



Idak • Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston

The right to learn, the power to achieve

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Website: www.ldakingston.com E-mail: ldak@ldakingston.com

Spring 2020 Newsletter

LDAK and Covid 19 Impacts

The Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston is experiencing the impacts of Covid 19 and social distancing in a number of significant ways, especially in terms of funding. Despite this, the board of directors continues to operate electronically and board members and our staff person are working to keep the association connected to the community through social media and our website. Our phone line and email are being monitored on a regular basis.

Funding: We have experienced a loss of income from our volunteering at Community Spirit Bingo. While we are confident that LDAK has adequate funds on hand to continue operating for a while, we look forward to the re-opening and are discussing ways of making up funding shortfalls once society begins to open up again.

Summer Camps: At the present time, the Boys and Girls Club, our partner in offering the Reading and Robots Rock camps, is assuming that camps will go forward this summer but at the same time implementation is slowed down and we are waiting to see whether the camps go forward as planned. We will let you know as soon as we do!

The Annual General Meeting will go ahead on April 28 via an electronic platform. Members are encouraged to join the meeting at 6 p.m. The slate of directors for 2020-21 will be voted on. In the meantime, we continue to offer up to date information on our website and social media platforms. We hope everyone stays healthy and safe during these challenging times.

PLEASE POST UNTIL June 5, 2020

GROUPS AND MEETINGS

LDAK Annual Meeting

The LDAK Board of Directors invites all members and, anyone else interested, to our Annual Meeting to take place on

Tuesday April 28 at 6:00 pm

The proposed slate of officers for 2020-2021:

President	Helen Simson
Past President	Djenana Jalovcic
Vice President	vacant
Treasurer	Pat Dudley
Members-at-Large	Gillian Moren Sunaira Tejpar Gail Eaton-Smith

If you have not already, please email ldak@ldakingston.com if you wish to attend this virtual meeting.

The Reading Clinic

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL, CHANGING FUTURES SINCE 20

www.thereadingclinic.ca

Specialists in Dyslexia and Learning Disabilities

Yes! Reading, Writing, and Math Programs

Daily Intensive Instruction Available

Twice Weekly After School Sessions Available

299 Concession St. www.thereadingclinic.ca

Contact: The Reading Clinic 613 547-5179 jennifer@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**



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)

denise@adhdsupportgroup.ca

613-389-3894

www.adhdsupportgroup.ca

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships Available to Students with Learning Disabilities

LDAO:

365 Evans Ave., Ste. 202, Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2 Phone: (416) 929-4311

Fax: (416) 929-3905

Website: www.LDAO.ca



Roy Cooper Scholarship

- LDAO offers a \$1,000 scholarship award in memory of Roy V. Cooper, who volunteered for over 30 years as a board member of his local chapter in Ottawa, as board member of LDAO and LDAC, and as a mentor to individuals with LD and/or their families in the areas of self-advocacy and assistive technology.
- The scholarship recognizes an Ontario high school student who has a documented Learning Disability and who will be attending a postsecondary institution during the 2020-2021 academic year. The student must be pursuing a bachelor of engineering or a bachelor of science in a physical sciences discipline (please note: physical sciences do not include social sciences or technology majors).
- Mr. Cooper spent his working life in the engineering/physical sciences field.
- Applications are to be received by local LDA chapters by Friday, June 12, 2020. Chapters will recommend one candidate from their area each year to be placed in the provincial competition. Please contact your local chapter to obtain an application form:
- **Application form available at Online Scholarships Resources: ldakingston.com>Resources>Scholarships**

The *Gloria Landis Memorial Bursary* is no longer available.

NEADS National Students Awards Program:



<http://www.neads.ca/en/about/projects/ete2/scholarship/>

- The awards will be offered to outstanding applicants who meet the criteria of the program. The awards are paid directly to the post-secondary institution (in the students accounts) that the recipients are attending to defray the cost of tuition fees for post-secondary study
- Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada
- Applicants must have a permanent disability (a permanent functional limitation which affects the ability of the student to participate fully in post-secondary education).
- Applicants must be currently registered in **and returning to** a full-time program of study at an accredited Canadian post-secondary college or university. Full-time status is at least 40% of a full course load
Deadline May 10

Raising Exceptional Children with Social Skills Struggles: A Parent's Enlightenment

As every parent knows, learning disabilities can have a social component, and often these kids are out of synch with their peers. The pain of being ridiculed and ostracized can be heartbreaking. But there is hope. Here, parent and advocate Bernadette Pace shares her story and offers solutions and hope carved from a lifetime of experience.

Born into this world as creatures of social nature, our lives are intricately connected and affected by our interactions with others. From infancy we mimic those close to us and their feedback provides guidance. During childhood we begin to fine-tune our social know-how as we build new relationships and strengthen those already cherished.

But when neurobiological disorders, including learning disabilities (LD), involve difficulties with social cognition - the 'thinking' behind the practice of social skills- connecting with others can become challenging.

