

communique

A different way of learning can lead to success.

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THE PUBLICATION OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Success is a journey not a destination: ISSUES ON TRANSITION

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Transitions are with us continually and we think of them as something that is often beyond our control. However, successful people work to control their destinies through thoughtful decision-making, based on self-awareness and deliberate and informed planning. Read on—.



In partnership with LDAO, Sobeys Ontario is a proud sponsor of Communique and the Learning to Learn Differently Project.

Message From The Chairperson

I am pleased to write my first official message as the new Chairperson of LDAO. This is a particularly special honour for me as I am a professional in the field of learning disabilities and the mother of an adolescent with a learning disability. I am also the first Chairperson of LDAO as it was agreed as a result of our strategic planning exercise last year, to

Volunteers needed for Hospital for Sick Children and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Youth Education Assessment and Research Service (YEARS) Initiative for Adolescents.

We are looking for teens (ages 14-17) to participate in a study at the Hospital for Sick Children on reading comprehension in adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and/or Reading Disabilities. We wish to study how attention and memory impacts on reading comprehension and how adolescents vary in their performance on reading, memory, and language tasks. All testing is free of charge and families will be reimbursed \$20 for their time. A one-day commitment is required. Written reports will be provided. Upon completion of the assessment at Sick Children's, ADHD participants will have the option of further assessment at CAMH to explore treatment alternatives and participate in education sessions and peer groups. Participants with **ADHD** are to contact **Ruth Barton**, Project Coordinator, at CAMH 416-535-8501, ext. 4374; Participants with **Reading Disabilities** are to contact **Karen Ghelani**, at HSC at 416-813-8419. ☺

change the title from President to Chairperson.

It was good to see many of our members at the recent AGM in Toronto. I want to take this opportunity to thank all our LDA volunteers for their continuing support and dedication to the needs of people with LD.

The theme of this issue of *Communique* is Transitions. As we all know change is often difficult for people with learning disabilities. There are three areas of transition that can be particularly overwhelming for people with LD: 1) as children with LD move from the nurturing environment of elementary school to the larger secondary school system; 2) moving on to the somewhat impersonal postsecondary educational system; and 3) the move from school to the world of work can be quite devastating. In this issue of *Communique* we present some articles and suggestions regarding making successful transitions.

With so many hurdles to overcome, it is always quite remarkable how many



Isabel Shessel, Chairperson

individuals with learning disabilities survive the many transitions in their lives. Remember that success is a journey not a destination. People with LD often experience an extraordinary journey.

I look forward to meeting with many members over the next two years. I encourage you to contact me through the LDAO office with any concerns you may have. All the best for the coming year. ☺

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

March 20-22, 2003
Interdependence: a cooperation towards success
Montreal, P.Q.
LDAQ Annual Conference
Cost: \$185-450
Contact: LDAQ
Tel.: (514) 847-1324, ext. 27
congres@aqeta.qc.ca
www.aqeta.qc.ca

April 28-29, 2003
OASAR Annual Conference
Ontario Association for Students At Risk
Toronto, Ontario
For information: (519) 824-4922
www.oasar.org

May 4-6, 2003
Destination Success 2003
A National Conference of Learning Disabilities in Post Secondary Education
Georgian College, Barrie, Ontario
Contact: (877) 722-1523
dnear@georgianc.on.ca
www.destinationssuccess.org

September 25-26, 2003
A different way of learning can lead to success
New workshops with Richard Lavoie and Larry Silver
Cost: \$200-450
Contact: Liz Brillinger, LDAO
(416) 929-4311, ext. 29
liz@ldao.on.ca
www.ldao.on.ca

Message from the Executive Director

The theme of this issue of *Communique* is transitions. For individuals with learning disabilities, transition points pose critical challenges that can determine their future. Similarly, organizations experience transitions as they move forward and grow. As 2002 draws to a close, LDAO enters its 40th year of existence. In 1963 in Toronto, a group of parents met in someone's home and joined forces to advocate with the school system on behalf of their children who had learning disabilities. Forty years later, through our chapters and the provincial office, we continue to advocate on an individual and systemic level to ensure that the needs of children, youth and adults are put forward and are factored into public policy.

In the past several years, we have had the opportunity to be proactive in developing and piloting new approaches to early intervention that we hope will reduce the number of students entering special education while assisting the school system in finding and assisting LD students more quickly and more effectively. These recent activities have been conducted in partnership with school boards and other key allies and have recently drawn international attention as demonstrated by a visit to Toronto by Dr. Larry Silver, Past President of LDA of America and Dr. Robert Pasternack. Dr. Pasternack is Assistant Secretary of the US Department of Education responsible for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation.

Their visit reinforced for us that we are on the right track in the model of service that we are developing and promoting and proved that LDAO is leading the way in service development. On March 17, 2003 we will be holding a fundraising dinner to mark our 40th anniversary and to mark public awareness month. Dr. Pasternack will return to Toronto to be our keynote speaker and will share his views of the future of education.



Executive Director, Carol Yaworski.

On the advocacy front, we are involved in a legal matter in Ottawa that is of great importance to exceptional students. LDAO has long fought to defend the concept of range of placements within Ontario's school system and for school board compliance with the Education Act. On August 27, 2002, the Ministry-appointed supervisor who is now running the Ottawa Carlton District School Board announced service cuts amounting to just over \$3M, most of them in the area of special education. Included in those cuts was the loss of resource withdrawal programs for students with learning disabilities.

