

# ldao

Learning Disabilities  
Association of Ontario

## OTTAWA CHAPTER

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Website: <http://ldac-c.ncf.ca>

Library: [www.librarything.com/profile/LDAO](http://www.librarything.com/profile/LDAO)

### Resource Centre Drop-In Hours\* January to June:

Monday	12:30 pm – 3:30 pm*
Tuesday	2 pm – 6 pm*
Wednesday	2 pm – 6 pm*
Thursday	12:30 pm – 3:30 pm*
Friday	By appointment only

\* Please call if you wish to make an appointment outside of the above hours

### July and August:

We're having fun at camp! How about you?

Learning disabilities can affect the way in which a person takes in, remembers, understands and expresses information.

People with learning disabilities are intelligent and have abilities to learn despite difficulties in processing information.

People with learning disabilities can succeed when solid coping skills and strategies are developed.

Living with a learning disability can have an ongoing impact on friendships, school, work, self-esteem and daily life.



# inTouch

*A different way of learning can lead to success*

WINTER 2009

## Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to 2009! This could be a big year for the LDAOC and the hundreds of communities in our catchment area.

During 2008 the LDAOC experienced some big changes in the people running the systems and providing services. Roy Cooper (Past President & Advocate) passed away, our Board President Jim Cincotta stepped down and our Executive Director Michelle Reis-Amores moved to a new organization. If we were talking about a forest experiencing it's natural lifecycle, you could say that the big oak trees that had been providing shade and protection have disappeared, and now the saplings will be fully exposed to the light. It might burn the saplings a bit at first, but with time they can grow to be their full-sized trees and take their place in the forest.

Entering 2009, Michael Cairns has been made President (Acting) by the Board, and I am holding things together in the LDAOC office. We can expect more changes as the months go on, since we are recruiting more volunteers at the moment. If you would like to be a Board Member, please don't hesitate to

call us. Together, we will be able to weather the changes during a difficult period in our organizational life-cycle.

Please notice that the drop-in hours have changed for the office. These hours may be more convenient for visitors, and we will be in better compliance of our lease. We are grateful to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and their Community Use of Schools program for our offices near the McNabb Community Centre. Thank you!

Also, please help us broaden our advocacy community by passing this newsletter along to friends, family members, colleagues and professionals interested in our work, by becoming a member (if you are not already) and by making a donation or volunteering some of your time to the LDAOC.

Thanks for all of your support during 2008. Happy New Year to you and your family!

Sincerely,

**Teressa Trollope,**  
*Resource Coordinator*



### LDAO-C Executive 2008-2009

**Executive Director**  
**President – Acting**  
**Vice-President**  
**Secretary**  
**Treasurer**  
**Library Representative**  
**Member at large**  
**Program Convenor**

**Vacant**  
**Michael Cairns**  
**Vacant**  
**Jennifer Bradley**  
**Amanda Tompkins**  
**Lynn Fraser**  
**Dr. Karima Lacene**  
**Bill Arends**



# LDAO-C would like to thank:

## Volunteers

**Jennifer H-E** – jointly speaking (with **Teressa Trollope**) at Algonquin College for the Community and Justice Services Class of 2009 on Oct. 30, 2008 and helping with information kiosk events.

**Linda B. and Suzanne B.** – helping people in need with their IEP – IPRC process

**Erin F., Gail D. and Dawn-Heather E.** – information via email and on-the-ground knowledge

**Miriam G.** – tutoring

**Bob Fraser, Janice Wilson, Rose-Marie Martin and Elvira Langa-Barona** – attending SEAC meetings at local Boards

Our entire volunteer-only Board of Directors (**Michael, Lynn, Jennifer, Bill, Karima, Amanda**)

**Stacey and Diane at Accurate Design & Communication** – for making this newsletter look great!

**United Way Ottawa** for the following Gifts In-Kind donations we have received:

- National Arts Centre (NAC) for tickets to the November 13, 2008 presentation of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.
- Neil Diamond for tickets to his November 30, 2008 concert at Scotiabank Place.
- Ottawa 67's for several tickets and exchangeable vouchers to their games at Lansdowne Park during their 2008-2009 season.

Tickets were used by volunteers and staff of the LDAOC.