As a parent of three children, 11, 12 and 15 years of age, each diagnosed with different disorders and disabilities (ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Sensory Integration Dysfunction, Anxiety, Nonverbal LD, Language Processing LD), I am able to share insight into the challenges they face each day. The most significant observation is that although each child's diagnosis is unique and symptoms vary, one commonality remains prominent— social.

Unlike a physical disability, LDs are 'invisible' and not as easily recognized. Unfortunately, when others are unaware, a child's faux pas can be interpreted as intentional and incite criticism, teasing, or spur active avoidance by peers. He/she may be subjected to harsh judgements, and labels such as "rude", "obnoxious", "self-centred", "mean-spirited", or "insensitive."

Often a child having problems with attention and poor impulse control says or does the wrong thing at exactly the wrong time. A common misperception is that since the child looks 'fine' and is verbose, his/her errant ways are purely attitudinal.

In order to help my children and to advocate more effectively, I set out to become an expert on their respective disabilities. As I delved into various sources— visits with specialists, support group contacts, books, journals, videos, web information— I learned that our ability to relate well with others is contingent upon multiple complex functions within the brain, each of which is performed in a fraction of a second.

To date, various researchers have identified a number of interrelated cognitive processes involved in social interactions. A basic description includes: receptive language (how we take in information via the senses); language processing (how we identify, sort the incoming information and store/retrieve from memory); attention control, impulse control, and emotion control; problem solving skills (planning, previewing, and selecting appropriate responses); as well as monitoring outcome and adapting responses as necessary.

According to Dr. Ross Greene, Founding Director of the Collaborative Problem Solving Institute in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, and author of *The Explosive Child*, "This process (social information process) is non-stop and requires a lot of efficiency and flexibility. It's barely noticeable to people for whom it happens automatically, but it's very frustrating if you're not one of those people." ¹

Since LD manifestations are unique for each child, social interactions can be mildly-to-severely affected by deficient language skills. Similar difficulties arise when a child has poor attention and impulse control, as diagnosed in ADHD, or when a child has difficulty with emotion regulation (frustration tolerance) and cognitive flexibility (mind set shifting), often associated with Tourette Syndrome. Incidentally, it is not

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uncommon for children with disorders to have deficiencies in multiple areas and to varying degrees.

Research suggests as many as 75% of children with LD have social skills deficits. ²

On average a child spends about 1,000 hours a year in the classroom, accounting for less than 20% of his/her time. The remaining time is spent in social environments- hallways, playground, sports, recreational activities, and community settings- wherein the greatest challenges occur for a child with LD. ³

Dr. Marshall Raskind, an LD researcher, shares his perspective: "Children with LD are often socially rejected by their peers, and they have problems establishing and maintaining friendships...researchers continue to study the reasons behind such problems, which can be more debilitating than the academic difficulties most commonly equated with LD." (Research Trends: Social Information Processing and Emotional Understanding in Children with LD, www.schwablearning.org)

Such debilitation is painfully evident in school and recreational activities. Both environments require interactive prowess. Dr. Mel Levine, founder of All Kinds of Minds Institute, writes in his book, *A Mind at a Time*, "In relating to one another, kids constantly have to absorb and interpret social feedback. They need to pick up subtle cues etched on the facial expressions or body movements of those with whom they are interacting. Of course, if you are insensitive when it comes to social feedback, as is the case for many kids with social cognitive dysfunctions, you don't even notice you are infuriating the person you're with." ⁴

As my children progressed from primary to middle school, and after sampling various recreational outlets, they had established a track record of negative outcomes from being socially out-of-sync. Classmate birthday invitations dwindled and eventually ceased along with the phone calls for play dates. Discussions about their school day started to include recantations of being teased and excluded at recess. My children's unwavering ability to place themselves at odds with teachers, coaches, camp counsellors, and other adults further contributed to social isolation.

How does one wide-eyed, guppy-gasping parent handle a child's blip in social cognition? Upon recovering from brief shock, I recall a statement from Dr. Duncan McKinlay, Psychologist, Child and Parent Resource Institute, London, ON, during his "Putting on the Brakes" seminar. He stated, "It is always the child performing the inappropriate act, and it is always the disorder(s) making it difficult for the child to act appropriately."

In the past I tried to differentiate between what was "intentional" and what was "disorder" to decide how to respond. I have learned firsthand that it is better to error on the side of "disorder" and focus on skill building while teaching accountability, than to error on the side of "intentional" and repeatedly resort to upping-the-ante consequences. The latter decision carries a risk of cultivating feelings of hopelessness and disconnection.

It is my experience as a parent advocate that the combined support of specialist, informed and understanding school professionals and family members ensures a child with disorders/LD has the opportunity for positive learning experiences, strengthened skills, and healthy relationship building.

Today, with a strong parent-school team collaborating for student success, my children's needs are more accurately defined in their respective Individualized Education Program (IEP). The accommodations reflect our joint expertise in what works well. Many environmental stressors were reduced or eliminated, providing relief from a variety of symptoms caused by neurobiological disorders. School officials also addressed the teasing. These steps created more accessible opportunities for my children to enhance language skills and improve academics, thereby raising self-esteem.

