

LDA Warns: No Safe Levels of Lead for Children

Maureen Swanson, Coordinator
LDA Healthy Children Project

In the midst of back-to-school preparations this year, parents faced a new task: check to see if their children's toys, bibs, jewelry, and lunch boxes were contaminated with lead, and need to be thrown out or returned to the store. Unfortunately, checking toys for lead may become a regular part of parenting. With



holiday shopping just around the corner, toy manufacturers and retailers warn that further recalls are likely as they heighten scrutiny of their products and suppliers.

We suspect that companies will continue to identify products contaminated with lead, says Sheila Buckley, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), and we want parents to know that there is no safe level of lead exposure for kids.

No Safe Levels of Lead

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently sets the *intervention level* for lead in a child's body at 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (10µg/dL). However, recent studies show that a child's ability to learn is impaired at much lower blood lead levels, and a new study links low levels of lead exposure during the toddler years to lags in educational achievement once children are in elementary school.

In the August 2007 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*, scientists from Duke University report a correlation between blood lead levels as low as 2 µg/dL in children screened at ages one or two and declines in math and reading test scores when the children reached fourth grade. Their findings complement a host of other studies over the last 15 years



showing learning and behavioral deficits occurring at blood lead levels well below the CDC's threshold.

Lead Is Not a New Problem

In the 1970s, Dr. Herbert Needleman, a professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, was the first to discover cognitive effects in children who had been exposed to lead, and became instrumental in getting the U.S. government to remove lead from gasoline and paint. More recently, Dr. Needleman, has shown a correlation between low levels of lead exposure and anti-social and criminal behavior in juveniles.

Sources of Exposure

Common sources of exposure to lead for children include ingesting lead paint, often found in older houses and buildings, or exposure to contaminated soil and drinking water. As shown by the recent toy recalls, children may also be exposed to lead in daily play, if they put a contaminated toy or piece of jewelry in their mouth.

LDA urges parents to have their children tested for blood lead levels at ages one and two, and to consult with their pediatrician regarding the results. For more information on identifying and addressing learning disabilities, see www.laamerica.org. For more information on lead poisoning and prevention, see www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/



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Facts You Should Remember

- LDA and scientific experts in the field believe that there is no safe level of

lead exposure for children.

- Lead's effects on children, even at very low levels, include learning disabilities and behavior problems such as increased hyperactivity and aggression.
- The current *action level* for lead, set by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood (10 µg/dL).
- Scientists are finding harmful impacts from lead levels as low as 2 micrograms per deciliter (2 µg/dL).
- The CDC has a stated goal of eliminating elevated blood lead levels in children by 2010 – just three years from now.



- The main way that children are exposed to lead is through lead paint, often found in older houses. Other sources of exposure include contaminated soils and drinking water.

- LDA asks pediatricians to screen all children for elevated blood lead levels and urges parents to ask that their children be tested for elevated blood lead levels.

What to Do

If you find that your children have toys that were recalled because they contained lead or you became aware that they contained lead through testing or other means, do not allow your children to have with them. If not otherwise instructed by the manufacturer, return the toys, jewelry and other items to the store where they were purchased or to a store that carries the same item. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's website (www.cpsc.gov) provides information on recent product recalls.

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Lynne Cannon, Editor

Jean E. Lokerson Honored by the Council for Exceptional Children



In April 2007 Jean Lokerson, longtime member of the Learning Disabilities Association of America and past member of the PAB and past First Vice President was a Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Pioneers Showcase Honoree. Jean's involvement with LDA began in Virginia and she has remained active in her state affiliate for many years.

Jean's education career actually began at the age of 21 months, when triplets were born into the Lokerson household. From those early days, she went on to teach in elementary and demonstration classrooms, and later pursued a doctoral degree at the University of Maryland.

During her 26-year career as a teacher educator with an intense interest in students with learning disabilities, both colleagues and students recognized that her experience and academic knowledge enhanced her work as a teacher educator at all levels. Her use of simulations, technology, and hands-on experiences has been recognized world-wide, and she is considered a pioneer in helping educators, employers, and parents understand and address the challenges of a disability. As a result, Jean Lokerson has been in demand as an educational consultant and is a highly

regarded presenter at national and international conferences.

A number of organizations have greatly benefited from her experience, including the Council for Exceptional Children and the Learning Disabilities Association. Dr. Lokerson developed LDA's unique Teacher Educator Team stipend program, worked to strengthen certification standards, and became known as a strong advocate for improving the education of individuals with disabilities. Widely recognized for her public policy work, she is also a consultant to the U.S. Department of Education, working on establishing programs and policies that serve students with special needs in public and private schools.

An Associate Professor Emerita at Virginia Commonwealth University, Dr. Lokerson earned her Ph.D. in special education with a minor in human development from the University of Maryland in 1970. She completed her master's degree at Syracuse University in 1965, and was awarded her undergraduate degree in elementary education (1959) from George Washington University.

Congratulations Jean on this very impressive award!

The biographical information used here was adapted from the University of Maryland's website.

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NIMAS: The IDEA Accessibility Standard

Part 3- What Can We Expect in the Future?

Steve Noble
LDA Board of Directors

In the last issue of *Newsbriefs*, we examined how NIMAS is really about two things: student access and student success. The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) which emerged as part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization of 2004, is directly connected to the responsibility of state and local education agencies to provide for the accessibility needs of students with print disabilities, including students with learning disabilities, using textbooks. But going beyond the mandates of the law, we also examined the way that NIMAS is really about the need to bring all students—including students with disabilities—to similar levels of proficiency. In this last installment, we now look at the promises of NIMAS as well as a few of the problems that may await us.



What's Around the Corner?

As of yet, the real impact of NIMAS has not reached home. This is because of the manner in which the authorizing language was written. First of all, NIMAS has no effect on textbooks written in the past that are still being used in schools. States were given two years from the enactment date to start putting NIMAS requirements into textbook adoption contracts. Furthermore, the statutory language only applies to print instructional materials published after the date on which the final rule establishing the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard was published in the Federal Register, which did not happen until July 19, 2006. Since textbook adoption language is generally written about a year (sometimes more) before the textbooks are planned to be used in schools, this means that only now are the

first electronic files starting to end up in the national repository. Finally, since most states have a protracted—typically seven year—adoption cycle, it will be another three or four years before we even reach the half-way mark.

The electronic files produced by publishers in accordance with the NIMAS regulations do not go directly to students, nor are they distributed to schools. They are first sent to the national repository, which is called the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC). The NIMAC is operated by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in Louisville, Kentucky. APH was actually named in the IDEA statute as the location for the repository. The latest update on the NIMAC website (www.nimac.us) showed that 840 electronic files have been submitted. These files are a mixture of textbooks and ancillary materials. The NIMAC site also indicates that only 37 states are actively collaborating with the repository at this point, so we still have a way to go.

Currently, a number of entities are gearing up to handle redistribution of these electronic files into *student-ready versions*—digital copies of textbooks that can be used by students on a computer or in a portable digital talking book player. Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (www.rfbd.org), otherwise known as *RFB&D Learning through Listening* is an example of a familiar organization that will be taking electronic files from the NIMAC repository and turning them into student-ready CD-ROMs. Another example is Bookshare (www.bookshare.org), which provides downloadable versions of books. Electronic files from the NIMAC will allow organizations like RFB&D and Bookshare to create full-text digital talking books, which when used on a computer will be able to display the text visually while it is being read audibly by the computer, along with synchronized highlighting. This kind of technology usage has been shown to be very useful for students with learning disabilities affecting reading, like dyslexia, both for reading accommodation and remediation purposes.

