

Learning Disabilities Association of York Region



What's Inside

Self Esteem	2
Kid Business	3
Community Business	4
Fun and Games	6
Parent matter	8
Program Information	8
Fun and Games	10
Volunteers	11
Websites of Interest	12



Our Mission

To provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education & services and to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities in today's society.

Living with ADHD During the Holidays

Adapted from Living with ADHD at Christmas Time (<http://homewithheather.com/home-family/kids/living-with-adhd-at-christmas-time/>)

The Holidays are supposed to be fun filled with different activities and treats. However, for children with ADHD this amount of overstimulation and lack of scheduling can be hard on them. Tools we use to help manage behaviours such as scheduling, routines and avoiding overstimulation are frequently left behind in the hustle and bustle of the holiday excitement.

Here are some tips that can make the holiday less stressful for your child and you!

- Try and keep the routines. Routines help organize and set expectations.
- Use a calendar to help schedule events. Having a calendar in their bedroom or kitchen allows children to be able to look and see what the expectations are for that day.
- Review expectations before activities.
- "Try" to limit sugar. You have to be reasonable on this one. Let them have some of the goodies but try and mix it in with some healthy snacks as well. Popcorn or nuts can make healthy snacks.
- Buy presents they are passionate about and not just the newest trend. If your child likes to draw, buy them something that feeds their talents. Also buying gifts that you can do together.
- Spend time with your child. Nothing is more special than the time you spend together.



As much as you can, be planned and prepared for the Holiday excitement. It will make the holidays more enjoyable for your child and you.

Self Esteem

Comeback Kids

School is a difficult place for any child. When you add a Learning Disability or ADHD into the equation it can become even more difficult. The good news is that by teaching children how to be resilient we can help them get through it all and even have fun. Here are some strategies you can use:

Focus on Strengths

Kids are all aware of their needs - they are reminded of them everyday. Resilient kids are able to look beyond their needs and focus on their strengths. It can be hard for kids to focus on their strengths and that's why you are right there to help them. By focusing on their strengths you are letting them know that they are not defined by their Learning Disability. There may be areas that are hindered by their Learning Disability but there are areas that they are strong in as well. Making a point of highlighting your child's strengths can go a long way in building a high self-esteem.

Give Credit for Success

Once children find things they are good at they may still be reluctant to acknowledge their



own success. Try to find chances to give credit to your child for their accomplishments. Some children with Learning Disabilities are reluctant to accept credit with claims that "they just got lucky." Do not let them dismiss their accomplishments.

Help Your Child Solve a Problem

Turn a mistake into an opportunity to problem solve. Knowing how to find solutions is an important part of being a resilient kid. Instead of criticizing your child, work with them. You can try something like "I notice that you are having trouble with controlling your feelings. What are some ways we can work on that?"

Share Your Own Struggles

Let your child know about your own struggles so they

do not feel so alone with theirs. This does not mean you have to share information about financial worries or marital problems but rather age-appropriate problems.

Teach Your Child to "Stick with It"

You are the one setting the examples for your child. This can be done by not giving up when confronting hurdles of your own.

Help Your Child Help Others

People with Learning Disabilities need people they can depend on but they also need people who depend on them. Helping out by doing chores builds a sense of competence. Beyond this children can participate in community service which will allow them to feel that they are making a difference in other people's lives.

Be There for Your Child

Let your child know that you love them. All these other strategies rely on the fact that your child knows that you love them and will be there for them.

Adapted from McCarthy, L. (2007). Comeback Kids. *ADDITUDE*. 8, 2, 36-39.



Winter Activities for Kids

It's cold outside. You're locked in the house with your kids on a snowy winter afternoon. What should you do? Sit yourselves in front of the TV? No way! We've got some great ideas for activities you and your kids can do during the winter months. Some will take you outside and others will keep you in the comfort of your kitchen; so grab your mittens, some kitchen utensils, and lets get started!

Snowball Science

Grab a breath of fresh air by going for a walk around the yard or community. Have the children each make a snowball during the walk. When you get home, measure and weigh the snowballs. Then put the snowballs in dishes in various places around the house (i.e. by the radiator, beside the window). Have the kids monitor the time it takes for the snowballs to melt in each location and how much water each produces.

