



# Idak • Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston

*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

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## Winter 2018 Newsletter

### Save the Date!

#### On April 14, 2018 Learning Disabilities Association

is joining forces with the **Limestone District School Board** to organize the **Parents' Symposium**. If you are interested in hearing more about **resiliency**, **anxiety** and **depression**, and **success with learning disabilities** make sure that you join us in April at Bayridge Secondary School for the event funded by the Ministry of Education, Parents Reaching Out Grant. Listen to the experts in the field who will give key note speeches, get answers to your questions, and network with parents, educators, and representatives of Kingston community organizations that support education and success of all students.

More details to follow. We are looking forward to seeing you all in April.

#### Upcoming Presentation: "Assisted Technologies"

Pat Dudley, board member with the Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston will be reviewing "Assistive Technologies" with United Parents of Bayridge on **Wednesday March 7th at 6pm** at Bayridge Public School located at 1066 Hudson Drive.

If you are in need of childcare please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/United-Parents-Of-Bayridge-1873636589574878/>

All welcome.

**PLEASE POST UNTIL April 18, 2018**

## GROUPS AND MEETINGS

### 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)  
adhpsgkingstonon@gmail.com 613-389-3894    www.adhdsupportgroup.ca 255 Kingscourt Ave.

### The Reading Clinic

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

2 locations: 559 Bagot St 1287 Woodbine Rd

Contact: Jan MacLean 613 547-5179    jan@thereadingclinic.ca



### LDAK Now Accepts Donations Online

LDA Kingston has chosen **CanadaHelps** to process our online donations. **CanadaHelps** is fast, secure and an economical way for the LDAK accept donations online.

Just visit [www.ldakingston.com](http://www.ldakingston.com) and click the "Donate" button on the home page. Tax receipts are sent electronically, to the email you entered, following completion of the online donation process.



# Just Try Harder!

## Techniques and Methods to Improve Focus and Concentration

In a culture that demands more and more attention shifting and time splitting, our ability to focus and concentrate becomes even more challenged. Regardless, these abilities are like a muscle and by implementing some simple techniques, can be used to increase productivity.

Being able to focus and concentrate are the keys to increasing your productivity. It doesn't matter what you're working on, whether it's a report for work or a hobby, a project or a task at home. If you can't focus on what you are doing, it will take a lot longer to complete the job.

Whether you're being distracted by employers, coworkers, phone calls, family members or random thoughts and worries, every time you restart a task you have to spend time getting back up to speed or back into a productive frame of mind.

Many people with or without ADHD/LD struggle to stay focused in a single task or project for an extended period of time. In fact, recent research reveals that almost half of all interruptions are "self-interruptions," where people interrupt themselves and start working on something else without any external trigger distracting them.

The good news is that focus and concentration work a lot like a muscle. Just as you can increase the strength and power of any muscle through exercise, you can increase your ability to focus and concentrate through practice.

**Here are a few suggestions for building your focus "muscles".**

### **Practice concentrating**

An athlete doesn't just engage in his sport during competitions. He practices various aspects of his sport when failure or success don't matter. Likewise, practice concentrating when you don't have to, so that you'll perform better when you do. The next two suggestions are exercises to help you practice.

### **Focus on an object in your environment**

Pick an object in your environment and just observe it. Notice its colors, textures, shapes and any movements it may have. Don't analyze anything about it, just watch it and notice it. If your mind starts to wander, bring your attention back to the object. Set a timer and practice for one or two minutes at a time.

### **Observe your breathing**

This exercise is similar to observing an object, but you're going to focus on your breathing instead. Close your eyes and just notice your breath flow in and out of your lungs. Don't try to do anything with it. Just practice putting all your focus and attention on it.

### **Practice separating yourself from your environment**

When reading or working at the computer, imagine sound-proof walls coming up around you and separating you from your surroundings. This is particularly useful if you have to work in a noisy or busy environment. Practice this intentionally for a few minutes.

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# Just Try Harder!

## Techniques and Methods to Improve Focus and Concentration

### **Set focus goals**

Have something to shoot for can help you focus on your work. Start out with a simple challenge, like focusing for 5 or 10 minutes without distraction. Once you've conquered that simple goal, start stretching yourself to 15 minutes, and then 20 minutes. Keep increasing the goal until you can focus for 30 minutes without interrupting or distracting yourself.