There is also hope that some

publishers will be prodded by the NIMAS requirements to simply produce their own accessible digital materials up front, since this is also encouraged in the IDEA statute. This concept is often called the *market model*. In many ways, such a model could be ideal if publishers actually strive to use a universally designed digital format that could be used equally by all students, regardless of a disability diagnosis. If that happened, then theoretically any student could obtain one of these digital textbooks directly through their school without having to use a service that requires a certification of a learning disability. This would of course be helpful for struggling learners who don't actually have a learning disability, or for parents who choose not to have their child served under special education. Although the market model is not currently a reality, it may bode well for the future.

Shaping the Future – Now!

Perhaps the most critical issue right now for the learning disability community is simply the lack of information. NIMAS is simply not on our radar screen. There is also some misconception floating around that NIMAS is just about blind students. While it is true that the advocacy push that got NIMAS into the IDEA came primarily from blindness groups, the reality is that the implementation of NIMAS will benefit—by far—more children with learning disabilities than any other single group of students in special education.

The potential for helping our students through taking full advantage of NIMAS is enormous. However, those of us in the learning disability community need to educate ourselves about NIMAS, and get involved at the state level to ensure that local implementation of the NIMAS provisions do not leave out our students. With this in mind, here are a number of ways we can all work in that direction:

- To get up to date on the NIMAS provisions in IDEA, check out the NIMAS Development & Technical Assistance Centers website at nimas.org.

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NIMAS

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cast.org

- To find out about the latest discussions on NIMAS or to ask questions from knowledgeable sources, sign up to the NIMAS listserv. The nimas.ig listserv has been formed for the purpose of NIMAS- and NIMAC-

related discussions, including concerns, options, issues, and practical applications. This discussion group is open to the public. You can sign up for the listserv at <http://lists.cast.org/mailman/listinfo/nimas.ig>

- To get involved in what is happening with NIMAS in your state, contact the primary point of contact person for

your state listed on: http://nimas.cast.org/about/resources/nimas_nimac_contacts.html

The contact person can advise you of planning group meetings in your state, or refer you to the best person to contact about getting involved. This is especially critical for LDA state affiliates. Getting to the planning table will be important to make sure that students with learning disabilities are not just an *afterthought* in your state.

- If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the author through LDA at info@ldaamerica.org

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Steve Noble is a member of the LDA Board of Directors and serves on the NIMAS Development Committee for the U.S. Department of Education through a cooperative agreement with the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). Steve Noble has been active in accessibility circles for many years, and was the originating drafter of Kentucky's K-12 and postsecondary textbook accessibility laws. This article concludes a series that examined the textbook accessibility provisions found in IDEA 2004.

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An Introduction to Learning Disabilities and Juvenile Delinquency

LDA Justice System/Mental Health Committee

Youth with learning disabilities are disproportionately involved in the juvenile legal system. Research indicates that most juvenile justice practitioners, as well as the general public, have minimal understanding of learning disabilities and how they may affect a youth's behavior. There also is evidence that youth with learning disabilities receive inadequate defense representation that fails to take into account their specific needs and potential vulnerabilities in a fundamentally adversarial process. Youth with learning disabilities are differentially targeted and processed than non-disabled youth by schools, law enforcement, and the courts. Such disparity in treatment may contribute to their disproportionate representation in the juvenile justice system. A number of additional factors are associated with an increased likelihood of delinquency, including hyperactivity, impulsiveness, poor behavioral control, attention problems, low intelligence, and poor attainment in school. The harsh reality is that youth with learning disabilities have been found to be more than twice as likely to commit a delinquent offense than non-learning disabled children. Numerous youth with learning disabilities have co-morbid diagnoses, such as ADHD and depression.

Theories Linking Learning Disabilities and Delinquency

There are three commonly cited theories correlating the link between a learning disability and delinquency. As discussed below, these include: (1) susceptibility; (2) school failure; and (3) differential processing.

- **Susceptibility Theory:** This theory holds that youth with learning disabilities are more likely to engage in delinquency because of particular characteristics associated with the disability. These characteristics may include impulsiveness, suggestibility, and poor social perception.
- **School Failure Theory:** According

to this theory, a student with learning disabilities who has not developed appropriately at school will look for acceptance in other ways, such as through delinquent behavior. The student may act out in anger toward school staff and others as a result of the educational failure.

- **Differential Processing Theory:** This theory presupposes that youth with learning disabilities are different from their non-disabled peers and, as a result, may not respond appropriately to juvenile justice professionals. Because these inappropriate responses are not properly recognized, youth with learning disabilities are more likely to be arrested and move further down the delinquency system.

Suggestions for Reform

Historically, the juvenile justice system has been premised on protecting the best interests of the juvenile instead of punishment. For instance, the legislative declaration of the Colorado Children's Code states in relevant part: *[W]hile holding paramount the public safety, the juvenile justice system shall take into consideration the best interests of the juvenile, the victim, and the community in*

providing appropriate treatment to reduce the rate of recidivism in the juvenile justice system and to assist the juvenile in becoming a productive member of society.

In this light, the following are suggested as ways to provide equal justice for youth with learning disabilities:

- Increasing information about protecting the rights of youth with learning disabilities in the juvenile justice system to all interested professionals, policymakers, and the public, as well as law enforcement personnel who make contact with the youth with learning disabilities before and at the time of arrest.
- More effective coordination of services between professions as youth with learning disabilities become involved in the juvenile justice system.
- Improved communication and collaboration between schools and juvenile professionals regarding identification of learning disabilities and in the development and implementation of educational plans.
- Training of law school students with appropriate internships and

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Response to Intervention: Report on the OSEP Leadership Conference

Justine Maloney
LDA Washington Representative

The Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) convened a Leadership Conference in August. Acting OSEP Director Patty Guard announced that Vanderbilt University has been awarded a grant for a center to look at the issue of fidelity in the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI). Presentations of interest to LDA were on the 2% modified achievement standards (the 2% Exemption), response to intervention, and transition and secondary outcomes.

The keynote speech on Foundations for Systems Change by Dean Fixsen, Director of the National Implementation Research Network was refreshingly realistic. Dr. Fixsen pointed out that promising research and training do not necessarily result in better outcomes for students. Effective intervention practices and effective implementation practices do. Changes do not come quickly or easily, but they can be made.

Two Percent Modified Achievement Standards

Presenters from the Department of Education pointed out that:

- The use of the 2% exception is permitted but not required. States have until the 2008-2009 school year to decide what to do.
- Separate modifications & assessments are made for reading and math.
- The IEP must include goals based on grade level content standards (no guidance on how that is done if student is being taught material below grade level).

- Content is challenging but less difficult.
- Three achievement levels are measured: advanced, proficient, below proficient.

Results of early programs indicated that:

- Simpler test items may not be the answer.
- There are two major subgroups:
 - Gap 1: students are almost at the standard achievement levels.
 - Gap 2: students are just above the 1% exemption for students who receive alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (the 1% toppers).