Ice Candle Holders

In need of some extra outdoor lighting? Find a large metal bowl, a plastic yogurt container, and a cupful of small stones or coins. Start by pouring a couple inches of water into the mixing bowl. Place it outdoors (or in the freezer) to freeze. Once it is frozen, fill the yogurt container with the stones or pennies and place it on the centre of the ice in the bowl. Slowly pour more water into the bowl, so that it nearly reaches the rim of the smaller container, and let it freeze solid. To remove from its mold, run warm water on the outside of the bowl and the ice should slip out. Next, dump out the contents of the inner container and pour in warm water to loosen it. Remove the container and place a votive candle in the opening. The result is beautiful, festive lighting for the outdoors!



Holiday Napkins

Looking for a new way to dress up your holiday table? Have the kids design an individual napkin for each guest. Find some machine-washable napkins (as many as you will have guests), multi coloured felt, scissors, fabric glue, mini pompoms, sequins and anything else you think you could use. You can then cut decorative shapes from the felt, such as a dreidel, Christmas tree, or reindeer. Then simply glue the shapes to a corner of each napkin and decorate them with glued-on sequins and/or mini pom-poms. You can even personalize napkins with names or colours. They are sure to be a hit with holiday guests!



Snow Forts

Snow forts are a surefire place for kids to spend winter afternoons. After a few hours of shoveling and molding, your children will have created their own winter hideaway. To help your kids find shelter in a snow fort, all you need is snow, snow and even more snow. If there are a lot of you, make it a game. Who can build the biggest fort? Who can make one that looks the most like your house? Make an entire city in your front yard!

Yummy Ice Cream

Make Snow Ice Cream! All you need is 3 cups loose, clean snow, 2 tbsp. milk, 1/4 cup sugar, and 1 tsp. vanilla extract. Just mix all the ingredients, sample the result and add more sugar and vanilla extract if it isn't tasty enough. Serve cold!

Information gathered from www.familyfun.com and www.activehealthykids.ca

Homelessness , Poverty and Learning Disabilities in York Region

Homelessness and poverty are an invisible reality in York Region. Often, these issues are viewed as affecting only “big cities” because this is where poverty is most visible. The homeless population can be seen on street corners, in shelters and drop in centers and sleeping in cardboard boxes. However, this picture does not describe the affluent towns of York Region; and nonetheless, the homelessness and poverty exist here too. One in 10 people in York Region live below the poverty line¹. More than 5,500 people are on the waiting list for social housing¹. There are even abandoned commercial and residential buildings being used as shelter for homeless families not far from prosperous neighborhoods in Richmond Hill; other families are forced to live in cars, trucks or tents in order to make ends meet. The York Region Food Bank reported an almost 40% rise in usage of their service from 2001 to 2006². Many food bank users are employed full time, but still are unable to support their families. The information presented here represents a scary reality.



One in 10 people in York Region live below the poverty line.

How does this relate to Learning Disabilities? Well, let us consider that many people with Learning Disabilities that are not taught successful coping strategies are unable to attain suitable employment. Thus, they may end up working low paying, un-stimulating jobs; often not making enough money to bring them above the poverty line. Also, many adults with Learning Disabilities who have not had early assessment and intervention have difficulty maintaining employment due to difficulties in communication, organization or comprehension and a lack of strategies to cope with their disability in the work setting. This is not a result of low intelligence, lack of motivation or laziness; it is the reality of children with Learning Disabilities who do not receive intervention who then grow into adults with Learning Disabilities who are unable to cope successfully.

Also, living in poverty is often an unstable environment for children. This is especially difficult for

In fact, one study showed that 45 % of homeless children met the criteria for Learning Disabilities but only 22% had ever received special education testing or accommodations in school².

This is partly due to the fact that these homeless children have low attendance, are found to change schools frequently and lack a stable home environment. Unfortunately, these children do poorly in school and are not given access to strategies for living with their Learning Disability or ADD/ADHD in the long term. This in turn, continues the cycle of poverty established in their families. They more often than not end up *slipping through the cracks* of the school system.

