilities to help them succeed in an age-and-stage appropriate way, building on their strengths. Ultimately, parents, teachers and students all agree - this is an important life skill to learn so we will explore some necessary steps for success. How do we get there?

First, I think it is helpful to actually define “advocacy” because there are many different interpretations and definitions. For this article, “advocacy” refers to “seeking active support for positive change”; therefore, “self-advocacy” means that one is taking action on their own behalf.

It is clear that the task of self-advocacy requires many high order thinking and communication skills that may still be developing, making it a gradual process that needs active support, and access to information and skills from adults in the students’ world. It also requires realistic expectations of the student by everyone involved.

This kind of process will take ongoing conversations by the larger team including parents, teachers, and the student themselves. We often have important meetings about a student where we don’t include them and yet expect them to self-advocate in the chaotic moments of classroom life when emotions may be running high. Practice in safe settings like arranged meetings so that supportive relationships can be fostered with school staff. This kind of relational safety is what will eventually lead to increased confidence and ability to communicate needs effectively in the moment. Again, these are skills that develop over adolescence and shouldn’t be expected without support and scaffolding across environments.

Do you hear helicopter blades bearing down on us from overhead? Let me be clear: I am not talking about taking over for a child - quite the contrary - I’m suggesting breaking things down into manageable sections and adjusting levels of support as kids move forward with their confidence and level of skills development, not unlike an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Where to start?

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# Nurturing Advocacy in Our Youth: Thoughts for Parents and Helping Adults

## “How to help the individual be ready for “self-advocacy”

### 1. Knowledge of Self:

Do they have a clear understanding of their LD? Do they know what will help them? This stage may take time and support as self-acceptance is a process. Clear, direct conversations at an age appropriate level can begin as soon as the diagnosis is given and can evolve with the child as they become mature and ready to share and integrate their own interpretations. Also, if adults helping the child can't answer the above questions, it may be a sign that additional information is needed - perhaps an updated assessment or additional exploration would be helpful.

### 2. Knowledge of Communication Skills:

Help them develop the skills to communicate their needs. Can they articulate things with you in a safe place during practice time? Can they start by saying a few words at a meeting with a parent/adult supporter with them before being expected to do it alone in the moment in front of their peers? Would they prefer to write a letter explaining things instead of doing it verbally? Use their strengths here - whatever modality they are strongest with, including bringing examples of where things worked or didn't work. Do they know how to give positive feedback? (Kids sometimes unintentionally put adults on the defensive with their brutal honesty.) Teach phrases to use and ones to avoid (“you never help me!”) If they can't do this with a parent at home practicing, they may not be ready to do it on their own. Go with them to start. Call a meeting but let the student “chair” it.

### 3. Knowledge of the System:

Do they know who to ask? When office hours are? A medium that the teacher prefers? Email for example? Right after class? Do they know the accommodations that are easier or more challenging for a teacher to provide? It is very difficult to know the system and you can see that this may take some ongoing communication and team building with those who are going to receive the requests so that everyone is ready and understands what the system requires for success.

### **TIPS:**

Plan for specific situations. Practice at home including things like tone of voice, body language, and word choices. Write a script, letter or an email.

Identify supporters. Who is your child's “go-to” person who they feel most comfortable with, who may be able to smooth the way for the student to advocate for themselves.

Understand school policies and discuss realistic expectations for support that teachers can offer.

Have a plan for when things go wrong—Brainstorm about what to do/who to go to if things aren't working

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(supply teacher in an exam won't allow accommodations for example). Students are often very good at articulating where problems happen in their day - ask them to come up with barriers so you can work around them. What are the next steps?

Finally, understand when a situation is not appropriate for self-advocacy and adults need to become more involved. Intervene directly if a student complains of bullying, or is upset and says they tried and "it didn't work". This can be demoralizing for a student and being told to "try again" is very hard to hear. Also, if the youth talks about feeling sad, depressed, overwhelmed, hopeless, angry or frustrated....these feelings may be signs that expectations are too high or even that mental health issues are present or brewing. Our kids need our help with feelings so listening and acknowledging them can go a long way to understanding and working together towards solutions.

Understand that no one person can do this alone: not our youth, not parents, not school staff. You can always bring on more team members including therapists, guidance counselors, and peers to help. It is through ongoing relationships and discussions that situations are understood, addressed and resolved. Remember that conflicts, mistakes, "failures", can be an opportunity to come together and have a more in-depth conversation.

You can see that communication and cooperation are paramount to this kind supportive approach to developing self-advocacy skills. Know that your efforts are worth it as you work together towards the goal of youth effectively advocating for themselves.

LDAO Communique: By Melissa Rowbotham

## Volunteers Needed

LDA Kingston is seeking to build our volunteer base for our *Charity Bingos*.