Challenges

- How to ensure access to grade level curriculum
- Who are the students
- What should the test look like
- What support does the state give to local IEP teams

Response to Intervention: Reports from Virginia and Pennsylvania

Virginia

Response to Intervention is just starting at the state level. At present 30 LEA's are using an RTI model. A state workgroup is made up of representatives from general education, student services, special education, and Title I specialists is charged with developing guidelines for implementing RTI (universal

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

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Some Ideas on What Grandparents *Can Do*

Sally L. Smith

REALIZE what your son or daughter is coping with having a child with a learning disability and, possibly, attention and language problems. Educate yourself about the nature of the condition so you can be a tremendous support to your children and grandchildren. They really need you.

LOOK for what works with your grandchild – special talents and gifts. Foster interests. Help find things he or she can do better than anyone else in the family (best finder, best artist, most imaginative, great question asker).

TEACH them what you know – not just discuss things, but **make things** – woodwork, quilts, play music together, study stars through a telescope, play make believe (if you are comfortable doing it), photograph or video together. Show them how to

sell things or help set up a little business or lemonade stand. Demonstrate banking investing in the stock market, cook together, garden together, collect rocks or something else to make a collection, and/or make scrapbooks with them.

RELATE to older students, by telling them about real life, historical experiences you have had that relate your life to what they are studying, such as World War II, Vietman, fighting for Civil Rights, watching men walk on the moon for the first time. They love it when you tell them about fascinating musicians, actors, playwrights, movie makers, entrepreneurs, and politicians that you have met. They find it particularly appealing when you have experienced some of the same problems that they have, i.e., learning disabilities, ADHD, shyness, being the smallest or tallest in the class, etc.

WHAT GRANDPARENTS CAN DO

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WHAT GRANDPARENTS CAN DO

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READ to them no matter what age.

HELP them to help others. They need to feel they can be of use to others. The world needs lots of helping hands.

PLAN celebrations with your grandchildren. This helps them organize, plan, think through a scene and see it to the end. They need every way to organize materials, situations, themselves, and follow through to completion. They need to learn to organize themselves. Today's technology (cell phones, iPods, computers, hand held Blackberries) help a lot.

GIVE specific praise. They have trouble with global praise, with abstractions. *You're doing well – what is well? Example: I love the way you are paying attention. Good for you for looking me in the eye when we are talking.*

MAKE mistakes on purpose in front of them. Say, *OOPs, I made a mistake. Let's see what I can do about it.* They need to realize they have a number of options when they make mistakes, it is not proof they are stupid or clumsy.

HAVE fun together. Tell them stories of your childhood, especially when you *messed up*. They are entranced by your misdeeds. Look at photo albums together or family trees that help them deal with sequences of time and visualizing what it was like a while ago. They love the feeling of security that family history brings.

**ENJOY! LAUGH TOGETHER!
HAVE FUN TOGETHER!**

Sally L. Smith is the Founder and Director of the Lab School, Washington, DC and the author of many books for parents and educators of children with learning disabilities.

Useful Websites on Transition and Secondary Outcomes

The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities: www.ndpc-sd.org

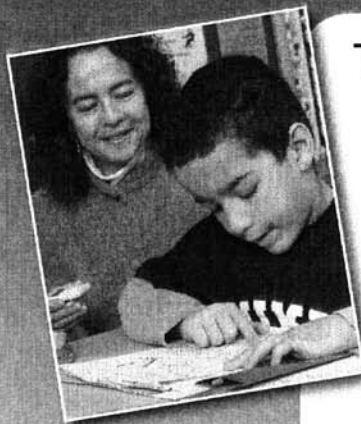
The National Post School Outcomes Center: www.psocenter.org

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center: www.nsttac.org

National Community of Practice on Transition: www.sharework.org

National High School Center: www.betterhighschools.org

Technical Assistance on Transition and Rehabilitation Act (TATRA): www.pacer.org/tatra



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The Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

Justine Maloney
LDA Washington Representative

No Child Left Behind (ESEA) Reauthorization

Roll Call reports that *President Bush's signature No Child Left Behind law is about to get an overhaul courtesy of the Democratic Congress, and the name itself could be one of the casualties.* Changes in current law probably will include making accommodations for schools with large numbers of English as a Second Language students and special education students.

Two bills have been introduced in the Senate which may affect the final legislation are:

- **The No Child Left Behind Act of 2007** (S 1775, Burr, R-NC) which would completely reauthorize NCLB. The current regulations on flexibility for assessing up to 30% of students with disabilities would be put into law.
- **The All Students Can Achieve Act** (Lieberman, I-CT; Coleman, R-MN, and Landrieu, D-LA.) is based on the bipartisan NCLB report published in February. The emphasis is on teacher effectiveness. It also

establishes a National Assessment Governing Board which will provide states with alternate assessments designed specifically for students with disabilities. The percentage of students with persistent academic disabilities to be tested on modified academic achievement standards would be 1% of all students tested-down from the 2% in current regulations.

Other NCLB Bills

The National Education Association website (www.nea.org/lac/esea/07nclb.html) has listed 59 bills which *improve* NCLB. **These could pass as stand alone bills but more likely would be incorporated into the final NCLB bill.** Bills which contain provisions of interest to the disability community include:

- **Improving No Child Left Behind Act** (S 348, Crapo, R-ID) among other provisions, would provide states additional flexibility in assessing students with disabilities.
- **No Child Left Behind Flexibility and Improvements Act** (S 562, Collins, R-ME) would allow students with disabilities to be assessed for AYP

based on their IEP.

- **No Child Left Behind Improvements Act of 2007** (HR 648, Young, R-AK) would link the use of alternate assessments for students with disabilities to their IEPs.
- **Comprehensive Learning Assessment for Students and Schools (Class) Act** (HR 2070, Udall, D-CO) would require utilizing more accurate and equitable methods to assess academic achievement of students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
- **Practicality in Education Act** (HR 2166, Moran, R-KS) would assess students with disabilities at the grade level recommended by their Individualized Education Plans.
- **State and Local Education Flexibility Act of 2007** (HR 2946, Terry, R-NE) would allow states to test students with cognitive disabilities based on their Individualized Education Plans.
- **To Allow States to Adopt Alternate and Modified Standards for Students with Disabilities** (HR 3076, Boozma, R-AR) would allow states to

REAUTHORIZATION OF NCLB

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REAUTHORIZATION OF NCLB

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adopt alternate and modified standards for students with disabilities.

Secondary Schools

- **Pathways for All Students to Succeed Act** (S 611, Murray, D-WA) would authorize \$1 billion per year for literacy skills grants and \$1 billion per year for mathematics skills grants for middle and high schools in local

education agencies that are eligible for Title I funds.

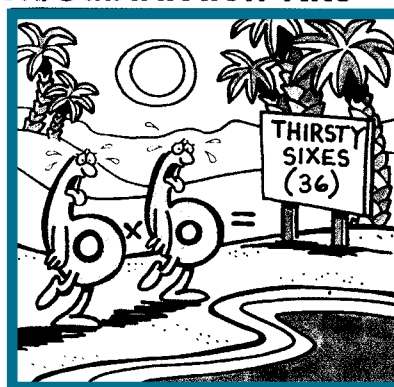
- **Graduate for a Better Future Act** (S 765, Burr, R-NC) would establish a \$500 million per year program of competitive grants to states, educational nonprofit organizations, or partnerships of such entities for their use in providing competitive grants to local educational agencies that have a high school graduation rate of no more than 60 percent in the aggregate or among at least two subgroups consisting of the poor or

major racial or ethnic groups.