Raising Exceptional Children with Social Skills Struggles: A Parent's Enlightenment

As for conflict resolution, an alternate model was introduced involving collaborative problem solving, described in Dr. Ross Greene's book, *The Explosive Child*. This strategy departs from the traditional reward and punishment method in changing a child's challenging behaviours and focuses on skill building in problem solving. The implementation of this program is responsible for my children's improvement in conflict resolution and for being viewed in a more positive light by peers and adults.

Additional coaching in social cognition, such as drawing attention to non-verbal feedback and reviewing unspoken social rules, is ongoing within a growing circle of support.

Understanding relationship building is a lifelong learning experience for all of us and helps me to keep my children's difficulties in perspective. Maintaining a positive outlook and celebrating their achievements, no matter how small, is the secret to success in overcoming adversity.

Resources

- 1 Greene, Ross W., Ph.D. *The Explosive Child*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY, 2005. (45)
- 2 Kavale, K.A. & Forness, S.R. (1996). "Social Skills Deficits and LD: A meta-analysis." *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 29(3): 226-237
- 3 Lavoie, Richard. (December, 2005 online chat with the National Center for Learning Disabilities). "Helping Children with LD Find Social Success." www.nclld.org/content/view/955
- 4 Levine, Mel, M.D. *A Mind at a Time*, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 2002 (234)

LDAO Communique Summer 2008

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

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

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

Kingston Frontenac Public Library & Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA)

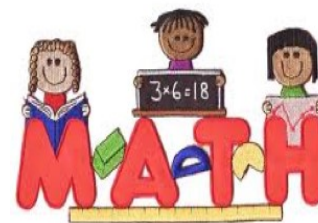
CELA provides over 500,000 titles in accessible formats for library patrons with reading barriers such as a learning disability or low vision/blindness. The collection includes materials for kids and teens in both French and English. Membership in CELA is free with a Kingston Frontenac Public Library card and also includes the option to join Bookshare. CELA resources can be read using a variety of technology and devices. Free and low-cost apps are available for iOS and Android devices and audiobooks can be downloaded from the CELA website.

Contact Jillann Rothwell at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library to register jrothwell@kfpl.ca

RESOURCES

Resources to inspire your **Child to Learn and Understand Math**. There's a ton of different resources geared to increase parent engagement on this Ministry of Education website below. Some tools include videos, guides for how to implement principles, and fact sheets. Plus, information is broken down by grade so it is easy to find what you need:

http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement-math/en/index.htm



The following are excellent short videos related to the Right to Read Inquiry.

Right to Read Videos - Ontario Human Rights Commission

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-read-videos>

Renu Mundhane, Chief Commissioner [11:03]

Lark Barker, President, Decoding Dyslexia Ontario [3:00]

Alicia Smith, President elect, International Dyslexia Association, sharing personal story as a mother of a 10 year old with dyslexia [4:41]



The website www.totallyadd.com is a great ADHD resource for adults!

Its content is fully Canadian, and a lot of the articles and videos are created by comedians Rick Green and Patrick McKenna. Best known for their documentary that first aired on Global and PBS in the US, *ADHD and Loving It!* is a fun exploration of what it's like to have ADHD, dispelling many myths.



International Dyslexia Association Ontario Branch

www.idaontario.com

Promoting literacy through research, education and advocacy. Offers information, support and advocacy for individuals with dyslexia, their families and educators in Ontario.

A blue banner for the 'IDA Ontario's Literacy and Learning Conference'. The text on the banner includes: 'International DYSLEXIA Association Ontario' with a logo, 'IDA Ontario's Literacy and Learning Conference', 'UNLOCKING POTENTIAL' in large white letters, 'April 25, 2020', and 'Ontario Science Centre, Toronto or live stream'. It also features a 'sponsored by Microsoft' logo and a graphic of a glowing keyhole.

L. D. A. K. EXECUTIVE

2019 - 2020

President	Djenana Jalovcic
Past President	Gail Eaton-Smith
Vice President	Helen Simson
Treasurer	Pat Dudley
Member at Large	Gillian Moren

RESOURCE CENTRE HOURS

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday

11 am—3 pm

(or by appointment)

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

We encourage all individuals interested in learning disabilities to become a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), and by doing so automatically become a member of Kingston chapter (LDAK). Visit the LDAO website for further information and benefits of memberships, and a secure online application form.

See <http://www.ldao.ca/about/membership/>

If you wish to use cash or cheque, print out the online form and submit to us directly at our address (below) and we will submit your application to LDAO.

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Kingston, ON K7K 4C2

Be sure to check out our website at www.ldakingston.com and find us on **Facebook** for current news!

Like us on Facebook!

Resources

Teaching LD www.teachingld.org

TeachingLD is a service of the **Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)** of the **Council for Exceptional Children**. DLD is the largest international professional organization focused on Learning Disabilities. The purpose of TeachingLD is to provide trustworthy and up-to-date resources about teaching students with Learning Disabilities.

Integra Program www.childdevelop.ca

An accredited Children's Mental Health Centre located in Toronto, dedicated to helping children and adolescents who experience social, emotional and behavioural problems related to their learning disabilities. Free tips sheets available under Resources.