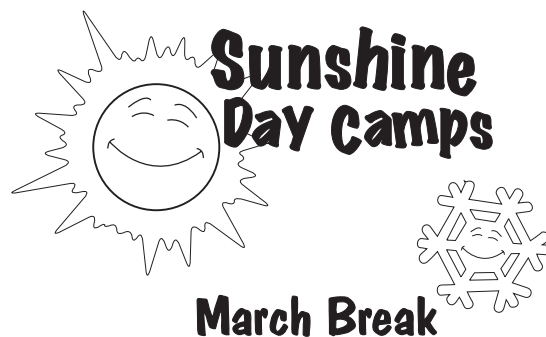
## New Report

*Released by the LDA Canada*

Those of you who were listening to the radio on Dec. 8, 2008 may have heard **Judy Kerr**, Executive Director of the LDAC live on CBC Radio's Ottawa Morning. You can hear the podcast for yourself if you visit [www.cbc.ca/ottawamorning](http://www.cbc.ca/ottawamorning) and look for Training Teachers to Deal with Students' Learning Disabilities.

Judy was being interviewed to mark the release of a new study called A Pan-Canadian Perspective on the Professional Knowledge Base of Learning Disabilities (pdf, 483 kb). "The study concludes that Canada's Ministries of Education have no specific guidelines for teachers or psychologists to address the needs of students with learning disabilities."<sup>1</sup> You can also sign the petition to support the LDAC's Policy on Educational Accommodations for Individuals with Learning Disabilities (pdf, 126 kb) at [www.rightttolearn.ca](http://www.rightttolearn.ca).

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved Dec. 30, 2008 from <http://www.rightttolearn.ca>



This year's camp will be held during the week of March 16 to 20, 2009. The format will be similar to last year, but we hope to have a few pleasant surprises for our returnees!

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Location: McNabb Community Centre,  
160 Percy St., Ottawa, ON  
Time: Roughly 9 am to 4 pm  
(see Application Form)  
Ages: 8 to 12

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*Application forms will be available late January, pre-camp interviews will be held in February and a schedule will be available in early March.*

Some of the goals for the Sunshine Day Camps are improving childrens' social skills, self-advocacy skills and to simply enjoy a social environment. Most of our campers are children with one or more of the following: learning disabilities, AD/HD, NVLD, and Asperger's Syndrome. Our ratio is one staff to 4 campers. We have room for 16 to 20 campers.  
e-mail [ldaoc.resources@rogers.com](mailto:ldaoc.resources@rogers.com)



# Become a SEAC representative!

# SEAC

(Special Education Advisory Committee)

**D**id you know that the Learning Disabilities Association has a seat on the SEAC of each school board? Ideally, we would have 1 representative and 1 alternate for each SEAC so that the work is shared. Parent or not, here is YOUR chance to monitor services offered by your local school board. If you are interested, you can contact your Board for information about meetings, and contact us as well to be nominated. Training may be available so you can be at your most effective as a SEAC representative.

In the case of the SEAC at the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), Bob Fraser has been a long-time representative, previously sharing the position with Roy Cooper. Bob would like to pass on his knowledge and his seat ASAP. If you are interested, you are

encouraged to attend the next SEAC meeting on Tuesday, January 6, 2008 in the OCDSB Board Room at 7:30 p.m. Meetings are held at 133 Greenbank Rd., Ottawa, ON K2H 6L3. For information: Contact Kim Young, Committee Coordinator, (613) 596-8211, ext. 8363.

The SEAC meeting Agenda for this month includes several interesting Public Information Items. Be sure to check in on their progress in the months to come via the OCDSB site at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca) > About Us > Board of Trustees > Minutes.

1. Special Education Costs for 2007-2008 (PDF) (Michael Clarke, ext. 8881)
2. Report No. 08-225, Waiting List for Learning Support Services, Assessments/Other Supports (PDF)
3. (Dawn Paxton, ext. 8254). Report No. 08-216, Summer Learning Program (PDF) (Dawn Paxton, ext. 8254)

4. Report No. 08-226, Corrective Reading Programs (PDF) (Dawn Paxton, ext. 8254)

5. Report No. 08-235, Summary on Tracking of Exceptional Students Demitted from Special Support Units and Primary Assessment Centres (PDF) (Dawn Paxton, ext. 8254)

6. Report No. 08-242, Input to Ministry of Education Grants for Student Needs (PDF) (Michael Clarke, ext. 8881)

**Pdf's are available in the online version. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of one of these articles please forward your email address to us at:**

e-mail: [ldaoc.resources@rogers.com](mailto:ldaoc.resources@rogers.com)

Tel.: 613-567-5864

Fax: 613-567-5979

## Workshop - The Reading Brain



**John Meissner, Psychologist**, returns this Spring, this time accompanied by **Chris DiZazzo**. They will be giving a presentation on newer research on reading and the brain, the importance of parent advocacy in helping children get help early on when reading problems emerge, and the positive effects of remedial work on brain functioning.