- **Striving Readers Act** (S 958, Sessions, R-AL; HR 2289 Yarmuth, D-KY) would authorize \$200 million in FY 2008 rising to \$1 billion in FY 2012 for grants to states and districts to create literacy programs specifically for middle and high school students.
- **Graduation Promise Act** (S 1185, Bingaman, D-NM; HR 2928 Hinojosa, D-TX) would provide \$2.5 billion to build capacity for secondary school improvement, and at the same time provide states and local school districts with the resources to ensure that high schools with the greatest challenges receive the support they need to implement research-based interventions.
- **Graduation Really Achieves Dreams (GRAD) Act** (HR 887, McCarthy, D-NY) would provide \$27 million for Project GRAD programs implementing integrated education reform services to improve secondary school graduation rates and college attendance for disadvantaged students.
- **Graduation for All Act** (HR 1623, Hinojosa, D-TX) would amend the

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REAUTHORIZATION OF NCLB

continued on page 14

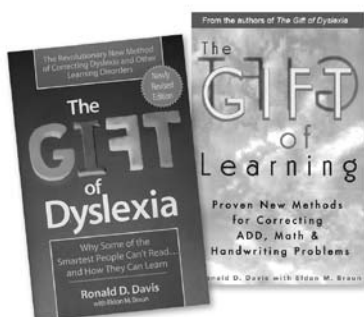
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LDA INFORMATION SHEET

Early Childhood Websites

The following websites regarding early childhood issues are provided for use by parents, teachers, and other interested professionals:

<http://www.Everydayteaching.com>

Practical resources for teachers or parents can be found at this website. It's free and you can subscribe.

<http://www.FamilyEducation.com>

This is a great resource for parents. An excellent Ready to Read screening tool is available. It is completed on the computer and then feedback is provided. Features include *School Resources for Parents*, *Parents' Guide for Understanding Online Acronyms*, and *Advice from Parents*. (Advertisements may be distracting.)

<http://www.schwablearning.org>

A *Parents' Guide to Helping Kids with Learning Difficulties*. The side headings include: Identifying Difficulties, Managing Your Child, Managing Home and Family,

Managing School and Learning, Connecting with Others, Resources, and Publications.

<http://www.ldonline.org>

Provides valuable information on numerous aspects of learning disabilities and ADHD.

Government Resources

<http://www.ed.gov>

Links to free resources are listed at the top of the page. Click on links for useful information for parents and teachers.

<http://idea.ed.gov>

This URL takes you to *Building the Legacy of IDEA 2004*. You can choose Part B or Part C.

<http://www.osepideasthatwork.org>

See link, left side of the page, entitled *Newly Added Resources for Parents*. This links to a tool kit for parents' use.

The Early Childhood Website Information Sheet was prepared by the LDA Early Childhood Committee and approved in August 2007.

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Adults with Learning Disabilities: Assessing the Problem

Introduction

When adults suspect they have a learning disability, or that someone they care about does, they need information. They often have questions such as: *What can I do? Whom can I call? How can I obtain information? Where are available services?*

Assessing the Problem

Those adults who suspect they may have a learning disability can begin to find assistance by having an assessment conducted by qualified professionals. Qualified professionals are individuals trained to conduct assessments. Often the professionals have been certified to select, administer, and interpret a variety of neurological, psychological, educational, and vocational assessment instruments.

Different assessment procedures may be appropriate in various settings such as community colleges, adult basic education programs, and through vocational rehabilitation agencies. It is important for the adult not only to be actively involved in the assessment process, but also to have confidence in the professional with whom he or she is working.

An assessment refers to the gathering

of relevant information that can be used to help an adult make decisions, and provides a means for assisting an adult to live more fully. An adult is assessed because of problems in employment, education, and/or life situations. An assessment involves more than just taking tests. An assessment includes an evaluation, a diagnosis, and recommendations.

The first stage of an evaluation is usually a screening. Screening tools use abbreviated, informal methods to determine if an individual is at risk for a learning disability. Examples of informal methods include, but are not limited to: an interview; reviews of medical, school, or employment histories; written answers to a few questions; or, a brief test. It is important to understand, however, that being screened for a learning disability is different from undergoing a thorough evaluation. When conducting a thorough evaluation, qualified professionals may first refer to the results of the screening in order to plan which tests to administer. Such tests may include, but are not limited to, those that provide information on intelligence, aptitude, achievement, and vocational interests. During the evaluation stage of the assessment process, all

relevant information about an individual should be gathered.

A diagnosis is a statement of the specific type of learning disability that an individual may have, based on an interpretation of the information gathered during the evaluation. A diagnosis serves a useful purpose if it explains an individual's particular strengths and weaknesses, as well as determines eligibility for resources or support services that have not been otherwise available. Through a careful examination and analysis of all the information gathered during the evaluation, qualified professionals use the diagnostic stage of the assessment process to explain the information gathered and to offer recommendations.

Recommendations should provide direction in employment, education, and daily living. Specific recommendations may be made regarding the instructional strategies which an individual will find most successful, as well as other ways to compensate for and/or overcome some of the effects of the disability. Based on specific strengths and areas for development identified during the evaluation and diagnostic stages of the assessment process, recommendations should also suggest possible accommodations that an individual can use to be more successful and feel less frustrated in everyday life.

Adults should be assessed according to their age, experience, and career objectives. This is the only way appropriate, helpful, and conclusive information can be provided to adults. As a result of an assessment, adults will have new information that can help them plan how to obtain the assistance they need. Regardless of their diagnosis, individuals will know more about themselves, have a greater understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and feel better about themselves.

Locating a Qualified Professional

In addition to the resources listed

ADULT ASSESSMENT

continued on page 13



A structured, residential program for young adults (ages 21-30) with developmental disabilities offering:

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ADULT ASSESSMENT

continued from page 12

here, there are agencies in most areas that can refer inquirers to diagnosticians or professionals qualified to conduct assessments appropriate for adults. Check your telephone directory for the following:

- Learning Disabilities Association of America, often listed with the name of the city or county first
- adult education in the public school system
- adult literacy programs or literacy councils
- community mental health agencies
- counseling or study skills center at a local college or university
- educational therapists or learning specialists in private practice
- guidance counselors in high schools
- International Dyslexia Association
- private schools or institutions specializing in learning disabilities
- special education departments and/or disability support service offices in colleges or universities
- state Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- university-affiliated hospitals

Questions to Ask Qualified Professionals

- Have you tested many adults with learning disabilities?
- How long will the assessment take?
- What will the assessment cover?
- Will there be a written and an oral report of the assessment?
- Will our discussion give me more information regarding why I am having trouble with my job or job training, school, or daily life?
- Will you also give me ideas on how to improve my skills and how to compensate for my disability?
- Will the report make recommendations about where to go for immediate help?
- What is the cost? What does the cost cover?
- What are possibilities and costs for additional consultation?
- Can insurance cover the costs? Are there other funding sources? Can a payment plan be worked out?

A Learning Disabilities Checklist

A checklist is a guide. It is a list of characteristics. It is difficult to provide

a checklist of typical characteristics of adults with learning disabilities because their most common characteristics are their unique differences. In addition, most adults exhibit or have exhibited some of these characteristics. In other words, saying yes to anyone item on this checklist does not mean you are a person with a learning disability. Even if a number of the following items sound familiar to you, you are not necessarily an individual with a learning disability. However, if you say that's me for most of the items, and if you experience these difficulties to such a degree that they cause problems in employment, education, and/or daily living, it might be useful for you to obtain an assessment by qualified professionals experienced in working with adults with learning disabilities.