These barriers to early assessment and intervention need to be eliminated in order for these children and adults with Learning Disabilities to prosper and end this cycle of poverty. However, further research is needed in York Region to establish the link between adults with Learning Disabilities, childhood diagnosis and treatment and poverty. This information would help us to work with today's youth and begin to correct mistakes that have been made in the past. Let's work towards a today where everyone has the chance to be a part of a community in a prosperous way!

References

¹Taber, C. (September 26, 2007). Region 'on brink of disaster', director of homeless drop-in says. York Region.com, Regional News. Retrieved October 5, 2007 from <http://www.yrng.com/article/50837>.

²York Region Food Bank. (2007). Statistics & Reports. Retrieved October 2007 from www.yrfn.ca/foodbanks.htm

³Zima, B.T., Bussing, R., Forness, S.R., & Benjamin, B. (1997). Sheltered homeless children: Their eligibility and unmet need for special education evaluations. *American Journal of Public Health*, 87 (2), 236-240).

Community Business Homelessness & Poverty in York Region:

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Volunteer, donate, get involved ... help make a change! A little means a lot. You don't have to donate millions of dollars or weeks of time. You can take the first step by finding out more about the following organizations working to end homelessness and poverty in York Region. Become an active member of your community today!

York Region Food Bank

Donate to your local food bank. Visit the website, to find out where to drop off donations and what food items are most needed. (www.yrfn.ca/foodbanks.htm)

York Region Alliance to End Homelessness

A local coalition of social service agencies, faith groups, interested community members and government representatives that meets regularly to understand, plan and coordinate services and supports related to homelessness in York Region. (www.endhomelessnessyorkregion.ca)

Poverty Action for Change Coalition

Mandate: To raise community awareness of poverty and the income security issues facing marginalized York Region residents through research, public education and initiatives that effect change. (www.povertyacc.com)

Raising the Roof

Raising the Roof plays a key role in facilitating shared strategies to end homelessness - strategies that would show people in tangible, practical terms what they can do in their own com-

Tried and True Strategies for Parents of Gifted Children with ADHD or Over-Excitability

Love your children for who they are, not for what they do or don't do

Set standards and insist they be met. Make sure you communicate that failure is not an option and that every action has consequences.

Use humor to defuse stress and anger. Many children who are gifted have an advanced sense of humor.

There are no quick fixes. Children who are gifted and have ADHD need intensive, long-term interventions. Be consistent.

Communicate regularly with your child's teachers no matter what grade your child is in. Try to do this before there is a problem.

Impose organization on your children until they prove they can do it themselves. Try to find a system

that works for both of you. There will be some backsliding from time to time.

Provide opportunities to express creativity. This can be a lifesaver when things get really bad.

Success generates more success. Encourage your child to find something they are successful in. Provide a choice of activities and insist they stick with it until it is completed.

Make sure your child is provided with appropriate curriculum and teachers from the start. Be positive but honest in presenting your child and his/her needs to school administration before the end of this school year for next year's placement.

Adapted from Lori J. Flint. (2001). Challenges of Identifying and Serving Gifted Children with ADHD TEACHING Exceptional Children Vol. 33, No. 4 pp62-69



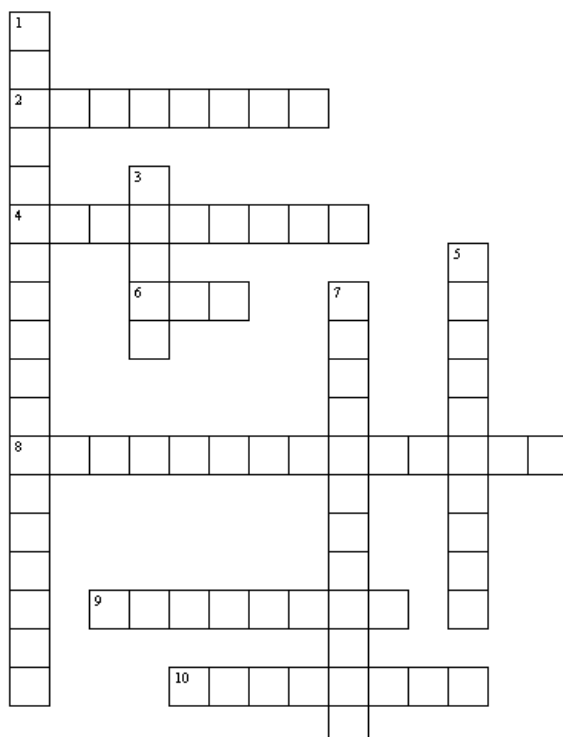
Action may not always bring happiness;
but there is no happiness without action.
- Benjamin Disraeli