Learn the important components necessary to develop key reading skills.

**Suggested Donation – \$10**

Date: Thursday, March 26th

Time: Informal meeting starting at 6:00 pm in Room 3

Presentation beginning at 6:30 pm

# Volunteers needed

## Board Members

- willing to become LDAO members (fee) and take an interest in voting
- developed skills, experience and contacts in the areas of :
  - fundraising, advocacy
  - employing or teaching persons with LDs
  - being a person with LD(s)
  - effectively parenting person(s) with LDs
  - successful relationships with persons with LDs
  - setting up and running a library
  - law, psychology, medicine, human resources, social work, etc.
- willing and able to meet once a month on a weekday evening
- willing and able to take part in a yearly planning retreat on a Saturday
- organization and participation in yearly Annual General Meeting
- assist staff with member outreach and other duties

## Tutors for low income individuals

Repetitive Work such as stapling documents, photocopying, data entry, filling envelopes etc. Research Telephone Calls to assemble comprehensive lists of relevant information Organization of our library books

# Member-Requested Topic

**Q** Can you provide some information about the Brain – Food connection and its relationship to Learning Disabilities and related issues?

**A** I have seen evidence that food choices and nutrition are linked to learning disabilities, but our office is just beginning to add this to our regular discussion. Eventually I hope to demonstrate best practices in the foods offered at our events. Are you an experienced nutritionist? I would like to hear from you on this question.

To date, LDA Canada's main focus has been the effects of toxicants (like lead and pesticides) on children's learning abilities and behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Health Canada acknowledges "that environmental contaminants are a contributing factor to... delayed developmental milestones (age at first sitting, walking, speaking), cognitive deficits, behavioural problems and school performance deficits".<sup>2</sup> And they say that: "Gaps remain in our understanding of children's environmental health issues. For example, we still know little about the levels and combinations of contaminants to which children are exposed, and how these environmental exposures contribute to chronic diseases and conditions among Canadian children."<sup>2</sup>

What we do know is that children eat more per kilogram of body weight than do adults, and they often have less variety in their diets<sup>2</sup>. If there are toxicants in the

food, then children will get more exposure than adults, and at the most vulnerable periods of brain development.

With technological advances, we can find very small amounts of toxicants in our bodies. But are there any measurable health effects that can be connected to those toxicants? Canadians are at the stage of gathering evidence. There are two studies underway, the Maternal-Infant Research on Environmental Chemicals (MIREC 2007 - 2012), and the Canadian Health Measures Survey (2007-2009).<sup>3</sup>

For more information, please visit the Health Canada website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) and the LDAC site at [www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca).

If you would like to comment on this article or would like to know more about a topic, please contact the LDAOC office.

<sup>1</sup> McElgunn, Barbara. November 1999. "Understanding and Preventing Environmental Hazards to Child Health and Development". Published by the Canadian Child Care Federation in *Linking Research to Practice: Second Canadian Forum Proceedings Report*.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved Dec. 30, 2008 from <http://www.hcsc.gc.ca/ewhsemt/contaminants/vulnerable/index-eng.php> "What Health Concerns can be Linked to Environmental Contaminants?"

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved Dec. 30, 2008 from <http://www.hcsc.gc.ca/ewhsemt/contaminants/mirec/index-eng.php>

Next in our regular series of alternative approach presentations...

## *Arrowsmith Program Information Session*

Have you heard about Arrowsmith? The Arrowsmith School in Toronto offers a training program specifically for students having difficulty with reading, writing, mathematics, comprehension, logical reasoning, auditory memory, nonverbal learning, attention, processing speed, and dyslexia. It is based on theory of brain plasticity and 25 years of experience. The Toronto Catholic District School Board has been using it as well.

There is interest in bringing this program to Ottawa. To learn more from a current Arrowsmith teacher, please attend the information session.

**When:** 11 a.m., Saturday, February 7th, 2009

**Where:** Ottawa location to be announced

Register by contacting our office

\$10 suggested donation

## Where we have been

Presentation at Algonquin College for the Community and Justice Services Class of 2009 on Oct. 30, 2008

### **Attended Volunteer Ottawa workshop entitled:**

“Are you missing out? Attracting untapped volunteer resources to your organization!”