There are many worthwhile checklists available from a number of organizations. The following checklist was adapted from lists of learning disabilities' characteristics developed by the following organizations: Learning Disabilities Association of America, *For Employers... A Look at Learning Disabilities*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities; and Gifted Education, Examples of Learning Disability Characteristics; The International Dyslexia Association's *Annals of Dyslexia*; and the Council for Learning Disabilities, *Infosheet*.

While individuals with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence, they do not excel

in employment, education, and/or life situations at the same level as their peers. Identified characteristics are as follows:

- May perform similar tasks differently from day to day
- May read well but not write well, or write well but not read well
- May be able to learn information presented in one way, but not in another
- May have a short attention span, be impulsive, and/or be easily distracted
- May have difficulty telling or understanding jokes
- May misinterpret language, have poor comprehension of what is said
- May have difficulty with social skills, may misinterpret social cues
- May find it difficult to memorize information
- May have difficulty following a schedule, being on time, or meeting deadlines
- May get lost easily, either driving and/or in large buildings
- May have trouble reading maps
- May often misread or miscopy
- May confuse similar letters or numbers, reverse them, or confuse their order
- May have difficulty reading the newspaper, following small print, and/or following columns
- May be able to explain things orally,

ADULT ASSESSMENT

continued on page 14



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but not in writing

- May have difficulty writing ideas on paper
- May reverse or omit letters, words, or phrases when writing
- May have difficulty completing job applications correctly
- May have persistent problems with sentence structure, writing mechanics, and organizing written work
- May experience continuous problems with spelling the same word differently in one document
- May have trouble dialing phone numbers and reading addresses
- May have difficulty with math, math language, and math concepts
- May reverse numbers in checkbook and have difficulty balancing a checkbook
- May confuse right and left, up and down
- May have difficulty following directions, especially multiple directions
- May be poorly coordinated
- May be unable to tell you what has just been said
- May hear sounds, words, or sentences imperfectly or incorrectly

As mentioned previously, an adult with learning disabilities may exhibit some of these characteristics, but not necessarily all of them. If an individual exhibits several or many of these characteristics to such a degree that they cause problems in work, school, or everyday life, he or she might benefit from an assessment by a qualified professional.

This article was adapted from information developed by a consortium of agencies devoted to serving adults with learning disabilities. For additional information, go to <http://www.nifl.gov>

graduation provisions of AYP to require that such information count separately for each designated subgroup of students. In addition, it would create a new \$1 billion grant program to improve adolescent literacy in middle and high schools.

- **Reliable and Accurate Graduation Rate Act** (HR 2862, Castle, R-DE) would establish a uniform definition of a four-year graduation rate, while taking into consideration the additional time needed for students with special needs, or limited English proficient students, or those students who are dual enrolled in high school and an institution of higher education.
- **Every Student Counts Act** (HR 2955, Scott, D-VA) would create a single, accurate, and consistent measurement for reporting and accountability of high school graduation rates, based on the National Governors Association's Graduation Rate Compact. It would also require the disaggregation of graduation data by subgroup to ensure that schools are held accountable for increasing the graduation rate for all types of students. Finally, the bill would give schools credit for graduating students who need extra time by allowing students who graduate in five years to count toward a school's successful graduation rate.

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Facts for Families: *Children and Divorce*

One out of every two marriages today ends in divorce and many divorcing families include children. Parents who are getting a divorce are frequently worried about the effect the divorce will have on their children. During this difficult period, parents may be preoccupied with their own problems, but continue to be the most important people in their children's lives.

While parents may be devastated or relieved by the divorce, children are invariably frightened and confused by the threat to their security. Some parents feel so hurt or overwhelmed by the divorce that they may turn to the child for comfort or direction. Divorce can be misinterpreted by children unless parents tell them what is happening, how they are involved and not involved and what will happen to them.

Children often believe they have caused the conflict between their mother and father. Many children assume the responsibility for bringing their parents back together, sometimes by sacrificing themselves. Vulnerability to both physical and mental illnesses can originate in the traumatic loss of one or both parents through divorce. With care and attention, however, a family's strengths can be mobilized during a divorce, and children can be helped to deal constructively with the resolution of parental conflict.

Talking to children about a divorce is difficult. The following tips can help both the child and parents with the challenge and stress of these conversations:

- Do not keep it a secret or wait until the last minute.
- Tell your children together.
- Keep things simple and straight-forward.
- Tell them the divorce is not their fault.
- Admit that this will be sad and upset-

ting for everyone.

- Reassure your children that you both still love them and will always be their parents.
- Do not discuss each other's faults or problems with the children.

Parents should be alert to signs of distress in their child or children. Young children may react to divorce by becoming more aggressive and uncooperative or withdrawing. Older children may feel deep sadness and loss. Their schoolwork may suffer and behavior problems are common. As teenagers and adults, children of divorce can have trouble with their own relationships and experience problems with self-esteem.

Children will do best if they know that their mother and father will still be their parents and remain involved with them even though the marriage is ending and the parents won't live together. Long custody disputes or pressure on a child to choose sides can be particularly harmful for the youngster and can add to the damage of the divorce. Research shows that children do best when parents can cooperate on behalf of the child.

Parents' ongoing commitment to the child's well being is vital. If a child shows signs of distress, the family doctor or pediatrician can refer the parents to a child and adolescent psychiatrist for evaluation and treatment. In addition, the child and

adolescent psychiatrist can meet with the parents to help them learn how to make the strain of the divorce easier on the entire family. Psychotherapy for the children of a divorce, and the divorcing parents, can be helpful.

Facts for Families: Children and Divorce (No. 1) was updated July 2004. Publication of *Facts for Families* in *Newsbriefs* is a project of the LDA Justice System/Mental Health Committee.

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Report Card on State Compliance with IDEA

On June 20, the US Education Department issued a report on how well states were complying with IDEA '04 based on data submitted for the 2005-2006 school year (www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guide/idea/monitor/factsheet.html). The results were based on 20 indicators, such as the high school graduation rates of students with disabilities compared to the graduation rates of the general population, and the percentage of parents who reported schools were encouraging parental involvement. According to the report nine states (Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and Wyoming) are on track, five states (Colorado, Indiana, North Carolina, North Dakota and Washington) need intervention, and the rest are in the needs assistance category. No state was found in need of substantial intervention.

The Education Department also determined how well states were serving toddlers with disabilities and their families. In that section, 15 states met all requirements, 21 need assistance and 15 need intervention. No state needs substantial interven-

tion.

Weaknesses cited by the US Department of Education included:

- States failed to ensure that local school districts comply with the law
- States failed to comply with requirements for providing transition plans from school to college or work

Graduation Rates

Only 16 states (Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin) met their target for the percent of youth with IEP's graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to the percent of all youth in the state graduating with a regular diploma. Fifteen states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington) met their target of the percent of youth with IEP's not dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the state not dropping out of

high school.

State Academic Standards

Academic standards describe what children in each grade need to know and be able to do. The state's academic standards can be downloaded from the state department of education website: (www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guide/idea/monitor/factsheet.html).

