



### **A Message from the Chair**

Winter brings its own special magic as we all prepare for the excitement of the holiday season. Our LDA network continues to work tirelessly to support our families living with LD as this time of year can be extra stressful as routines change to make way for holiday activities. We would like to give special recognition to our amazing heroes who are the hardworking professionals working with the individuals and families living with LD – thank you for your dedication to our LD community! To everyone in our LD community, wishing you all the blessings of the holiday season and a very happy new year.

Thealzel Lee  
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

### **A Message from the Executive Director**

Another Christmas is right around the corner, and every year I'm amazed at how quickly it arrives at our doorsteps. From all of us at LDAC, we wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a very happy and healthy New Year!

#### *Canadian Survey on Disability (2017)*

On November 28, 2018, LDAC was invited to participate in a webinar given by Statistics Canada as it released that very morning, the results of the Canadian Survey on Disability 2017.

According to new findings from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), an estimated one in five Canadians (or 6.2 million) aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities.

Among youth ages 15-24, the most common types of disabilities are mental health-related (7.8%), learning disabilities (5.5%) and pain-related disabilities (4.4%). Among all respondents 15 and over, 3.9% reported having a learning disability, and this broke down as 3.8% among those aged 25-64 and 3.3% for those aged 65 and over.

Mental health-related disabilities (7%) ranked fourth in prevalence among disability types for persons aged 15 to 65 years and over and represented just over 2 million Canadians.

Common to all age groups, however, was the prominence of pain-related disabilities—which were the most prevalent disability type among working age adults and seniors, and the third most prevalent disability among youth.



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For many of these Canadians, challenges and obstacles in their day-to-day lives may limit their full participation in society. Understanding the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in their personal, employment, or economic situations helps inform government policy and programs.

For a more detailed analysis, the following are links to all the Statistics Canada products:

Daily:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

Daily Audio: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/btd/othervisuals/other018>

Profile Article: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/89-654-X2018002>

Fact Sheet <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/89-654-X2018003>

Infographic: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/11-627-M2018035>

Concepts and Methods Guide: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/89-654-X2018001>

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### **Committee Reports**

#### Research Committee

In lieu of a report, the Research Committee has again submitted a research update, this time from: Judith Wiener, Ph.D., C. Psych, Professor Emerita, School and Clinical Child Psychology, OISE/University of Toronto and former President of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities

#### *Learning Disabilities and the 4<sup>th</sup> R*

Below average achievement in the 3 R's (reading, writing, arithmetic) is the key and defining challenge of children and adults with learning disabilities (LD). The problem is that these difficulties are only part of the picture. More than 50% of individuals with LD have problems with social relationships and emotional wellbeing - the 4<sup>th</sup> R.

Nevertheless, in the past 10 years researchers have neglected this area to the extent that a recently published and otherwise excellent textbook does not include a chapter on the 4<sup>th</sup> R.

So, what do we know about the 4<sup>th</sup> R in individuals with LD? We know that they have problems with social skills and peer relationships, have high levels of anxiety and depression, and often



are diagnosed with ADHD. We know that parents of children with LD suffer from high levels of parenting stress, that repeated failure affects motivation to work hard, and that successful individuals with LD work very hard and have supportive parents. We know that well-designed social skills training and mindfulness programs are effective. We know that inclusive well-resourced classrooms with teachers who model and praise positive social interactions are helpful. We know that adolescents and adults with LD need to learn self-advocacy skills and we know how to teach those skills.

The problem is that there is also a lot that we don't know and that researchers need to investigate. For example, we don't know whether individuals with LD are vulnerable to cyber bullying nor do we understand the impact of social media and online relationships on the 4<sup>th</sup> R. We don't know about how to communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse parents in a way that they understand LD and can support their children. Researchers need to design studies that will guide parents, educators and clinicians to address these and many other issues.

### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee continues to meet regularly to ensure the production of the quarterly newsletter and take on other communications-related initiatives. Currently, the Committee is conducting a national survey of provincial and territorial Executive Directors concerning the campaigns in October for Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. We hope to gauge satisfaction with the "Don't Dis My Abilities" campaign that was turned this year from an Ontario to a national theme, thanks to the generosity of LDAO. We also wish to plan for future campaigns and how better to support the national network, including the creation of a national task force on LD Awareness Month.

Bob Cram –Chair

Members: Lorrie Goegan, Brendan O'Neill, Claudette Larocque, Brent MacPherson, Scott Patterson

### **The Canadian Partnership for Child Health and the Environment (CPCHE)**

LDAC is a founding member of CPCHE. [www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/)

Fall has been a busy time. The following are some highlights of the activities that have preoccupied the committee.



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On behalf of LDAC, I submitted comments in response to Health Canada’s consultation “DEFINING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS: A first step towards a policy framework on vulnerable populations”.

I was invited by the Canadian Network for Human Health and the Environment (CNHHE) to be part of the selection committee to choose a new member and observers for the government’s Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the Chemicals Management Plan (CMP).

From the CHNNE NEWS:

We are witnessing an alarming increase in neurodevelopmental disorders in children. Parents in the United States report that 1 in 6 children, an increase of 17% over the past decade, have a developmental disability, including learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and other intellectual developmental delays. Human, animal and mechanistic data increasingly implicate toxic chemicals as factors that increase risk for neuro-developmental disorders. . . .

Based on decades of data indicating that the developing brain is significantly more vulnerable than the mature brain to the toxic effects of chemicals, the current regulatory requirements are likely not sufficiently protective for children.

I submitted comments to the Canadian Environmental Law Association’s proposed new wording for the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Also of interest:

*Who’s Minding the Store? Campaign* - retailer report card on companies ranking their progressive policies on toxics in the products they sell.

<https://environmentaldefence.ca/2018/11/14/retailer-report-card-2018-canadian/>

Dr. Lanphear’s video on where the research money goes.

<http://littlethingsmatter.ca/2018/02/12/cause-or-cure/>

(Bruce Lanphear, MD, MPH, is a Clinician Scientist at the Child & Family Research Institute, BC Children’s Hospital and Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, BC.)

Barbara McElgunn, RN,  
Health Policy Advisor, LDAC



## **Provincial/Territorial Updates**

### British Columbia

Submitted by:  
Linda Youmans  
LDA BC - Community Liaison, Kelowna

"The word "disabilities" is associated with the past and people's negative experiences with institutions. I am looking to change the word to "diversabilities" because these institutions are now closed and I want to focus instead on the abilities of people now and in the future. People with diversabilities do not want to be a burden to society, but instead want to be contributors and participants in society." – Shelley DeCoste

As Kelowna Community Liaison, I was delighted to be asked to create a list of Diversability Service Providers in the Okanagan. Categories I chose were based on my experience as a mother of a young adult with autism and dyscalculia. Assessment, Behaviour Intervention, Counselling, Employment Assistance, Recreational Programs and Tutoring are some of the categories covered. Assistance was received from branch staff, parents and professionals. In addition, I created two Diversability booklists, one for children and one for teens with over 200 titles vetted by myself. Subjects chosen were Anxiety, ADHD, ASD, Depression, Dyslexia, OCD, Sensory Processing Disorder, Blindness, Deafness, etc. Most of the fiction books chosen have heroes with a diversability!

To promote the resources and inspire community engagement across the country, all three lists have been sent electronically to 8 B.C. school districts, 29 ORL library branches, 60 B.C. service providers, and all libraries in B.C. and Canada. IHCAN, Work B.C. and MCYSN have distributed them to their staff and clients.

In addition, I have been able to promote them actively in our community through presentations at organizations, to Certified Educational Assistant students at Okanagan and Sprott-Shaw Colleges and participating at Community Living BC and Autism Events. In addition, to promote inclusion, we will be offering American Sign Language story times in two branches and hopefully Sensory Story Times in the near future. A Diversability training workshop, planned for the Spring, will include a panel of four speakers with diversabilities and learning disabilities talking about their lives. B.C. families and professionals are being helped enormously by these projects!