While the loss of those services are of great concern to us, our most grave concern was that hundreds of students who had been through the IPRC process had their schedules and access to specific services changed without a new IPRC being held. LDAO has joined a group of parents in the Ottawa area in seeking a judicial review of the supervisor's decision in the context of what we believe to be a violation of the Education Act in not following the IPRC process set out in the legislation. The matter will be heard in Ottawa on November 29, 2002 and we will post the outcome on our website www.ldao.on.ca.

Best wishes for the holidays and see you in 2003!☺

communique

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Communique provides a forum for information, news and opinions relevant to the field of learning disabilities. The Association does not, in any sense, endorse opinions expressed or methods or programs mentioned. Articles may be reprinted unless otherwise stated. Please mention *Communique* as the source if and when articles are reprinted.

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ON THE LEGISLATIVE FRONT

Developing a Practical and Meaningful Transition Plan for Students with Learning Disabilities

“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there.”

This quote from Alice in Wonderland describes all too well the experience of many students with learning disabilities when the time comes for them to go from one educational setting to another and, in particular, from secondary school to their post-secondary destination of choice. In spite of the fact that transition planning is a mandated process for exceptional students who are 14 years of age or older and whose primary identification is any of the exceptionalities other than giftedness, research indicates that only about 10% of the students with learning disabilities have a practical and meaningful transition plan included in their Individual Education Plan. This is not an acceptable level of compliance with Ontario’s special education legislation. Furthermore, the lack of adequate transition planning results in students often making inappropriate choices for their future.

Therefore, school boards must be held more accountable not only for complying with this requirement set out in Regulation 181/98 and the IEP Standards Document, but also for ensuring that each student’s transition plan meets all the necessary requirements to reflect that student’s individual strengths, needs, interests and goals. Students and their parents or guardians should be able to count on this commitment.

Transition is usually described as a co-ordinated set of activities for a student, designed to promote successful progress to and from school. Transition relates to entry into and exit from each educational level, such as pre-school to elementary school, elementary school to secondary school as well as diverse post-school activities,

including post-secondary education, both university and college, vocational training including apprenticeships, employment, adult education, independent living and community participation.

Successful transition for all students including those who have learning disabilities is based on the student’s:

- ◆ identified needs
- ◆ recognized strengths, skills and competencies



- ◆ interests
- ◆ preferences
- ◆ short and long term goals
- ◆ past experiences, including academic achievements, co-curricular and volunteer involvements at school and in the community.

We know that, in order to be identified as having a learning disability, students must demonstrate that they have average to above average intelligence. Provided that they have been taught, supported and

accommodated throughout their educational career appropriately, they should be able to be successful in the post-secondary destination of their choice. While intellectually most of them can handle the demands of post-secondary education, they should be encouraged to make independent choices and be supported through appropriate transition planning to achieve their personal goals.

Changes which affect successful transition from secondary school to post-secondary settings for students with learning disabilities are:

- ◆ direct teaching and teacher/student contact decrease significantly
- ◆ academic and achievement expectations increase
- ◆ changes in the available personal support network
- ◆ reduced hands-on support role for parents and others
- ◆ greater expectations on the student to become:
 - ◆ self-motivated
 - ◆ resilient
 - ◆ more independent
 - ◆ able to manage the many demands of more independent living and/or living with support in the community
- ◆ self-advocate
- ◆ able to cope with disclosure challenges
- ◆ able to apply coping strategies independently
- ◆ able to identify and advocate for accommodations required

The primary responsibility for facilitating successful post-school transition for students with learning disabilities rests with the school board and in particular with the student’s school principal. However, parents and students must

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On The Legislative Front
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advocate for and participate in transition planning throughout the student's secondary school years. It should not be left until Grade 12 to realize that the student's future goals cannot be achieved, because he did not take the right courses or did not learn to advocate for his accommodation needs. While all stages of transition are important, the transition made at the end of secondary school is particularly influential in terms of the student's future success and independence.

School boards need to ensure that their transition planning process includes all the necessary learning disabilities-specific components that will ensure that this large group of exceptional students are effectively supported in their transition planning. Essential components of an effective transition plan for a student with learning disabilities must include:

- ◆ **Academic** preparation plans, including literacy, metacognitive, problem solving, communication and future goal specific skills;
- ◆ **Personal skills** development, including future independence, life planning, social skills and self-advocacy skills development;
- ◆ Identifying the student's **accommodation needs** and how these can best be met at various times and in diverse locations. This includes learning to use adaptive and assistive technology, developing coping strategies and practising the application of compensatory skills to overcome the impacts of the disability;
- ◆ **destination-specific preparation.**

There are many resources in the community, ranging from the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario and its chapters to the special needs offices of community colleges and universities to the disability specific and employee assistance programs of many companies and

businesses. Many of these would be excellent partners in the school board's transition planning and support programs and services. School boards and their personnel need to build upon, encourage and welcome such community involvement initiatives.