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LDA Washington Representative

Legislation

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

The President signed into law the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (PL 110-44). The new law includes projects for students with disabilities, including transition programs, distance learning, supporting and training staff in disability related fields, and making postsecondary education accessible through curriculum development.

After Labor Day, there will be little time for action on many pending bills unless the scheduled date of adjournment is changed.

Appropriations

On July 19, the House passed the 2008 Labor/Health and Human Services/Education Appropriations (HR 3403) which includes about \$7 billion more than the FY 2007 Labor-HHS-Education appropriation, \$10.6 billion more than the President's budget proposal and \$2.3 billion more than the Senate bill. The Senate bill (S 1704) includes more money for IDEA (\$11.24 billion for Part B and \$450 million for Part C) than the House (\$10.96 billion and \$436.4 million respectively). Both bills include \$110.9 million for the National Children's Study. The President has promised to veto any appropriation bills which exceed the levels in his February budget recommendations.

Reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

On July 19, the Senate Finance Committee approved a bipartisan 5 year \$35 billion expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). SCHIP pays for insurance for children and some adults in families whose incomes are too high to make them eligible for Medicaid but too low for them to afford private insurance. Increased costs would be offset by increased taxes on cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco. The President threat-

ened to veto the bill because it would hurt private insurance companies.

On August 14, the House passed the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (HR 3162) which, in addition to the Senate provisions, among other things, would establish a one year moratorium that would prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from restricting coverage or payment for rehabilitation or school-based (i.e. IDEA) administration, transportation, or medical services. Restriction of this coverage would increase costs for local agencies.

Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007(HR 1424)

On July 18, the House Education and Labor Committee approved the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act (HR 1424), which would require group health insurance plans to put coverage for mental illnesses on equal footing with physical ailments. Private health insurers generally provide less coverage for mental illnesses than for other medical conditions. On August 3, the senate sponsors hotlined the new S 558 manager's amendment, giving senators an opportunity to raise objections prior to floor consideration of the bill. The sponsors were successful in removing all objections to consideration with the exception of Senator Jim Demint (R-SC), who placed a hold on the bill that precluded passage before the August recess. The full senate is now expected to consider S 558 in September.

Federal Agencies

IDEA

Comments on Proposed Regulations for Part C

The deadline for comments was July 23. The comments of the Education Task Force of the Citizens with Disabilities will be posted on their website: www.c-c-d.org

Part B State Performance Plans (SPP)

IDEA '04 requires each state to have in place and posted on its website a performance plan which evaluates the state's implementation of Part B. The state also

must submit to the Secretary of Education a Part B Annual Performance Report (APR). The Office of Special Education Programs' responses to the States' SPP and APRs will be posted on <http://www.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/index.html> as letters are issued.

Other Reports

Rewards and Roadblocks: How Special Education Students Are Faring under Now Child Left Behind

The National Center on Learning Disabilities review of the impact of NCLB on students with disabilities in several key states found (1) Improved rates of participation in state general assessments for all states (2) Improved performance in reading and math, and (3) Improved performance in 4th grade reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), where there is no corresponding improvement for students without disabilities.

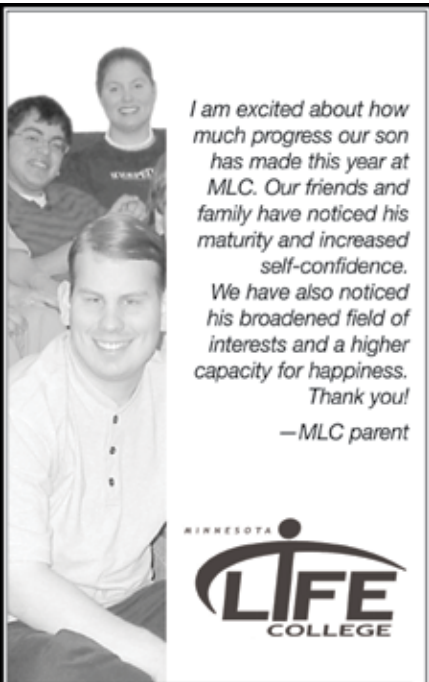
A webinar on this study, the report and its companion piece, State Testing Accommodations: Their Value and Validity can be found at www.ld.org/NCLBReportCard.

National State Policy Database

RRFC Network and NASDSE have put together the National State Policy Database which allows you to locate and download full copies or specific sections of the federal and state special education regulations. Currently, the database contains only regulations pertaining to Part B, but the contents will be expanded in the future. This information can be found at www.rrfnetwork.org/content/view/347/382/

The Documentation Disconnect for Students with Learning Disabilities: Improving Access to Postsecondary Disability Services

This publication of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities discusses Issues affecting documentation for postsecondary disability services and ways to bridge the gap between secondary and postsecondary settings may be downloaded from http://ahead.org/resources/njclcd_paper.php



I am excited about how much progress our son has made this year at MLC. Our friends and family have noticed his maturity and increased self-confidence. We have also noticed his broadened field of interests and a higher capacity for happiness. Thank you!
 —MLC parent



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LDA FROM LDA



Back to School...Back to Basics



Charles Giglio,
 LDA President

As legions of our children and young adults with learning disabilities return to their educational settings, we extend our warmest greetings to all for a successful school year. We also promise our families and caregiving partners that LDA, the only family driven national advocacy entity for persons with learning disabilities, will continue to quadruple its efforts in becoming *the recognized leader for the Learning Disabilities Community.* (Strategic Plan 2005-2010).

Pat Lillie, Chair of LDA's Public Policy/Advocacy Committee and her outstanding band of volunteers and national experts as well as Myrna Mandlawitz, Washington Consultant and Justine Maloney, Washington Representative, have joined your President in launching a full court press on Capital Hill these past six months. It is our intention to capitalize on all the good work achieved in the past by our members and volunteers and become even more vocal in our advocacy. LDA is at another important crossroads as reauthorization legislation comes due. **You Can Help!**

Learning Disabilities Month

In observance of October as *Learning Disabilities Month*, I would ask our state


affiliates to renew their efforts in using information contained in the media packets distributed at the Affiliate Support Committee (ASC) Conference workshops. These packets present a smorgasbord of activities that are appropriate for different levels of advocacy. For example: public relations interactions with the media, op ed letters from parents, informational presentations at PTA/PTO meetings in the fall, local radio public service announcements and interviews, etc. At the end of the day, just telling our stories is the best PR that can advance our cause.

Use LDA's Available Information

Finally, as we continue to update and modernize our media capabilities, I urge you to consult our outstanding website, ldaamerica.org, and pluck the treasure trove of information available to you for such topics as: *You Are Not Alone, News from Washington, Online Course for Parents, Healthy Children Project, Response to Intervention (RTI), Conference 2008*, etc.

LDA's website also will assist you in applying for possible funding from the Learning Disabilities Foundation of America which supports distinctive public awareness programs to *advance understanding of the needs of persons with learning disabilities.*

Thank you in advance for your continued support and together let us reignite our resolve on behalf of our children and adults with learning disabilities.



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---	---

Riverview School, celebrating its 50th year, has an international reputation for excellence in special education. Riverview is a co-educational and residential school, providing a caring, structured setting for students with complex language, learning and cognitive disabilities, scoring within the 70-100 range. The School is committed to developing student competence and confidence in academic, social and independent living skills. Taught by licensed teachers, Riverview is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and is approved and licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

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Maureen B. Brenner, Head of School
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Looking Back, Looking Forward



Sheila Buckley
LDA Executive
Director

As I reach my first anniversary with LDA, my retrospective is very positive, despite some notable hurdles.