Fun & Games

Test Your Knowledge

*Our greatest glory
is not in never
falling but in rising
every time we fall.*
- **Confucius**



We're Interested!

Is there something you would like to see in our next newsletter? Questions? Concerns? Queries?

We want to know! Simply email us at info@ldayr.org with anything you would like to know about learning disabilities and/or ADHD and we'll try and include an answer in our next Newsletter.

ACROSS

- The practice of speaking up in support of yourself or others to advance or promote their rights and needs
- Learning Disabilities are _____
- One in ___ people have a learning disability
- Adaptations that are made to a program or facility that allow a person with special needs to participate in the program, utilize the service or perform a particular job
- Refers to a language-based disability in reading or deciphering words. People with _____ have difficulties with the positive integration of sight, sound, and meaning in relation to the printed word.
- Learning Disabilities are _____ conditions

DOWN

- 60– 80% of individuals with ADHD also have a _____
- Learning Disabilities represent _____ percent of all disabilities, yet only 16 % of people with Learning Disabilities report receiving aids and/or services
- Only _____ testing can accurately determine the presence of a learning disability
- People with Learning Disabilities have trouble developing _____

The answers can be found on page 10!

CONTACTING LDAYR

By Telephone: 905-884-7933

- Lynn Ziraldo ext 22
Executive Director
- Programs & Services ext 21
- Resource Facilitators ext 21
- General Information ext 23
- Volunteering & ABCs and 123s ext 26

By E-mail: info@ldayr.org

Can you guess the celebrity with a LD?

This person is an actress, comedian, radio presenter, television host and author.

She is one of only ten individuals to have won an Emmy, a Grammy, and Oscar *and* a Tony Award.

She was discovered by famed director and producer Steven Spielberg in 1983 while performing her self written 1 women show on Broadway.

Although she was born Caryn Elaine Johnson, she adopted a distinctive stage name after moving to California in the mid 1970's.

(Find the Answer on Page 10!)

No Family Feuds

Trips to see family members or friends far away can offer great learning experiences and give children a sense of the larger family network. But family members do not always understand the thought and time that it can take to raise a child with a learning disability. They may think that your child's behavior is the result of poor parenting. Comments like "You really let her get away with a lot" or "If I had him for a week he would obey.", may leave you feeling anxious about upcoming holiday get togethers.

Keeping Family Visits Fun

By teaching your friends and family a few of the strategies you use at home you and your child can avoid negative experiences and judgments.

"Re-introduce" your child before you travel. Children with learning disabilities can get overwhelmed by too many new experiences and people. Aunts, uncles and cousins who they have only seen once or twice a year count as "new."

Update your child with pictures and letters from relatives before visits. By keeping extended family more familiar you are making a visit feel more safe and comfortable even before you leave for the trip.

Offer advice in advance. You have already figured out what works for your child. Let your relatives know and you can avoid meltdowns.

Prepare your child. Knowing what to expect before entering a situation can help your child do their best. Before you leave for a visit tell your child why they are visiting, who will be there and how long the visit will last. Together brainstorm solutions to expected problems.

Give special thought to special events. Weddings, family reunions and graduations can



offer experiences for your child to remember and enjoy. Remember that crowded events can over stimulate any child. Set limits with family members.

Plan appealing activities. By bringing plenty of distractions (books, puzzles, DVDs) you can offer opportunities for your child to regroup and do his own thing.