Post-secondary success, whether in an educational setting or in employment, is eminently possible for all students with learning disabilities. It is imperative that school boards make the necessary commitment of resources, including personnel and funding, to manage the transition process effectively and successfully for all of their exceptional students. They must also establish an environment that is student centred. For students with learning disabilities that will mean a recognition that these students are able to achieve to their potential provided that they receive the necessary help, guidance, support and accommodation. The focus needs to be on their abilities and competencies ahead of the barriers represented by the learning disability. Since students with learning disabilities differ from one another, their transition plans must be individualized and should not be simply generated by a computer or based on a generic template. There is no single suitable postsecondary destination for students with learning disabilities. Similarly, there is no single suitable career choice for students with learning disabilities. They need to be supported in setting their own goals and achieving them.

It is a cliché that every journey begins with the right first step. Transition planning is the key first step on the journey of post-school life for students with learning disabilities. We must support them in taking it. ☺

*Eva Nichols, Legislation and
Government Liaison Consultant*



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Learning to Walk Again: The Transition to Junior High

You and your child are about to take on a scary new challenge: Junior High. It's exciting, scary and you feel a little bit of remorse as they take another step toward independence. However, right now they still need you and, going into grade seven, they may need you more than ever.

Think of your child's transition to junior high as if your child was learning to walk again. What did you do? If they are walking you let them go; even if they wobble and need some encouragement you let them do it themselves. If they fall you don't run to help them up; you let them try to get up themselves. You might give them instructions, but they can do it themselves. If they fall and cannot get up and then start crying (or in this case asking for help), you go and help them up. When they are back on their feet, you then step back and be supportive from behind the scenes.

Grade seven will probably be the toughest year your child will have to experience, with a new school, new teachers, new classmates, on top of a whole new system of doing things. They are suddenly required to move from class to class and they must have the proper books for those classes. They must keep track of assignments, projects and the dates they are due. They have to sign up for their clubs and classes and any other extra curricular activities, and then, to top it off, they have to remember when and where to go for all these things. In my child's school they even have to sign up their parents for parent-teacher interviews and then relay this information correctly to their parents. Often the information doesn't make it home. If you are concerned, imagine how your child is feeling!

Communication with your child is one of the most important factors when helping them through this transition. Be aware of a change in behaviour, social activities, sleep or eating patterns. All these can be affected if your child is feeling stressed and is having trouble dealing with the stress. It is important to talk to your child and find out

the guidance counsellor. This is the perfect time for you and the counsellor to sit and talk with your child about their possible concerns. Be prepared to drive your child to school (it is not cool to walk your child to school now) or set up a buddy system with one of their friends who lives close by. This may help your child feel less alone in the big world. A "cool" new outfit or the latest footwear always helps a child feel they fit in more.

2. Organization will become a big factor in your child's success:

If your child has never used an agenda book they will probably be introduced to them in grade seven. Our school provides them. If your school doesn't use them, it might be something that you can introduce to help with your child's organization. The summer before grade seven, get them an inexpensive daytimer (weekly) and have them record their social events as well as their chores or visits etc. This will give them a little bit of a head start in time management for the upcoming school year.

If your school is equipped with e-mail for individual teachers, this is a perfect way to find out how your child is coping and it takes very little time. If your child is having trouble keeping up, ask the school to provide weekly reports filled out by each teacher and sent home to inform you if the child is completing their assignments or how things are going in the class.

3. Many children with LD and ADHD struggle socially and may develop self-esteem problems:

To help with this problem I found a social skills group for my child. This group consisted of other children like him who had similar problems. This was very useful

exactly what he/she is most concerned about with regard to the move to junior high. Talk about what role your child wants you to play in dealing with some of their concerns. Sometimes talking is enough. If it isn't, here are some hints that other parents and I have found very helpful.

1. A tour before the school actually opens:

Introducing them to their new teacher and the physical aspects of the school can alleviate a lot of stress. Arrange this with



Learning to Walk Again
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and gave my child the coping techniques that he needed. It also made him realize his mother was telling the truth and he was not the only one going through these struggles.

4. OK so now you have your child ready. Is the school ready?

I ask this because I realized that the school was not prepared for my child. The school should have a comprehensive history of the child. To ensure they have this and that they understand it, set up a meeting with the school guidance counsellor, the principal, resource teacher and homeroom teacher. Give them an overview of your child: his/her personality, strengths and weaknesses. Be very honest with yourself and the school. The overview should include a short academic history to date,



Grade seven will probably be the toughest year your child will have to experience, with a new school, new teachers, new classmates, on top of a whole new system of doing things.



positive and negative aspects, any fears your child may have, and provide information on the ways others may push your child's buttons.

This not only helps your child but it helps the school. They can then make arrangements to ensure that your child has a friend in their homeroom. They can alert other teachers to be vigilant about certain situations such as bullying. They should let you know what their plan of action will be and what other resources may be available to you and your child. Remember, when meeting with the school, always approach them in a positive way and try to be prepared with some reasonable solutions of your own. The school's understanding of my child seemed to be one of the most

important things that helped him move forward and feel successful.

5. Keep in touch with the teachers:

Pick one that you feel comfortable with and who can communicate with the other staff. I always look for a "mothering" type of person in the school and connect my child with that person, for the times when he feels stressed, has forgotten his medication or needs a place to take time out to talk to someone. A soft heart and a warm smile on a bad day are good for everyone. The resource or guidance teachers are usually good choices as they understand that learning disabilities and ADHD do not have to interfere with your child's learning.

