



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

August 22, 2005

Deb Matthews, MPP
Parliamentary Assistant
Ministry of Community and Social Services
80 Grosvenor St.
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

Dear Ms. Matthews,

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) is the provincial association representing the interests of persons with learning disabilities throughout Ontario. In the almost forty years since its formation, LDAO has expanded its activities and services to include adolescents and adults who have learning disabilities, in postsecondary and employment sectors, in addition to serving parents of school age children.

There are many adults with identified and unidentified learning disabilities (LDs) who struggle with employment issues; they also participate in OW and ODSP programs. Therefore, we were very interested in reading the **Review of Employment Assistance Programs in Ontario Works & Ontario Disability Support Program**, December 2004. It has just come to our attention through a reference in **Ontario Learns**, the report from the Adult Education Review by Kathleen Wynne.

Your Review shows a thorough understanding of the issues in the employment supports field, including ones that particularly affect clients with LDs, and the holistic, client-centred approach is very refreshing. We see value in the recommendations, but we do have some suggestions to offer.

The recommendation for a job readiness assessment should include screening for possible learning disabilities, and referral for psychoeducational/vocational assessment for those who need an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in order to set appropriate goals. This aspect of employment planning is vital to the employment success of those clients who have LDs.

LDAO has voiced on several occasions our belief that intensive training programs, including those being offered through ODSP employment supports, need to be available to those clients on OW who struggle with LDs, often in conjunction with other problems. Post-employment supports are also vital. We strongly support your recommendations on these issues.

The recommendation to offer intensive case management, including customer service training, to front-line staff is very important. Some of our local chapters are already providing in-service to OW and ODSP workers about recognizing and meeting the needs of clients with LDs. LDAO would like to work with MCSS to organize this service on a province-wide basis.

In conclusion, we commend you on the production of this insightful report, and ask that the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario be included in any future consultations.

Sincerely,

Christopher Carew
Chief Executive Officer

C.c. Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Community & Social Services
Ernie Parsons, Parliamentary Assistant for Disabilities, MCSS