### **Limit focus time**

Don't focus intensely for more than 60 minutes at a time. Just as your body needs a rest from time to time, so does your mind and the harder it's working the more often it needs a break. After 50-60 minutes, take a small break to renew your ability to focus.

### **Use artificial stimulants in moderation**

Stimulants like caffeine and sugar may give you a short term boost, but if you overuse them, they can cause anxiety, irritability and make it harder to focus. If you use a lot of caffeine, try to gradually reduce your use to a more moderate level.

### **Write down distracting thoughts**

Rather than trying to suppress distracting thoughts while you are working, write them down so you can come back to them later. This will automatically release the nagging thought and free your mind to focus on what you are working on right now.

### **Use a do not disturb sign and turn off tv, radio, telephone, e-mail, and internet**

Let others know that you don't want to be disturbed and eliminate as many avenues of interruption as possible. Sometimes this may mean coming into work early when there are fewer distractions or working in an unusual location, like an unused conference room.

### **Reduce distractions ahead of time**

If you know something is likely to come up during your focus time, try to deal with it before you get started. This includes getting a snack or drink if you are likely to get hungry or thirsty while working.

### **Notice yourself getting distracted**

If you catch yourself getting distracted by wandering thoughts, just notice that without judgement and bring yourself back into focus.

### **Do something physical to re-establish your focus**

Sometimes you need a physical cue to re-establish your focus. For example, writing, or typing or picking up a pen can help you get your mind back to the task. Or use the "Tunnel Vision" method and cup your hands around your eyes like blinders on a horse and aim your vision at the work to be done.

### **Develop greater interest in your task**

It's easier to focus on something you're interested in. Think about any aspect of the task that makes it interesting. If the subject doesn't interest you, maybe you can find interest in how the task will benefit you or someone else. Or may-be you can focus on the skills involved in performing the task. Challenge yourself to improve your performance over time.

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# Just Try Harder!

## Techniques and Methods to Improve Focus and Concentration

### Recognize conditions that promote concentration

When do you find it easiest to concentrate? When the light is bright or dim? When there's silence or when there's background noise? Do you concentrate better in a cleared space or do you focus better surrounded by clutter? Can you concentrate better when you're alert or when you're calm and maybe a little tired? Plan your highest leverage focus periods for when circumstances are best.

### Create a space for focused work

Once you know what conditions promote your ability to focus and concentrate, intentionally set up your workspace and working environment to incorporate as many of them as possible.

### Practice the other important rule

To increase the length of time in which you can comfortably focus, every time you feel like taking a break force yourself to go five minutes more and then take your break. Do this until you can focus for 50 minutes without taking a break.

These simple tips and exercises will help you develop your focus muscles and enhance your ability to concentrate on a single project for extended periods. Pick your favourite one and start implementing it this week so that you see your productivity develop.

LDAO Spring/Summer Communique 2016 By Ahmad Feroz Hematyar

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## LD @Home



**LD @home**

**NEW WEBSITE with FREE RESOURCES**  
for parents, students and families dealing with LDs.

# The ADHD Files

## **Reefer Madness: Parenting ADHD Kids**

Ok, Universe. I can take a hint. Twice in the past week I've found myself talking to concerned adults (one parent, one teacher) about the connection between marijuana use by teenagers and young adults and ADHD.

This tells me that there's still not enough out there on this topic, so I'm devoting this column to the subject. I've written about ADHD and self-medicating in previous posts, but obviously it's important to keep talking about it.

One concern that's expressed time and time again by parents of ADHDers is that if they put their ADHD kids on medication, especially stimulant medications, before long, the kid'll be smoking dope, snorting coke, and chomping on 'shrooms. The fear is that legit ADHD drugs will act as a gateway drug, a one-way ticket to la-la land.

### **Fear not, Mom and Dad, your ADHD Angel can be kept away from angel dust**

I know it's counter-intuitive Mom and Dad, but putting a kid on an ADHD medication when they need it is actually one of the best things you can do to keep them off street drugs and prevent them from self-medicating.

There's a reason your son or daughter would be using marijuana in the first place. Here's an analogy: we need to eat, right? Let's say for some reason, they couldn't get healthy food. If left to their own devices, they'll grab whatever's easily grabbable, whatever makes them feel good. They'll eat crap. Chips, pop, fries, pizzas, you name it. Heck, if they're smoking dope, they'll be eating twice as much of it. They still gotta eat, right? (I admit, not all teens will do this, but a lot will. I'm just trying to illustrate a point, so cut me some slack here).