6. Don't be intimidated by meetings with the school:

Think of yourself as the expert on your child. If you are not comfortable in this role, have your child's psychologist, paediatrician or psychiatrist attend the meeting if possible. They certainly understand the impact that school has on your child.

7. Find a dedicated teacher who believes that each child has talent and is very important:

Don't be afraid to ask for a certain teacher for your child as this person plays a large role in how that child will do in this school year. Find such a teacher by talking to other parents in your area. This was an important factor in the success of my child's transition to junior high.

8. The other thing to remember is that children need a balance between school and home:

Children should have time to relax as well as do homework.

I have suggested all of this from my own experience with what works and doesn't work with my children. I have spent hours doing research, attending information meetings, talking to the Learning Disabilities Association and looking into my children's schooling options. The

transition to junior high is a big leap for most students. For the child with LD and ADHD, it may be an even larger leap. Nevertheless, knowing your child and keeping the professionals informed will benefit him/her in the long term, and keeping a positive attitude will benefit everyone. ☺

By Andrea Roy. This article appeared in NewsLines, the newsletter of LDA of Manitoba, Volume 7 Issue 2 May 1998. Used with permission.

Genetics and Reading Disabilities: Research Study

Hospital for Sick Children is seeking families with a child between 6 and 16 who has a problem with reading. Since reading disabilities often run in families, there is a chance that other family members will have reading disabilities as well. Researchers in the study think that reading disabilities are caused by changes in genes. They hope that if they are able to isolate the genes that make people develop reading disabilities, they may be able to eventually better treat reading disabilities.

Time commitment will be a one-day meeting with researchers during which you will be interviewed and your child will be tested and a blood sample taken. A written report will be sent to you that can be copied to your child's school.

For more information: Dr. Barbara Anderson, (416) 813-8207; e-mail: Barbara.Anderson@sickkids.ca. ☺

Advocacy for Adolescents

Training teens to take on their own troubles

Advocacy often appears to be a parent's job. It seems to fall under the category of protection-protecting one's young from harm, from failure. Indeed, for the primary school youngster, the parent is his or her most important and passionate advocate. But once a child reaches junior high or high school, most parents are automatically disqualified from advocacy. The fact that they are parents (and are, therefore, inherently "uncool" and, quite possibly, incapable in their teenager's eyes) is the element that dismisses them from this role.

Who then becomes a youngster's champion? The youngster her or himself. The very ones who, in the end, must understand and accept their disability, and, who must act proactively to seek solutions that make a difference. That is why, as parents and caring professionals, one of our most important goals should be to help the child with ADD and/or Learning Disabilities develop into an informed and effective self-advocate.

Student self-advocacy can begin successfully by grades four/five. Indeed, many youngsters with ADD and/or LD possess an incredible verbal fluency and social sophistication that are invaluable assets in negotiation. Those words "overly social" and "gregarious", which heretofore have appeared on report cards as negatives, now can be recognized as strengths and brought to bear for the student's own benefit.

The steps in training youngsters as self-advocates are identical to those used in training their parents.

1. Identify the student's individual strengths as a learner.
2. Identify what his or her liabilities are and how these affect classroom performance.
3. Identify and request reasonable accommodations in testing and instruction.

Students who engage in this advocacy training must be mature and secure enough

to accept their differences, as well as believe in and maximize their strengths. The development of a student "Self-Advocacy Worksheet" must be done utilizing the student's own words, words which he or she will be comfortable using-ultimately by him or her self- in negotiation. Advocacy worksheets differ in length and sophistication depending on the age of the child. The single most important element in successful student self-advocacy is that the student can self-examine, self-accept and (through support and practice) become self-sufficient in this process.

A student who is developing advocacy skills must learn the concrete preparatory steps to negotiation:

1. Don't go up and try to advocate before or after class.
2. Make an appointment with the teacher.
3. Write the date and time on your worksheet.
4. Have copies of your worksheet for everyone who will be there.
5. Review your worksheet before your meeting.
6. Arrive on time.

Attitude check-negotiation NOT confrontation:

The training of a student as a self-advocate must include role-playing and rehearsal. At Educational Tutoring and Consulting, we develop the worksheet as an exercise in self-realization, self-acceptance and self-empowerment. We utilize the worksheet as a guide-a game plan-for the student to follow in advocacy meetings with his or her teacher(s). We recommend that the worksheet be put in the teacher's mailbox prior to the first meeting.

The coordinator working with the student role-plays advocacy sessions prior to meeting with the teacher and accompanies the student to the first in-school advocacy session. She acts as an initiator, the one who models the first step (that critical step that so eludes our youngsters): "Mr.

Jamieson, Brett has developed a thoughtful plan for participating successfully in your classroom. He would like to present it to you and work with you in developing some solutions for him as a student. Brett--".

Sample Advocacy Worksheet 6th. Grade Student

Strengths:

1. I am good at expressing myself verbally.
2. I am very artistic (with watercolours).
3. I have good computer skills.

Learning Differences:

1. Attention Deficit Disorder
2. Language: Phonetic Memory (spelling)
3. Written expression (on demand)

What Happens to Me in the Classroom:

1. I have a hard time with the organization and pacing of long-term assignments.
2. I cannot screen out environmental stimuli like outside movement or a ticking clock.
3. I sometimes have a short fuse, and I often react impulsively.
4. I have a difficult time taking notes.