Without a doubt, the transition of leadership posed challenges to the organization in many ways. Internally, challenges were posed at the LDA National Office, as Executive Director duties and other key functions were relegated to staff. Externally, the transition presented challenges to our constituents, including state affiliates and key volunteers, many of whom took on additional roles and responsibilities. Un-

der the leadership of Board of Directors President Charlie Giglio, the organization not only was stabilized during this critical time but invigorated and has charted what I believe to be an exciting and promising new direction for LDA.

I am grateful for the commitment and fortitude demonstrated in the 18 months preceding my arrival and for the support I have been given since.

I cannot overstate the work of the staff here at the LDA National Office who will be integral to LDA's success moving forward. I am pleased to welcome LDA Membership and Development Coordinator Sharon Tanner, who was hired in April and Healthy Children Project Coordinator Maureen Swanson who began her work late last year. Both bring fresh perspectives, strong

skill sets in their respective areas and the kind of drive we need to propel LDA to the forefront of the learning disabilities arena. Sharon and Maureen are complemented by veterans Ginny Schultz, Mary-Clare Reynolds and Andrea Turkheimer, whose combined years of service to LDA spans more than four decades.

As the staff have made my first year a fulfilling one, so too have the scores of volunteers, members, affiliates, and friends across the country. Thank you for your support of LDA. I look forward to continuing our work together.

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Healthy Schools for Healthy Kids

Maureen Swanson
Healthy Children Project Coordinator

Children return to the classroom with a lot on their minds – *Will I like my teacher? How much homework will we have? Can I sit with my friends at lunch?*

What they won't think about are questions like: Is there mold in my classroom? Will the stuff they use to clean give me a headache? Did they spray pesticides on the playground?

Children need you, their parents and teachers, to think about those questions. Especially since children, teachers and other school employees spend at least six hours a day at school, where they may be exposed to allergens and toxic chemicals that are linked to problems such as asthma, learning disabilities and increased hyperactivity.

Heather Loukmas, Executive Director of LDA of New York, is instrumental in ensuring that children in the state of New York have healthy school environments in which to learn and grow. She works closely with the Healthy Schools Network to advocate at the New York State Legislature for policies to protect children's health at school and to provide information that helps parents, teachers, and other organizations to develop healthy school advocacy groups.

The Healthy Schools Network has an excellent website, www.healthyschools.org, that provides resources and expertise to help people get involved with making their children's schools as safe and healthy as possible. Four main areas of concern are:

1. Indoor air quality: Poor air quality can lead to short-term health effects such as fatigue and nausea, and long-term health conditions such as asthma. The Environmental Protection Agency has an Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools program that provides

guidance and materials on improving air quality in schools, including ways to organize a program, assess current conditions, create and implement a plan and assess results. (See www.epa.gov/iaq/schools)

- Is the school clean and are carpets, floors, ceilings and air intakes free of water stains and mold?
- Do classroom windows open, and are heating air conditioning and ventilation systems in order?
- Are renovations and repairs, such as painting, demolition and construction, completed? If not, what is the school's plan to control dust, fumes and noise?

2. Toxic products – Some cleaning products and science and art supplies contain lead, mercury, formaldehyde or solvents. According to the EPA, concentrations of solvents are consistently up to 10 times higher indoors than outdoors. People with respiratory problems such as asthma, and young children may face a higher risk of negative health effects when exposed to solvents indoors. There are effective, non-toxic products available for cleaning and for use in science and art classes.

- Ask to see Material Safety Data Sheets, which provide information on product ingredients and health effects.
- Ask the school about adopting a non-toxic purchasing policy.

3. Pesticides: Connecticut passed a law in 2005 that bans the use of lawn care pesticides on the grounds of day care centers and elementary schools. Now, Connecticut has extended the ban to middle school grounds as well. Some states have enacted no-spray zones for pesticides around schools, including Massachusetts, Louisiana, New Jersey and North Carolina. One starting point is to find out what laws your state may already have regarding pesticide use in schools, and whether the laws are being followed by your school district.

- Ask if the school uses pesticides inside

or outside, and if so, when, where and for what pests.

- Are students, staff and parents notified prior to pesticide applications?

4. Diesel Bus Exhaust: Studies show that students exposed to exhaust from diesel school buses can face health risks that include asthma and cancer. (See www.epa.gov/ne/eco/airtox/diesel.html for more detail.) Some states, cities, and school districts are adopting legislation or initiating programs to establish *No Idling* zones at schools, reduce bus idling time, and/or purchase new buses that use alternative fuel technologies, such as bio-diesel. States with laws and programs to reduce students' exposure to diesel bus exhaust include Washington, New Jersey, Maine, and New York.

- Look for loading and idling areas for cars, buses and trucks – they should be located well away from the school.
- Ask if the buses are energy-efficient and have newer technology to reduce emissions.

Other issues of concern at schools include whether drinking water and building paints are free of lead; whether school grounds are clean and free of air, water and soil contamination; and whether playground equipment is made of arsenic treated (CCA) wood.

The good news is that many schools and states already have programs or groups focused on one or more of these children's environmental health issues. You may find it easy to get involved with an existing group of concerned parents, teachers and administrators, or you may decide to start your own. Come hear more at the 2008 LDA Conference from your fellow LDA members about successful strategies for getting governments and schools to adopt environmentally friendly policies and practices.

Join or Renew Your Membership Today

Parent Support

Being a member of LDA can be an enormous support to the parents of a child with a learning disability. When parents initially discover that their child has a learning disability, they may have feelings of guilt, worry, uncertainty, self-pity, and anger. There may be a lack of knowledge about what the problem really is. Parents look for help, they may receive conflicting advice and become more confused and frustrated. Understandably, they may develop anger towards the community, schools, professionals, and themselves. Parents may even deny the problem or blame each other. An effective LDA affiliate can help parents understand and cope with their special child.

Information and Referral Network

An inquiry to the local affiliate, state office, or national LDA office may be a critical first step in providing help to a person with learning disabilities.

Through its *Annual International Conference* as well as state affiliate conferences and workshops, LDA provides a forum for questions on learning disabilities and new technology and approaches for teaching individuals with learning disabilities. Attendance at the conferences, workshops, symposiums and support groups reaches tens of thousands of participants yearly. Parents, teachers and other professionals and individuals with learning disabilities are the participants that gather for education, networking, and advocacy.

Its **Bookstore** maintains an extensive offering of books and materials covering every aspect of learning disabilities. These materials are ordered by schools, libraries and thousands of individuals with learning disabilities.

The LDA publication, *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, is a quarterly peer-reviewed publication oriented toward professionals in the field of learning disabilities.

Legislation

LDA provides information and recommends action on pending legislation which may affect individuals with learning disabilities and/or their families. At the request of Congress, LDA representatives testify on matters relating to special education, literacy and employment programs. The organization holds and participates in numerous forums on legal rights of individuals with learning disabilities.

School Program Development

LDA and its state and local affiliates work with school systems to assure quality programs and better services for students with learning disabilities. LDA has offered scholarships to school principals attending the International Conference. This service has provided some 300 principals with an ongoing network of information and support.