### **Balancing the Brain**

If your kid's got an ADHD brain, by definition, there's something biochemically out of whack. So they're going to (consciously or subconsciously) do whatever they can to get their brain back into whack.

Research backs me up on this. Dr. Kenny Handelman, a psychiatrist who specializes in adult and adolescents with ADHD, says a lot of teens with ADHD use marijuana to self-medicate for hyperactivity and agitation. Handelman also says that research clearly shows that marijuana lowers thinking abilities and memory, but that teens "...may feel like they can concentrate (better), because they are less hyperactive and restless." (from Attention Difference Disorder, How to Turn Your ADHD Child or Teen's Differences into Strengths in 7 simple Steps, Dr. Kenny Handelman, 2011, p.201).

Think of it this way: there's a reason ADHD is in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM IV). It's a condition that causes a lot of trouble for those who have it. We're beginning to amass more and more evidence that our brains are not only chemically, but also structurally different. It makes sense that kids grasp at whatever they can to try and alleviate some of the symptoms they're feeling, whether it's hyperactivity, anxiety, overwhelm, social isolation, whatever. On the other hand, if you as the parent nip it in the bud (if you'll pardon the expression) by getting your son or daughter appropriate

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# The ADHD Files

diagnosis and treatment, which often includes an ADHD medication, their symptoms will be addressed and they'll no longer feel a compelling, even desperate need to make themselves feel better.

## **Here's some tough love for Parents**

It goes deeper than chemistry. Think about it: if your kid is untreated, especially if they're a girl, research shows that their ADHD-ness has a strong chance of messing up their social lives, leaving them feeling like a lonely loser. This can spiral into depression, which will eventually sabotage their grades, leading to low self-esteem, and finally, the need to escape from these compounded crappy feelings.

Now you've got yourself a kid who's not only hooked on illegal drugs, but a junior alcoholic, making bad choices, getting into trouble, contracting STD's, and (if they're a girl) with an unwanted pregnancy.

Ok, I've deliberately painted an extreme picture. But it's by no means over-the-top or exaggerated. I was one of those undiagnosed girls, I should know (don't read too much into that; you'll have to read my book for the full scoop.)

## **The Good News**

Now, here's the good news: with the right treatment, including not only medication (if that works for your child, and there are about 10% for whom it won't be effective), but also appropriate help with academics, counselling if necessary (preferably including some sessions with the whole family), lots of support and encouragement, diagnosis of any learning disabilities or other co-existing conditions (depression, anxiety, bi-polar and other conditions often accompany ADHD), and whatever else your child might need to successfully manage their ADHD symptoms, that beautiful, creative, wacky, one-of-a-kind kid of yours can flourish.

And you might even keep him out of jail while you're at it.

LDAO Spring/Summer Communique 2016 By Zoe Kessler, BA, B.Ed.



With support from the Ontario Ministry of Education's Special Education/Success for All Branch, LDAO has developed a bilingual resource designed to provide Ontario educators with meaningful information to help support students with learning disabilities, known as LD@school.

***New Video!*** Blended Learning: Levelling the Playing Field for Students with Learning Disabilities

***New Learning Module!*** An in-depth look at executive function.

***Podcast:*** TalkLD Special Edition

**Stay up-to-date and join our bi-weekly newsletter.....[www.ldatschool.ca](http://www.ldatschool.ca)**

## L. D. A. K. EXECUTIVE

**2017 - 2018**

President	Djenana Jalovcic
Past President	Gail Eaton-Smith
Vice President	
Treasurer	Pat Dudley
Secretary	
Members	Helen Simson
at	Lauren Baker
Large	

### RESOURCE CENTRE HOURS

**Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday**

**11 am—3 pm**

**Resource Centre Co-ordinator**  
Lana Greenwood  
(other hours by appointment)

#### ***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.

Learning Disabilities Association Kingston  
817 Division St. Unit 108  
Kingston, ON K7K 4C2

Be sure to check out our website at [www.ldakingston.com](http://www.ldakingston.com) and find us on **Facebook** for current news!

**Like us on Facebook!**

### **For Your Information.....**

#### **www.LD@home**

New website with free resources for parents, students and families dealing with LDs.

LD@home features:

Expert Advice, Articles, Personal Stories, Videos, Webinars and Podcasts

#### **The ABC's of Mental Health**

<http://www.hincksdellcrest.org/ABC>