What Would Help Me in the Classroom:

1. Chunk long-term assignments. Ask for these "chunks" on a daily/weekly basis.
2. Balance lectures with visual delivery: charts, timelines, mind maps etc.
3. Give me an outline of the lecture in advance.
4. Give me a reading guide before I start.
5. Let me demonstrate my knowledge.
6. Modify my testing procedures (more time/oral tests).
7. Allow someone to take notes for me (using carbonless paper).☺

By Janice Bleakney and Karen Wiles, Educational Testing and Consulting, Mercer Island, WA. Reprinted with permission from CHADDER Box, January, 1994.

TRANSITION AND SELF-ADVOCACY

What is Self-Advocacy?

Developing self-knowledge is the first step in self-advocacy skills. Learning about one's self involves the identification of learning styles, strengths and weaknesses, interests, and preferences. For students with mild disabilities, developing an awareness of the accommodations they need will help them ask for necessary accommodations on a job and in postsecondary education. Students can also help identify alternative ways they can learn. Self-advocacy refers to:

an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. (VanReusen et al., 1994)

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE SELF-ADVOCACY?

There are many components in developing self-advocacy skills in young adults who are engaged in the transition process. Helping the student to identify future goals or desired outcomes in transition planning areas is a good place to begin. Self-awareness (self-knowledge) is critical for the student in determining the direction that transition planning will take.

Many tools and resources are available to assist transition planning teams in conducting a student-centred planning approach. The following sections provide some strategies to help individuals with disabilities develop self-advocacy skills.

Promote the Student as a Self-Advocate

Encourage the student to be active in the IEP process and other decision-making situations. Assist the student in compiling and developing an exit file. This file should include the last IEP, a transition plan, documentation of disability, recent test scores and assessment summaries, a list of strengths and areas of need, a list of home or work accommodations needed, a summary of learning style, letters of recommendation, and the telephone numbers of service providers. This file empowers the student and encourages self-knowledge. Self-

communicate

advocacy issues and lessons will be most effective if they are integrated daily.

Respond to Students Who Self-Advocate Appropriately

Listen to the problem and ask the student for input on possible accommodations or modifications that he or she may need. Talk with the student about possible solutions, discussing the positive and negative sides. A person who self-advocates should not feel alone. Good self-advocates know how to ask questions and get help from other people. They do not let other people do everything for them or tell them what to do. Self-advocates are assertive. Assertive people tell others what they want and need, but they do not demand. They respect the rights and feelings of other people. They talk over their ideas with other people. They ask questions for guidance, then make up their own minds after reviewing the information. They may have strong feelings, but they try to be objective when making their decisions.

Identify Strategies for Teaching Self-Advocacy

Students need opportunities to practice newly acquired self-advocacy skills. Teachers may wish to have students role play various situations, in which they can practice skills such as the following:

- ◆ Setting up a class schedule
- ◆ Moving out of the home
- ◆ Asking for accommodations needed for a course.
- ◆ Meeting with a rehabilitation counsellor or social service caseworker
- ◆ Meeting with a medical provider
- ◆ Working with a personal care attendant
- ◆ Interviewing for a job

Students apply self-advocacy skills by calling and requesting information about a service they need for transition from high school. Students can prepare to visit an adult service provider by compiling a list of questions to ask and requests for services.

Identify Examples of Self-Advocacy Objectives on an IEP

Following are some examples of objectives for an IEP that would promote development

of self-advocacy. Students will:

- ◆ Be able to access information from the support service staff of the postsecondary school in which they have expressed an interest.
- ◆ State the type of information necessary to self-advocate.
- ◆ Define the terms assertive, passive, and aggressive.
- ◆ Identify assertive, passive, and aggressive behaviour in written scenarios.
- ◆ State examples of their own assertive, passive, and aggressive behaviours.
- ◆ Respond assertively in a given situation.

Identify Student Skills Needed for Self-Advocacy in a Job Interview

Students need specific self-advocacy skills for job interviews. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Be prepared: Complete an application and a resume.
- ◆ Be alert: Greet interviewer, establish eye contact, and sit up straight.
- ◆ Be an interested listener: Show enthusiasm.
- ◆ Express yourself clearly: Avoid slang and negative comments.
- ◆ Tell about yourself: Describe your strengths, goals, and past experiences.
- ◆ Ask questions: Show interest and energy.
- ◆ Describe what you have to offer or the types of work you want to do. Demonstrate self-confidence and enthusiasm.

These are just a few examples of the techniques educators and parents can use to ensure that students have the self-advocacy skills needed to make the transition from school to work. It is important that self-advocacy be recognized as a critical component of transition if the ultimate goal of transition independence is to be achieved.

WHY IS SELF-ADVOCACY PART OF TRANSITION?

No one has a greater stake in the outcome of transition planning than the student with a disability. The student should be an active, participating member of the transition team,

(continued on page 11)

A different way of learning can lead to success!!!!