These resources come from three communities: People with Disabilities, New Canadians and International Women Volunteers. Dec. 3, 2008

Information Booths at:

1. Make the Cut
2. Taxation Office - Person's with Disabilities Day
3. Transportation Canada - Charity Fair
4. etc...

## Where we are going

Representation at stakeholder meeting in relation to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). January 6, 2009.

Presentation at Tungasuvvingat Inuit Community Services on January 19, 2009.

**LDAC and LDAOC will be attending “Transitions: In and Out” together on January 29 and 30, 2009.**

This is the 3rd Annual Vocational Schools Conference organized by the Ontario Vocational Schools Association.

### Did you Know?

You can get a kit from Health Canada's Website called “Indoor Air Quality – Tools for Schools Action Kit for Canadian Schools”.  
Go to Health Canada <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> and search for the title or ISBN #.

Indoor Air Quality - Tools for Schools Action Kit for Canadian Schools 2003  
ISBN: H46-2/03-292E Cat. No.: 0-662-33401-9

# Donations to the LDAO-C

- 1 Educational and fun games such as Cashflow for Kids, Mastermind, Cribbage, Checkers, Spirograph, kids' horseshoes, Skyrail Roller Coaster, mosaic games. We will use these at camp.
- 2 Gently used toys and games for the camp “Treasure Box”.
- 3 Help send a limited-income child to camp.
- 4 Help limited-income adults obtain assessments and diagnoses.
- 5 Funds for small ads in local papers.
- 6 Website hosting fees and email services.
- 7 Keeping the website up-to-date (this takes quite a bit of time).
- 8 Purchasing library database software for online searching.
- 9 Setting up a TTY service
- 10 Publishing our newsletter
- 11 Telephone services
- 12 Help get staff regular training so we can more effectively help our clients
- 13 Purchase office supplies
- 14 Purchase books, dvds and educational games for the Resource Library

# “Do you see anyone else throwing their dinosaur?”:

*Providing social cues to help regulate social and emotional behaviour in children with NLD.*

By Local Volunteer Contributor – Richard Comeau

## *Teaching pro-social behaviour:*

“**O**scar, take a look around. Do you see anyone else throwing their dinosaur at the boxes?”  
“No.”

This exchange took place in a drugstore about two years ago when my son was three. Although these words might seem ridiculous, in them is a valuable tool that we can employ when correcting behaviour in children with NLD.

When we seek to correct behaviour, the underlying goal is not only to call attention to inappropriateness, but to prevent the behaviour from recurring. Ultimately this involves transferring the responsibility for behaviour to the child. It is important not to assume that our children, especially those with non-verbal learning disabilities, ought to “know better.” We need to remember that although the behaviour may upset us, we can’t change what has happened. Our role is to teach the child so they can make a more appropriate social decision in the future.

Following this thinking, here is an unproductive response to Oscar:

“How many times do I have to tell you not throw things?”

I am really communicating: “You cause me stress.” This is not what I want to be saying. We want to slow down the hasty reaction time that often causes us to

snap at our children with words that don’t reflect what we want to actually say. So it is important to ask questions that steer us in the right direction.

Our reactions can be much more helpful if we see our role as teaching the child something that is very difficult for them learn on their own. We need to teach them how to read their environment. Those in the child’s support network need to learn how to anticipate how the child might perceive a situation, then provide the child with a social script that will facilitate a positive social experience. This response circumvents a lot of the unproductive emotional snapping that often ensues from punitive approaches.

A very effective way to teach our children is to provide them with opportunities to compare and evaluate their behaviour against what else is going on in the particular situation. So while my child wanted to throw his toy in the store, once he was encouraged to look around and see that no one else was doing that, he just stopped. This approach offers an opportunity to give the child praise. “Good job, you noticed that it was not the time to throw things.” Kids thrive on praise, but remember to be genuine.

Here you are anticipating, thinking ahead about responses that will be appropriate. You must become the observer. A child with NLD may

observe her environment but not know how to respond to it. When they respond positively it is important to recognize this, praising and thus encouraging these pro-social behaviours for future use. Through these experiences, a child with NLD is more likely to socially self-manage.

## *Managing emotional misperceptions:*

Children with NLD often struggle with overreacting to their thoughts. By providing the tools for a child to compare their actions with those around them we are also providing the means by which we can help the child process their immediate and often escalated reactions. These often result in emotional outbursts, which can be very socially isolating, especially amongst their peers.