All volunteers must attend a 1.5 hour bingo information session prior to volunteering for any bingo sessions. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old.

The bingos are held in a quiet, smoke-free environment on Montreal Street and the session is 2 hours in length. Volunteers work in pairs from our organization. The volunteer's main job is to call back winning card numbers. Volunteers do not sell cards or handle any money. Volunteers may participate at their convenience.

If you are interested, please email Lana at: [ldak@ldakingston.com](mailto:ldak@ldakingston.com)

# Cultivating Resilience - Helping Children Develop Skills To Thrive in Good Times and in Bad

When we look at our 5 year old jumping rope or over-texting pre-teen, we do not see the 35 year old that they will eventually be. While we need to consider their happiness and success today, we also need to consider the skills they will need to navigate the increasingly complex world and become that well-adjusted 35 year old. In order to overcome adversity and view challenges as opportunities, they need resilience. Resilience is the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances, allowing our children to exist in this less-than-perfect world, while moving forward with optimism and confidence.

Every parent wants to shelter their child from physical pain, worry, heart-break or regret. Wouldn't it be great if we didn't have to be concerned about bullying, divorce, peer pressure, terrorism or poverty. But does sheltering children from "life" really benefit them? Consider that even if we could immunize children from disappointment and stress, they would never have the chance to experience the satisfaction of facing a challenge, overcoming the adversity and thereby discovering that they are able to cope with stress and misfortune. To appreciate success or experience joy, we need to be faced with some struggle, failure or rejection. Recognizing good fortune required experiencing misfortune.

## **What factors make someone resilient?**

Resilience begins with a positive attitude. Resilient people are optimistic. They can regulate their emotions and see failure as a form of helpful feedback. Resilient people have the ability to change course and move forward even after misfortune.

Resiliency is a mindset. Resilient people see challenges as opportunities and believe that they ultimately strengthen them. They seek solutions to problems rather than self-doubt, victimization or a "why me" attitude.

Resilience is often uneven. Sometimes a person can be extremely resilient in one area of their life, but need extra support in another.

Resilience is not a trait of "perfect people". Those seeking perfection are fearful of making a mistake and thus won't take chances unless they are sure of success. Resilient people do take risk, confident in their ability to overcome a failure and move forward.

In his book, **Building Resilience in Children and Teens**, Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg set out the 7Cs:  
**The Essential Building Blocks of Resilience**

### **Competence:**

When we notice what young people are doing right and give them opportunities to develop important skills, they feel competent. We undermine competence when we don't allow young people to recover themselves after a fall.

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# Cultivating Resilience - Helping Children Develop Skills To Thrive in Good Times and in Bad

**Confidence:**

Young people need confidence to be able to navigate the world, think outside the box, and recover from challenges.

**Connection:**

Connections with other people, schools, and communities offer young people the security that allows them to stand on their own and develop creative solutions.

**Character:**

Young people need a clear sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity.

**Contribution:**

Young people who contribute to the well-being of others will receive gratitude rather than condemnation. They will learn that contributing feels good, and may therefore more easily turn to others, and do so without shame.

**Coping:**

Young people who possess a variety of healthy coping strategies will be less likely to turn to dangerous quick-fixes when stressed.

**Control:**

Young people who understand privileges and respect are earned through demonstrated responsibility will learn to make wise choices and feel a sense of control.

**Bottom Line #1:**

Young people live up or down to expectations we set for them. They need adults who believe in them unconditionally and hold them to the high expectations of being compassionate, generous, and creative.

**Bottom Line #2:**

What we do to model healthy resilience strategies for our children is more important than anything we say about them.

While no parent wishes adversity upon his or her child, realistically we know “life” happens. Our children need to be capable of handling what the “road of life” throws at them—the ups, the downs, the bumps and the curves. They need to be prepared to cope with difficult situations and bounce back. If we want our children to fully experience the world—with all of its pain and all of its joy—our goal has to be resilience.

You can find Dr. Ginsburg’s book in the local library or visit his website at:

**[www.fosteringresilience.com](http://www.fosteringresilience.com)** to learn more.

## L. D. A. K. EXECUTIVE

**2015 - 2016**

President	Gail Eaton-Smith
Past President	David Williams
Vice President	
Treasurer	Pat Dudley
Secretary	
Members at Large	Bill Cormier Lynn Sadlowski Aimee Clark

## RESOURCE CENTRE HOURS

**Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday**

**11 am—3 pm**

**(or by appointment)**

**Saturday & Sunday Closed**

**Resource Centre Co-ordinator**

Lana Greenwood

### ***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
- ⇒ 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
- Please check this box if you agreed to receive your copies of Communiqué (provincial newsletter) by e-mail

**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  
116-993 Princess St. Kingston On K7L 1H3

***THANK YOU***