Take turns monitoring. It's easy to get distracted around family and friends you have not seen for awhile. Take turns watching your child with your partner or a relative that has a close bond with your child.

Have an "escape plan." Before going decide on "cues" your child can give you when she's too overwhelmed, tired, or hungry to stay in control. An "escape plan" to shorten long goodbyes may be helpful.

Carve out some down time. By staying at a hotel rather than a relative's house can offer some down time. Some relatives might be insulted when you present this idea but explain that this can offer some less intensity and excitement that can result in a better visit for everyone.

And most of all, have fun!

Adapted from Brady, C. (2007). No Family Feuds. *ADDITUDE*. 8,2, 30-31.

Siblings of Children with Learning Disabilities

A study by Hames (2005), tested how well children under the age of 7 are able to understand learning disabilities. The study compared children who have a sibling with a learning disability to children who have had very little contact with someone with a learning disability.

The children in the study were asked to perform various activities such as counting to 10, completing two jigsaw puzzles and building a tower of cups. After these activities, each child watched a video. The first portion of the video showed a child who did not have a learning disability and was able to perform the same tasks the child had earlier completed with little difficulty. The second part of the video showed a child with a learning disability who was not able to perform the tasks. After watching the video the children were asked to answer a series of questions.

The study concluded that siblings of children with learning disabilities were more accurately able to understand the difficulties the child in the video was having. The children, aged 6 and 7 had a empathic understanding of the difficulties the child with a learning disability would have.

Study:

Hames, A. (2005). *How younger siblings of children with learning disabilities understand the cognitive and social implications of learning disabilities*. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. Vol. 20, No. 1, p.3-19.

Program Information

For Parents ...

Being the parent of a child or children with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD is not always easy. At times you may feel isolated, frustrated and unable to handle situations. However, you are not alone! There are many parents out there just like you, looking for support, guidance and camaraderie. The LDAYR is organizing some new programs to specifically target these needs and more. Please feel free to check them out!

Morning Support Group:

Can't make our monthly evening Parent Support Group? Come join us for a morning chat! This is an opportunity for parents and guardians to come together and discuss what their feelings, thoughts, problems and solutions are for raising a child with LD. This is an expansion on the Parent Support Group already held the first Thursday of every month (see below for more info) . Meetings will be held every second Tuesday of the month from 9:30am to 11:30am. The group will start January 8, 2008 Please contact Renee at ext. 21 for more information or to register.



Parenting Course:

This course is designed for parents of children with LDs and/or ADHD . This course is based on the belief that “parents can learn to perceive their child’s strengths and needs accurately, and are uniquely qualified to accept the child as he/she is and encourage him/her to make the most of his/her strengths and compensate for his/her needs. This course is being offered in 10 week or four week blocks with the option of being a large group of 16-18 participants, small group of 4 or individually. There is a fee that applies upon registration. Registration is limited, so you MUST pre-register. For more information please contact Renée at (905) 884-7933 ext. 21.

Parent Support Group:

This group is developed for parents of children and adolescents with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD to provide the opportunity to exchange problems, strategies for solution, and other information among other parents and professionals. This allows parents to form networks with other parents as well as build self esteem and self confidence about parenting styles. The Parent Support Group is held the first Thursday of every month between October and June.



For Everyone ...



Online Workshops:

LDAO now hosts online, self-paced workshops. These workshops explore topics and issues related to learning and LDs. Created for adults and youth with LDs, parents, teachers, and other professionals. These online workshops aid in the education of information about Learning Disabilities, Learning styles, self-advocacy, and setting up your child for success. To access these online workshops, log on to www.access.learning.LDAO.ca

Program Information

For Adults ...

Job Fit—A Guide To Successful Employment

Looking for work? Having difficulty keeping a job? Job-Fit can be the bridge to help you close the gap between where you are today and where you want to be. This program is designed for individuals with Learning Disabilities aged 18 years old and older. Please contact the Renee at ext. 21 for more information or to begin the Job Fit process!