One way to help the child is to call attention to the child’s reaction, and help them break it down. Here’s an example of breaking down the common social cues involved in reading if someone is angry at you.

“Are you mad at me?” Abas manages through trembling lips.

“Well, let’s see. Something needs to happen for you to be reasonable in suspecting that I am angry with you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I have to be angry. Do I seem angry?”

“No.”

“Then is it reasonable to assume that I am angry at you?”

“No.”

This approach can lead to a meaningful discussion that not only helps the child learn where their perceptions may be unsupported by reality but also helps you to further understand your child.

“How can you tell I am not angry, what do angry people do? How could you know someone was angry?” or

“What caused you to think that I was angry with you?”

Too often we try to change behaviour without recognizing its purpose. What is happening for the child when they escalate? What are they trying to protect themselves from? What need do they have that requires our attention? What expectations do you have that lead you to quick unproductive responses? By asking these types of questions, you are also raising your awareness and your child’s awareness. There is so much to learn from even the simplest situations when you become reflective.

*Richard Comeau BFA, B. Ed, is a parent and Parent and Child Development Facilitator. He offers services in the Ottawa area. He can be reached at 613-265-1959.*



## Mutual-Aid Meetings

Facilitated by LDAOC staff and/or volunteers, meetings will be held on a monthly basis. You are invited if you have an interest in learning disabilities and would like to share and learn. Suggestions for topics are welcome. At the moment, the default topic is Special Education Advocacy in Public Schools, but alternative topics will be requested at the beginning and spontaneous discussion can be accommodated depending on the group.

**Suggested Donation is \$5, payable at the door.**

**Please register with the Resource Coordinator at 613 567-5864 or by email.**

**9:00 AM – Resource Centre and Classroom will be open. Come in and have a coffee or tea!**

**9:30 AM to 11:30 AM – Presentation and/or discussion**

**11:30 AM to Noon – Further questions, networking and an opportunity to visit the Resource Centre**

**Upcoming dates are: January 20, February 17, March 10, April 21, 2009**

## Workshops and Parent Support Groups

Support groups are being formed around topics such as ADHD, Dyslexia and NVLD.

Please contact us for updates, to join the lists or suggest another topic.

## Quick List of upcoming events at the LDAO-C

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
<b>JANUARY 2009</b>		
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Mutual-Aid Meeting	9 a.m. to noon, \$5 suggested donation
TBA	Other workshops	Check the website or Member email
<b>FEBRUARY 2009</b>		
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Arrowsmith Information Session	11 a.m., \$10 suggested donation
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mutual-Aid Meeting	9 a.m. to noon, \$5 suggested donation
TBA	Other workshops	Check the website or Member email
<b>MARCH 2009</b>		
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Mutual-Aid Meeting	9 a.m. to noon, \$5 suggested donation
TBA	Other workshops	Check the website or Member email
Mon. 16 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup>	Offices open by appointment only	March Break Sunshine Day Camp
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Reading Brain</b>	Presentation at 6:30 pm, \$10 donation
<b>APRIL 2009</b>		
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Mutual-Aid Meeting	9 a.m. to noon, \$5 suggested donation
TBA	Other workshops	Check the website or Member email

### The Socially, Ethically and Environmentally Responsible Office

#### *To conserve resources, we:*

- keep the lights off in the office when light from the windows is enough
- purchase 100% post-consumer recycled paper when possible
- turn the lights and computers off while the office is closed
- recycle our paper waste

#### *To "walk the talk", we:*

- encourage an atmosphere where all income levels, ethnicities, ages, sexual-orientations and abilities feel welcome
- encourage non-violent assertiveness in social interactions
- openness and individual responsibility
- respect for human rights and critical thinking

Since there is always room for improvement, we encourage our membership to let us know how we can do better. Write us a letter, but please keep your criticisms constructive!

We take pride and believe in what we do because our belief is grounded in the strengths and potential of our community.

### Your Business Card-Sized Ad

Big Business - \$60.00

Small Business / Professional - \$40.00

Non-profit - \$20.00

*(Other sizes and pricing available)*

**Please check our website for updated program information:**

<http://ldao-c.ncf.ca>

**Yes,  
I would like to help LDAO-C continue  
to do their important work.**

I am enclosing my donation of:

[ ] \$25 [ ] \$50 [ ] \$75 [ ] \$100

[ ] Cheque [ ] VISA [ ] MC

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



Mail your donation to:

**LDAO-C**

160 Percy St, Room 2  
Ottawa, ON K1R 6E5