NEW WORKSHOPS

by

RICK LAVOIE AND DR. LARRY SILVER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th, 2003

Social Skills, Self Esteem and Self Advocacy Skills

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 2003

Treatment and Programming for Learning Disabilities

8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Holiday Inn- Toronto- Don Valley

1100 Eglinton Ave. East, Toronto [Room Rates for those attending the conference \$121.00 per night single or double occupancy, call (416) 446-3700 and ask for the Reservation Department]. Be sure you mention that you are there for the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Conference

For more information

contact Liz Brillinger @ (416) 929-4311 Ext. 29

or email liz@ldao.on.ca

REGISTRATION FORM

Sign up for:	Early Bird	After June 1/03
<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs. Sept. 25/03	\$200.00	\$225.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Fri. Sept. 26/03	\$200.00	\$225.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Both days	\$400.00	\$450.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLP Credit Course	Additional: \$50.00
Method of Payment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque- Make Payable to LDAO

Visa Number: _____ **Expiry Date:** _____

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Name: _____ **Organization:** _____

Position: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

Promoting Early Intervention: Phase Two

As the LDAO moves into the new year with the Promoting Early Intervention initiative, we are gearing up to undertake a second year of piloting selected sites in the 2002-2003 school year.

We have received an unprecedented amount of support and interest in our initiative from school boards, educators and parents alike. Currently, over 500 educators in the province are involved in screening their senior kindergarten students and following up with the provision of targeted interventions. The success of the Dynamic Screening and Intervention Model (DSIM) and pilots has been due to the work and commitment of the volunteer members of the PEI working groups and steering committee, the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto, the staff at LDAO and the partnerships that have been struck with 34 School Boards and Aboriginal Authorities.

Phase Two Goals

Our goal with Phase Two is to continue tracking last year's senior kindergarten (SK) cohort into Grade 1, while bringing

on a second cohort of SK students, resulting in 1000 educators using the Web Based Teaching Tool (WBTT) and early intervention model. Through a further year of piloting we hope to be able to answer the following empirical questions and determine if:

- The interventions administered in SK have been effective, instilling the message that early screening does not mean lifelong learning problems;
- The changes in the Grade 1 classroom environment result in students who previously were not flagged as at risk for learning failure, being flagged at this stage;
- Are there any students who did not attend kindergarten, and are therefore new to the school in Grade 1, who are at risk for learning failure;
- The changes made to the model and WBTT as a result of the feedback from parents and teachers, and our experience over the last year, resulted in improved utility;
- SK is the ideal time to screen students or if Grade 1, with it's increased emphasis on academics, and mandatory

attendance, is the better or additional time to screen.

Teacher Preparation Materials

In addition to the above-mentioned goals, innovative alternative preparation strategies and materials sufficient for a provincial roll out will be developed.

With the addition of grade 1 educators to the pilots, LDAO will be responsible for the development and role out of training materials sufficient to equip classroom teachers, resource teachers and principals to implement the DSIM and navigate the WBTT. Expanding the training material provides LDAO with the opportunity to develop an alternative training model that is more cost effective than the original training for the first pilots, undertaken between October 3rd and October 12th, 2001. Distance education principles will be employed and key individuals will be contracted with to write the material. ☎

Kate Lloyd, Manager, Program and Service Development

Transition and Self-Advocacy cont. from page 9

as well as the focus of all activities. For a young person with a disability, decision-making is complicated by limited choices and the tendency for others to tell the individual what to do.

Too often students are taught that dependence, passivity, and reliance on unseen forces will take care of them. Throughout transition planning, students should be encouraged to express concerns, preferences, and conclusions about their options and to give facts and reasons. They may need to learn how to express their thoughts in a way that makes others listen to them and respect their views. In order to

learn these skills, students need to practice them within a supportive environment. The transition process is a good place to start. Transition planning should be an ongoing opportunity for students to learn and practice responsibility and self-knowledge. Transition is an ever-changing process, and students need to be skilful enough to adapt to the challenge of those changes.

ABOUT THE BOOK: Integrating Transition Planning Into the IEP Process (Second Edition)

brings you up to date with recent changes in US law, including IDEA '97 and the Carl Perkins Act of 1998. The book explores ways schools, community service agencies, private organizations, and families can

work together to help students make a smooth transition to adult life. Covers transition planning, self-advocacy, assessment, curriculum for transition, support services, and program evaluation and follow-up. ISBN 0-86586-3269-6. Available from the Council for Exceptional Children at toll-free 1-888-232-7733. ☎

*Excerpted from Integrating
Transition Planning Into the IEP
Process, Second Edition
by Lynda L. West, Stephanie Corbey,
Arden Boyer-Stephens, Bonnie
Jones, Robert J. Miller and Mickey
Sarkees-Wircenski. Published by the
Council for Exceptional Children
1999*

THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION REGIONALIZATION PLAN UPDATE

In early 2000, the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) received a four year, \$230,200 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The aim is to support the development of Regional Centres, streamline existing chapters and strengthen the delivery of services and supports to people with learning disabilities across Ontario.

LDAO has been in existence in most areas of the province for at least 35 years (2003 sees the celebration of the provincial organization's 40th Anniversary). Local groups started in the kitchens and basements of parents concerned that the community as a whole was not meeting the educational, health and social needs of their children with learning disabilities. As we know, LDAO has been instrumental in bringing about many significant changes in communities across Ontario with many of them being in special education services.