Adult Support Group:

This group was created for adults with learning disabilities. It provides help and guidance, in a caring, nurturing environment. It also allows for development and maintenance of self-esteem and self confidence through the establishment of networks and friendships. In addition to this, the social experiences gained from the course, enhance social perception which leads to an increased social worth. The Adult Support Group is held the second Wednesday of every month between October and June.

For Kids ...

Social Skills Program:

“The Friendship Club”

There is an emerging awareness that many children with LDs and/or ADHD have social deficits. Social learning is not consciously taught to children. The ability to understand social roles, read facial expressions, perceive and express emotions and interpret language’s more subtle meanings are typically acquired intuitively. The social skills program hosted by the LDAYR is a program dedicated to children 5 to 16 who have learning disabilities and/or ADHD, who lack socially appropriate behavior, are shy, have trouble getting along with others and/or have trouble meeting and keeping friends. Registration for the Winter Session is January 7, 2008 from 4:30pm-8:30pm at 11181 Yonge Street.

“I liked the friendship club so much. I liked the way they put everything together and just make it work out. At school I am now able to answer questions more and understand what the teacher is telling me. I thank you all very much!” - Fall 2007 Participant,



SoAR—Some Assembly Required

The soar program is designed for students in grades 6 to 8 who want the opportunity to learn and talk about: Learning & Learning Disabilities, Study Skills & Strategies for Success and Making Choices & Choosing Paths. We will be holding a session beginning in the new year. This is a 10 week program held once a week between 4:30pm and 6:00pm. The cost is \$150 for members or \$200 for non-members. For more information or to register, call the Resource Centre at 905-884-7933 extension 21.

To Register, or for more information about any of our programs, call us at 905-884-7933, visit our website www.ldayr.org or drop by the office at 11181 Yonge Street, Unit 221, Richmond Hill, ON.

Become a Volunteer Tutor



The ABC's and 123's Program is a unique, exciting program servicing the York Region area.

You will have the opportunity to tutor children in SK to Grade 3 and work closely with their parents ensuring that they are involved in the learning process.

Volunteers must be 18 years or older, and able to commit to a minimum of 10 hours per month.

Volunteer hours will be after school, in the evenings and / or on weekends.

This is an excellent opportunity for those who have a passion to work with children.

Training, Support and References Provided

For information, please contact the Program Volunteer Coordinator Learning Disabilities Association of York Region

at: 905-884-7933 ext. 26
or E-mail: info@ldayr.org



Learning Disabilities Association of York Region

"I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

- Albert Einstein

Vintages & Jazz

Please set aside
Sunday, May 4th 2008
and join us for our
9th annual
Vintages & Jazz

This is an afternoon of great music,
wonderful food, excellent wines
and fun surprises.
All proceeds go towards
our ongoing programs
and services.

If you would like to volunteer, donate an item
for the Silent Auction or reserve your ticket
please call 905-884-7933.

The Last Word

We at the LDAYR would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season! With a new year upon us, we wish you all a grand celebration of family, friends and festivity! Also, we would like to remind you that our office will be closed from December 22 until January 2, 2008. See you in the new year!



Please Donate

Contributions are personal decisions made to honour someone special, to make a difference. Please consider a gift to LDAYR today.

To make a contribution, please phone 905-884-7933 or e-mail info@ldayr.org



Learning Disabilities Association of York Region



Member Benefits:

- Access to all our programs and support groups;
- Use of Resource Centre and lending library;
- Resource Counseling
- Advocacy services
- And much more!

YES! Sign me up as a member of LDAYR!

\$50 per year (Family/Individual) \$20 Students \$75 Professionals \$125 Institutional

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone #: _____

I am:

- Parent/Guardian/Family of child with LD and/or ADHD
- Adult Consumer
- Professional
- New Member
- Student (Provide ID #)
- Institutional
- Renewing Member

Send cheque or money order to: LDAYR, 11181 Yonge Street, Unit 221, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1L2

The Learning Disabilities Association of York Region does not support, endorse or recommend any method, treatment, product, remedial centre, program or person for children, youth or adults with learning disabilities. We do, however, endeavor to inform in the belief that you have the right to know.