LDA and its state affiliates frequently work directly with school systems in planning and implementing programs for early identification and diagnosis, as well as remediation in resource and special education classroom situations. Because of the relationship of learning disabilities to school drop-out and delinquency, the organization works with educators, correctional authorities and jurists in order to develop comprehensive approaches to education.

Adult Issues

LDA publishes materials on issues of importance to adults with learning disabilities on adult literacy, parenting, and special populations. A special series of bulletins address civil rights and accommodations in various settings, including college, the workplace, and the military. LDA sponsors Leadership Development Academies fostering self-advocacy among young adults, and its affiliates offer adult support groups.

JOIN LDA TODAY!

Name _____

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Annual membership dues (includes membership in both LDA national and state organizations):

\$25: Texas

\$30: Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming

\$35: Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin

\$40: Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland

\$45: California, Foreign Membership, Missouri, North Carolina

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September 14-15, 2007 LDA of Maine Postponed to April 11, 2008

Location: TBA
Contact: LDA of Maine
(207) 465-7700
E-mail: lda@ldame.org

September 29, 2007 LDA of Illinois Fall Conference

Location: Doubletree Hotel, Alsip, IL
Contact: LDA of Illinois
(708) 430-7532
E-mail: LDAofIL@ameritech.net

September 29, 2007 LDA of Wisconsin

Location: Reeve Union Building,
University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh
Contact: LDA of Wisconsin
(866) 532-9472
E-mail: info@LDAwisconsin.com

October 2, 2007 LDA of New Jersey Special Education Conference

Location: Wilson Auditorium, Fairleigh
Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ
Contact: (800) 483-7436
Website: www.friendshealthconnection.org

October 13, 2007 LDA of Connecticut Annual Conference

Location: Carol Autorino Center
St. Joseph College
Contact: Fran Ficocelli
(860) 560-1711
E-mail: info@ldact.org

October 18-19, 2007 LDA of New Mexico

Location: Hotel Eucanio, Las Cruces
La Cruces
Contact: Anna Alvarez
(505) 882-6738

October 21-23, 2007 LDA of Iowa

Location: Holiday Inn, Airport
Convention Center, Des Moines
Contact: Kathy Specketer
(515) 280-8558
E-mail: kathylda@askresource.org

October 21-23, 2007 LDA of Michigan

Location: Kellogg Hotel & Conference
Center, East Lansing
Contact: LDA of Michigan
1-888 597-7809
E-mail: ldamich@sbcglobal.net



October 27, 2007 LDA of Nebraska

Location: ESU #3, Omaha
Contact: LDA of Nebraska
(402) 348-1567
E-mail: ldaofneb@yahoo.com

October 27, 2007 LDA of Virginia Annual Conference

Location: Holiday Inn Central,
Richmond, VA
Contact: LDA of Virginia
(804) 358-5474
E-mail: jlokerso@vcu.edu

October 31 – November 3, 2007 LDA of Texas

Location: Renaissance Austin Hotel,
Austin
Contact: LDA of Texas
1-800 604-7500
E-mail: contact@ldat.org
Website: ldat.org/about/conference.html

November 8-9, 2007 LDA of Kansas

Location: Marriott Hotel, Overland Park
Contact: LDA of Kansas
(785) 228-9527
E-mail: marciasu@aol.com
Website: www.LDAkansas.org

November 9, 2007 LDA of Indiana

Location: Ritz Charles Conference Center,
Carmel
Contact: LDA of Indiana
1-800 284-2519
E-mail: ldaofindiana_kathy@yahoo.com

November 9-10, 2007 LDA of Pennsylvania

Location: Harrisburg East Holiday Inn,
Harrisburg
Contact: LDA of Pennsylvania
(610) 458-8193
E-mail: LDAPAinfo@aol.com

November 12-13, 2007 LDA of Oklahoma

Location: Tulsa Southern Hills Marriott,
Tulsa
Contact: LDA of Oklahoma
1-800 532-6365
E-mail: ldao2002@sbcglobal.net

November 16-17, 2007 LDA of Missouri

Location: University Plaza Hotel &
Convention Center, Springfield
Contact: LDA of Missouri
(417) 864-5110
E-mail: ldamo@cland.net

February 27-March 1, 2008 Learning Disabilities Association of America International Conference

Location: Hilton Chicago Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
 Contact: Mary-Clare Reynolds (412) 341-1515
 E-mail: info@ldaamerica.org
 Website: www.ldaamerica.org

**PLAN AHEAD...
 Future LDA Conference Dates and Locations**

2009 Salt Lake City, UT
 February 25-28

2010 Baltimore, MD
 February 17-20

2011 Jacksonville, FL
 February 23-26

2012 Chicago, IL
 February 29-March 3

**The LDA domain is:
 ldaamerica.org**

**The email address for LDA is:
 info@ldaamerica.org**

Rates for classified ads are as follows: \$25.00 for 12 words or less and \$1.00 for each additional word. Orders should be sent to LDA, 4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234. Payment must accompany the advertisement. Ads will be run in the issue following their receipt.

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LDA's Mission: To create opportunities for success for all individuals affected by learning disabilities and to reduce the incidence of learning disabilities in future generations.

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JUVENILE DELIQUENCY

continued from page 5

making learning disability principles and special education law essential elements of the juvenile law classroom curriculum.

The consequences of not addressing the needs of youth with learning disabilities include an increased likelihood they will become further involved with the juvenile justice system and ultimately the adult system. Additionally, it is far more cost effective to handle these issues early in the process than to have taxpayers spend approximately \$60,000 per year to house a single youth in a prison environment. More significant, such changes would give youth with learning disabilities additional positive opportunities to turn their lives around. A learning disability may be the only reason a juvenile is in the courtroom facing a delinquency charge. Promoting further changes to help youth with learning disabilities could improve the youth's life in immeasurable ways and help to ensure that they are empowered to meet their potential. For instance, the youth may have a more effective Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at school, a better attitude through individual therapy, and finally understand how to plan for his or her future. In some cases, involvement with the juvenile justice system can become a blessing in disguise. Advocates involved with this issue have the opportunity to further the idea that the seeds we sow today are the sprouts of tomorrow.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

continued from page 6

screening, tiered intervention, and progress monitoring) and an outside advisory group made up of representatives from public schools, universities and colleges, principals associations, state special education advisory committee, and parent advocates (including Jean Lokerson of LDA of Virginia) is providing input into the guidelines. Guidelines will be developed which will:

- Not be mandatory
- Be explained through a series of statewide institutes
- Have 5-8 pilot sites established for implementation in the 2008-2009 school year

Pennsylvania

RTI was introduced in Pennsylvania schools in winter of 2005. Pilots in grades K-6:

- Recognize that RTI is a 3-5 year school-wide change process
- Findings from 7 pilot sites
- Greatest gains in grades k-1
- Need for more data on reading in grades 3-5
- Most movement in tiers occurred from fall to winter
- Movement based on progress based on benchmarks and teacher opinion
Future focus will be on:
- Middle school RTI
- Professional development and technical assistance

- Continuation of elementary school projects

Lessons learned:

- Focus on instruction
- Time for tiered interventions (at elementary level, 30 min/day set aside for interventions for students who need them or enrichment for those who do not).
- Teacher discussions are essential for instructional decision making.
- Professional development focused on capacity building.

**CHECK
OUT:**

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