Times have changed. Today many local chapters have a paid staff component, are governed by a volunteer board of directors and run many different support programs and direct services. The needs of our organization as a whole have grown in leaps and bounds but its structure hasn't really changed in those 35 years. Yet the outside world on which we depend for financial and human resources has changed significantly.

School boards have amalgamated and so have municipalities. Jobs take people across

the province in numbers not seen in the early days. Funders and volunteers are looking to make a significant impact on the organizations to which they give their time and money. What has not changed are the needs of people with learning disabilities. Regardless of their community, everyone has the right to expect that their needs will be met. The best way for this to happen is that LDAO have a strong local presence that is able to help identify and address those needs with quality services and supports.

The LDAO Chapter Liaison Committee and LDAO staff have spent the past 2 years reviewing both the successful and not so successful aspects of our existing organizational structure. LDAO believes that our proposed structure of a Regional Centre Model with high quality support, programs and service delivery will benefit LDA's locally and provincially.

Regional centres would facilitate communication among local LDAs, increase their ability to present a unified message about the nature of learning disabilities, provide quality community services and supports, and share relevant resources and programs. The development of Regional Centres would also strengthen internal structures and systems and stabilize the relationship between LDAO and its local affiliates. These centres would also allow for more specialized staffing and standardized administrative and financial systems.

The establishment of Regional Centres **would not** however, detract from the ability of LDA's to develop services, supports and programs that reflect the unique needs of the individual communities that they serve. Consistent with existing LDAO structures, each Regional Centre would remain autonomous with respect to daily decision-making and self-governance practices.

Recently, the LDAO Board of Directors, acting upon positive input from the chapters and satellites and from LDAO staff and external stakeholders, adopted the establishment of Regional Centres as part of the 2002 Strategic Plan. Over the coming year, the LDAO will continue to refine its regional plan, seeking advice and feedback from various levels of the organization. We look forward to receiving this feedback and presenting a more detailed overview of this vision in the coming year.

If you have any questions about the LDAO's vision to develop Regional Centres, please call Tim Savage at (416) 929-4311 ext. #39 or e-mail to chapter@ldao.on.ca.

*Submitted by the LDAO Chapter
Liaison Committee*

We're Turning 40 Save the Date!

Join us on Monday, March 17, 2003 as we celebrate 40 years of support for people with learning disabilities at the LDAO 40th Anniversary Dinner. This special event, to be held at the newly renovated Liberty Grand ballroom in Toronto, will help raise money for critical research while highlighting the state of special education in Ontario and across North America. The event will feature guest speaker Robert Pasternack, PhD, Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education. Watch our Web site for further details at <http://www.ldao.on.ca>. For tickets or sponsorship information, please contact Denise Harding, fund development consultant, at (905) 853-2758.



Resources on Transition Issues

Transitions to High School for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder,

by Howard Eaton & Leslie Coull, Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd., Vancouver, BC, 2000. www.ecgl.com

This Canadian organization has put together an excellent video and curriculum unit for young people entering high school. The video features several students interviewed in grade 8 and again two years later. Together with a Discussion Guide, Student Work Guide and Self-Advocacy Handbook, the video covers topics on understanding LD and ADHD, knowing your strengths, planning for new challenges in high school, and learning to self-advocate. Teachers will be interested in the curriculum packages, while parents may want to order the video or the Self-Advocacy Handbook (for students). *See below for prices.*

Transitions to Postsecondary Learning for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder,

by Howard Eaton & Leslie Coull, Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd., Vancouver, BC, 1998. www.ecgl.com

In this video (with accompanying curriculum unit) postsecondary students talk about their experiences transitioning from high school to college or university. Similar themes are discussed as in the above high school curriculum, but with emphasis on the different expectations in a postsecondary environment.

To order either program call: 1-800-933-4063. Curriculum packages cost \$210.95, video alone \$99. and Self-Advocacy Handbook \$11.95 (plus shipping & handling and GST).

A Family Affair: Preparing Parents and Students with Learning Disabilities for Postsecondary Education,

by Jane Drover et al, The Meighen Centre at Mount Allison University & LDA of Canada, 1998 (\$8.00 + S&H + GST). Available from LDAO or LDAC.

This book is divided into sections directed at parents, parents and students together, and students themselves. The parent section recommends starting planning for postsecondary studies in junior high. There are many good ideas for both parents and students on how to prepare and on all the areas that need to be considered.

Learning a Living: A Guide to Planning your Career and Finding a Job for People with Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Dyslexia,

by Dale S. Brown, Woodbine House, Bethesda, MD, 2000, (\$28.95 + S&H + GST)

Transitioning to the world of work is another important process. Ms. Brown has written a very practical book for individuals who are in high school or postsecondary studies, or who are preparing for a job change. Issues of self-esteem, motivation and social skills are covered, as well as career planning and many "how to's" for finding and keeping a job. Ms. Brown brings a wealth of experience to this topic, both personally and from her role on the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Order from your local bookstore, or call Parentbooks, 1-800-209-9182.

COMING SOON

Some Assembly Required (SOAR) Transition Curriculum for Students Grade 7 to 12

The first three grade levels of LDAO's transition curriculum are expected to be available to School Boards in September 2003.