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### Quebec

#### *Learning Disabilities Institute International Annual Conference*

March 27-29, 2019, Montreal, Quebec

Theme: Succeeding in a world of differences!

The conference program focuses on the assessment of learning and related disabilities, intervention approaches, and related themes. Over 1500 delegates are expected to attend. Visit our website at [www.institutta.com/congres/congres-2019](http://www.institutta.com/congres/congres-2019)

#### *Webinars*

All year long, the Learning Disabilities Institute offers workshops and lectures on different topics. These are intended for a broad range of participants: parents, teachers, resource teachers, etc. Take a minute to subscribe for free to our monthly newsletter and stay up to date. Visit our website at [www.institutta.com/ateliers-de-formation](http://www.institutta.com/ateliers-de-formation)

To subscribe to our newsletter : [www.institutta.com/institut-ta/bulletindelinstitut](http://www.institutta.com/institut-ta/bulletindelinstitut)

### Prince Edward Island

In October LDAPEI held an LD awareness event hosted by our Patron the Lt Governor of PEI Her Honour Antoinette Perry. This event brought together those affected by and interested in LD matters including various representatives from the Legislative Assembly, Jordan's Principle, psychiatrists and psychologists, educators and those living with an LD. Additionally a panel event was held for families and individuals to ask questions of a paediatrician, psychologist, resource teacher and a retired inclusive education consultant. The building closed otherwise there would have been more questions! Presentations to 40 college students, PEI resource teachers, home and school and discussions with various indigenous groups means increasing awareness of LDs and an opportunity to offer services where needed.

LDAPEI wishes everyone working to help those affected by LDs a wonderful Christmas and success in the New Year.

### Manitoba

LDA Manitoba has had a lot of changes recently. We are happy to announce that our Arrowsmith program has doubled in size in the last year. Our students range from 8-63 years old. It's exciting to watch them grow and support each other as they move through and master the Arrowsmith program.



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We have also seen a jump in enrollment in our LINKS programs. This literacy specific program combines neuroscience and confidence building to help develop our students and prepare them for any challenge they may face. We like to say: “If you love language, you’ll love LINKS”. It’s a fun and multi-sensory approach to learning reading, writing, and phonological processing.

When our students are not being superstars, they keep busy hanging out with therapy dogs, doing movement therapy, and playing board games with each other.

Other than that, we are looking forward to our upcoming fundraising events, the first one being ‘Date with a Star’ in January. This event is celebrating its 18th year and is a great way to build connections in our community.

### Newfoundland and Labrador

The Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador has had a change in Executive Director. LDANL wishes farewell and best wishes to David Banfield, who was the ED at LDANL until the summer of 2018. We thank David for 10 years of service on behalf of people with Learning Disabilities in this province. In September 2018, Edie Dunphy joined the team as Executive Director. Edie has a background in teaching at various levels around the province as well as work as a Consultant with the Government of NL. She is enjoying diving into the role of ED, working with the Board of Directors under Lynn Green’s leadership and is looking forward to exciting projects ahead.

### **Events and Other News**

Reading Rockets has released a holiday book-buying guide with recommended children’s books selected in part for their contribution to developing early reading skills: <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/buyingguide/2018>

The Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) is public library services for Canadians with print disabilities. [Click here to visit the website.](#)

Check out [CELA’s catalogue](#) for more new and exciting reads as they are added!

- One website, celalibrary.ca, to log in, search and access both the CELA and Bookshare collections in one streamlined process.
- All reading formats, DAISY audio, text or braille consolidated into one record per title for easier to navigate search results
- Simplified registration process.



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Learning Disabilities Association of America Annual Conference, February 18-21, 2019, Fort Worth, Texas: <https://ldaamerica.org/events/annual-conference/>

Annual International Conference, Institut des troubles d'apprentissage/Learning Disabilities Institute, March 27-29, 2019, Montreal, QC, [www.institutta.com/congres/congres-2019](http://www.institutta.com/congres/congres-2019)