

Help your child with a learning disability succeed in school

For parents of students in the primary, junior and middle school grades

Children with learning disabilities have a range of abilities. They may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling and/or organizing information *if left to figure things out by themselves or if taught in conventional ways*. With the right support/intervention, however, children with learning disabilities can succeed in school and career later in life.

Here are some strategies you can use at home to help your child be successful in school:

Help your child develop organization skills

- provide necessary materials: backpack, binder, dividers, pencil case, personal device (BYOD)
- colour-code and label books, folders, duotangs and materials
- teach how to organize papers, workspace, locker and materials daily
- make checklists or take a photo of materials to use at home as well as in school
- establish a daily routine with expectations clearly defined and discussed
- write down and post all chores/responsibilities in a visible place
- use post-it notes and/or reminders on personal devices
- encourage your child to pack his/her backpack for school the night before and leave it by the door

Teach your child time management skills

- teach how to tell time and read a clock (analog/digital)
- teach how to read and use calendars, agendas and schedules
- include a timetable and calendar in binders, locker, on personal device and clearly posted at home
- post all due dates, help to create and use checklists to prioritize tasks and activities
- use timers for seat work and transitions

Help with homework

- establish a routine and schedule for homework
- read your child's agenda and class website regularly
- make a "to do" list for the night/week
- provide a quiet location with adequate lighting, free from distraction
- allow for a break between homework assignments
- maintain a set of regularly used materials for homework at home
- help your child to break down larger assignments into manageable parts that are not overwhelming
- let the teacher know if homework is too difficult
- be available to **assist** with homework
- have your child get the phone numbers of a few responsible students in the class to get clarification, if necessary, on homework

Help your child develop success attributes

- discuss with your child about his/her personal strengths, areas of need, and talents in various settings (not only school)
- foster perseverance
- help your child develop realistic, short-term and long-term goals and discuss the plan for achieving them
- encourage your child to participate in extra-curricular activities that focus on their strengths and interests
- model how to ask for help in daily interactions
- encourage your child to share feelings and opinions, talk about his/her experiences - both struggles and triumphs using appropriate vocabulary
- help develop and nurture positive relationships
- encourage your child to solve problems at home independently
- identify and encourage effective use of assistive technology such as speech-to-text

Visit "Parents Boost Learning" at www.peelschools.org for more *Parent Tip Sheets*.

software and/or text-to-speech software, spell checkers, word processors, etc.

- maintain consistent discipline; have positive incentives and reinforcements
- be a positive role model

Other ways to help

- keep track of your child's performance, be involved and informed
- work as a team with your child's school to help your child
- send your child to school regularly
- children with learning disabilities must have a good understanding of their abilities and be assured that they are not dumb or lazy
- use simple language during discussions
- have simple, clear expectations and consequences
- be aware of accommodations/modifications that help your child succeed; review your child's IEP before any meeting concerning your child's learning
- networking with other parents and professionals can increase your awareness and dispel popular misconceptions - you are not alone
- recognize each child's worth, do not compare siblings
- provide guidance needed for independence

Tips for Self Advocacy

- as a parent, support your child's efforts towards independence
- learn what your rights are and what your child's rights are
- if you don't advocate for your child, no one else will. You are the best person to advocate for your child because you know his/her strengths and needs, likes and dislikes
- model advocacy skills for your child
- use information as a powerful tool for understanding the puzzle of your child's learning disability

Keep a sense of humor

Learning is a challenging, often a painful, experience for children with learning difficulties. They need laughter in their lives, and lots of it!

Resources for parents

Books

- All Kinds of Minds: A Young Student's Book About Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders
by Melvin D. Levine
- Learning to Learn
by Carolyn Olivier and Rosemary Bowler
- No One to Play With
by Betty B. Osman
- Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know and Ways to Help
by Priscilla L. Vail
- When Your Child Has Ld: A Survival Guide for Parents
by Gary L. Fisher, Rhoda Cummings and Pamela Espeland

Helpful Links

- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario www.ldao.ca
- National Center for Learning Disabilities <http://www.ncl.org/>
- International Dyslexia Association www.interdys.org
- Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Learning Disabilities <http://www.dldcec.org>
- Child Development Resource Connection Peel, at 905-507-9360 or www.cdrcp.com
- Peel District School Board www.peelschools.org
- All Kinds of Minds www.allkindsofminds.org
- SNOW - Special Needs Ontario Window *Cultivating the Inclusive Education Community* <http://snow.utoronto.ca>
- LD Peel www.ldapeel.com
- LD OnLine www.ldonline.org/ldresources/canada.html

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