For full description see Communique Vol. 31 No. 2 Summer 2002.

Thank You to Our Donors & Funders

for gifts received from June, 2002 to October, 2002.

Your support helps LDAO provide a level playing field of opportunities and services for children, youth and adults with learning disabilities!

Project Funders

Promoting Early Intervention

Ontario Ministry of Education

Learning Disabilities & Literacy

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Human Resources Development Canada

Chapter Development Project

The Ontario Trillium Foundation

The President's Council

The President's Council was initiated to recognize an outstanding level of commitment through annual contribution to LDAO and the learning disabilities network.

Allen & Deborah Edward
Carol & Randy Jones
Peter & Mary Elizabeth Kinch
Merle Langbord Levine
Dr. & Mrs. William Mahoney
Robert M. McDerment
Annette Quinn
Robert & Penny Richards
Carol Yaworski

The welcome and invitation is still open! You will help us and our chapters maintain our position as the only organization in Ontario providing services to the learning disabled population. Please contact Denise Harding, Fund Development Consultant @ (416) 929-4311 ext. 40 or e-mail mdharding@rogers.com for further information.

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Commemorative Gifts

LDAO appreciates gifts made in honour of anyone of your choosing. Please consider a commemorative gift to support the work of LDAO and mark birthdays, anniversaries, memorials, graduations or any other milestone. Please contact Denise Harding, Fund Development Consultant @ (416) 929-4311 ext. 40 or e-mail mdharding@rogers.com for further information about **Commemorative Gifts** or the **Lifetime of Learning Monthly Donor Program**. Gifts of \$50+ will be listed in the subsequent newsletter.

CEO's 15th. Annual Golf Tournament

This year's Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) golf tournament netted \$13,000 to support the work of LDAO. CEO has been a donor since 1987 when the then CEO President, Bill Weinstein,

(continued on page 15)

CEO's Golf Tournament

cont. from page 14

who was also a member of the LDAO Board, initiated the donation to LDAO of the annual CEO golf tournament proceeds. Bill remains involved with CEO. Thank you to the new CEO President John Gamble and his staff for continuing the tradition.

Listed below are the industry-related companies who participated in the tournament and some of the many companies, stores, arts and sport organizations and government ministries who contributed to the prize table.

Donors

Aldworth Engineering Inc.
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Yellow Ball Tournament

DPIC Companies

Study Seeks Families

Researchers at the University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children are conducting a study examining how children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) feel about themselves and their relationships, as well as how parents view their children's behaviour and feel about parenting. Researchers are looking for parents and their 9 to 14-year old children. Both children with and without ADHD are needed. As part of the study, an educational assessment and assessment of the child's self-concept will be conducted. Parents will receive an assessment report on their children and will be compensated for their expenses. No medical procedures will be conducted.

For more information, please call (416) 923-6641, ext. 2450 and leave a message. ☎



The 2002 Gloria Landis Memorial Bursary was presented to Nancy Augustine by LDAO Director Randolph Sealy. Nancy is a mature student working toward her B.A. in psychology at York University's Atkinson Faculty. A single mother with four young children, Nancy was only recently diagnosed with a significant learning disability, and has shown great determination in pursuing her goals.

Your Community Contacts

Chatham-Kent

Contact: Dawn Babbirk
Tel: (519) 352-2024
ldack@netrover.com

City of Kawartha Lakes

Satellite (Lindsay)
Contact: Barb Overwijk
Tel: (705) 324-5119
overwijk@sympatico.ca

Durham Region

Contact: Mrs. Marlene Avery
Tel: (905) 509-4182
platers@pathcom.com

Halton County (Oakville-Burlington)

Contact: Heather Holden
Tel: (905) 844-6905

Hamilton-Wentworth

Contact: Tom Parker
Tel: (905) 523-1332

Kingston

Contact: Lana Greenwood
Tel/Fax: (613) 545-0373
ldak@kingston.jkl.net

Kitchener-Waterloo

Contact: Charlotte Buchan
Tel: (519) 743-9091
ldakw@golden.net
www.ldakw.on.ca

Lambton County

Contact: Joanne Cully
Tel: (519) 344-7745
www.sarnia.com/groups/lda-lc

London Region

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lda@linkd.net
www.ldalr.on.ca

Mississauga

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Newmarket-Aurora and District

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Niagara Region

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North Bay & District Satellite

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learningdisabilities@shaw.ca
www.members.shaw.ca/ldassm

Simcoe County

Alliston: (705) 435-0376
ldoffice@ldass.org
www.ldass.org
Barrie: (705) 726-5553
Local Tollfree: (888) 684-5855

Thunder Bay

Contact: Janis Thompson
Tel: (807) 622-9741
www.ldatbay.ca

Toronto District

Contact: Dena Tenenhouse
Tel: (416) 229-1680
www.ldany.on.ca
admin@ldany.on.ca

Wellington County

(Guelph)
Contact: Margaret Burnett
Tel: (519) 837-2050

Windsor-Essex County

Contact: Beverly Clarke
Tel: (519) 252-7889
learningdisabilities@on.aibn.com

York Region (Richmond Hill)

Contact: Lynn Ziraldo
Tel: (905) 884-7933/471-1620
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http://webhome.idirect.com/~ldayr/



A different way of learning can lead to success.

communiqué

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