

LDA Minnesota Learning TIMES

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LDA Assessments *for children and adults provide self-understanding, renewed hope, and improved achievement*

Does this student seem familiar to you?

Jaime is in 10th grade and has had significant difficulty in making progress in reading and general classwork. She passed the benchmark tests, but has struggled with other testing due to having insufficient time to complete the work. She initially began having difficulty in first grade. She received speech and language services and remedial reading and math instruction during elementary school, and barely managed to keep up. Upon entering high school, she began to fall further and further behind and was referred for a learning disability assessment.

However, the school psychologist, who worked with students from four different schools, could not begin the assessment until the second half of the school year. Jaime wants to go to college and pursue her interest in veterinary medicine, so her parents, fearing the consequences of postponing help any longer, scheduled an assessment with LDA.

Do aspects of this student's experience remind you of yourself, a friend, student, or family member who may be having difficulty at school or on the job? Does he or she have a history of learning challenges or family members with learning disabilities?

You don't have to wait to fail – LDA can schedule your assessment immediately. LDA assessment experts diagnosed Jaime with a reading disability. Her LDA assessment report provided information about her disability so Jaime could understand her strengths and weaknesses. The report documented the disability so Special Education services and accommodations. Instructional suggestions were also included for her teachers. With renewed hope, Jaime is back on track to achieve her academic goals.

LDA provides assessments for ages 7-adult for Specific Learning Disabilities and ADHD. Children ages 5-9 who are experiencing difficulty with learning to read can benefit from LDA's Early Reading Profile, which examines a young reader's strengths and weaknesses in acquiring basic reading skills and provides recommendations for reading instruction. Visit www.ldaminnesota.org for complete details on LDA's assessment services.

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The following can signal a possible learning disability and/or ADHD.

Observation of these signs is reason to seek further evaluation at LDA:

- Learning difficulties beginning in the early grades
- Special Education services provided during school years
- A family history of learning disabilities
- Patterns of achievement are inconsistent
- Does not appear to be working up to potential
- Frequently needs to have instructions repeated
- Appears distracted or forgetful
- Lifelong difficulties with oral language, reading, writing, math, reasoning, or organizational skills
- Secondary problems with self-esteem, motivation, jobs, or relationships

Specifically with reading:

- Difficulty sounding out words
- Slower reading rate than others
- Difficulty understanding what is read

Specifically with spelling:

- Reversing words, like "saw" for "was"
- Leaving out letters when spelling a word
- Avoiding use of words that are difficult to spell

Specifically with mathematics:

- Poor adding, subtracting, multiplication, and/or division skills
- Inability to memorize the multiplication tables
- Difficulty understanding word problems
- Difficulty remembering the sequence and steps to solve a math problem

Types of Assessments Available at LDA

Learning Disability Assessment	Confirms or rules out the presence of a Specific Learning Disability.
Diagnostic Assessment	Determines the presence of other learning problems, including ADHD.
Early Reading Profile	Examines the strengths and weaknesses of struggling young readers.
Adult Reading Profile	Analyzes the adult reader's acquisition of the four components of reading and determines strengths and weaknesses.
GED Accommodation Assessment	Determines whether accommodations may be requested for GED testing, according to GED standards.

All assessments at LDA provide:

- Self-understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Documentation needed to request services and/or accommodations
- Recommendations for more effective instruction
- Referral to other helpful resources
- Renewed hope that dreams can be achieved

Components of Assessments for Learning Difficulties at LDA

1. Interview about personal, medical, family, and language issues, both current situation and background
2. Information on current academic and/or job functioning and history of educational difficulties and special services
3. Previous assessment results, if available
4. Testing to determine cognitive strengths and weaknesses
5. Testing to determine achievement strengths and weaknesses
6. Professional observations
7. Analysis of all components to provide a diagnosis statement for learning disability, ADHD, or other disorder
8. Educational recommendations for instruction, accommodations, and/or referral

For assessment questions or to request an assessment application, please contact Wendy Sweeney, LDA Assessment Coordinator, at ws@ldaminnnesota.org or 952.582.6020. You may also request an application online at ldaminnnesota.org.

Q. My child is in the process of being evaluated for possible special education placement by our local school district. Although she has not yet been diagnosed with a disability, can she receive accommodations for her reading problems pending the outcome of the evaluation?

A. Yes. Once a child is identified by school personnel as possibly having a disability, that child must be provided the protections provided to a disabled child, pending the outcome of a special education evaluation. It is therefore important that parents, teachers, and special educators develop and implement reasonable curricular and environmental accommodations during a child's evaluation that may or may not be the foundation of IEP (Individualized Education Plan) accommodations should the child become eligible for special education services.

Q. My 17-year old son has been identified as having a learning disability that adversely impacts mathematics acquisition. He wants to take the ACT this year, but feels he should not have to take the math portion due to his disability. We have heard that since math is his disability and is the focus of his IEP, my son can "opt out" of the math portion of the ACT? Is that true?

A. No. Should your son choose to take the ACT, he will be required to take the entire test, and curricular (content) accommodations will not be allowed. Depending on his IEP, however, he may be allowed extensive accommodations such as time extensions, alternate locations, test readers, scribes, private rooms, and other reasonable accommodations.

Q. My daughter attends a private college in our state. She is a sophomore, and is starting to have difficulty keeping up with the reading requirements of her major (psychology). She has a learning disability, and received special education in high school until the end of her junior year. We have asked her college advisor and the college's Special Services Director to implement some of the accommodations that were successful in high school. College officials have been sympathetic, but have said that the college has no obligation to provide accommodations, and have only offered the services available to other (non-disabled) students. Are there any accommodations that our daughter is entitled to by virtue of having a disability?

A. Your daughter is not entitled to the same accommodations that she had under special education in high school. Once she graduated, special education laws are no longer applicable. She is considered an adult, and as an adult she may receive accommodations for her disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). The college can require that the disability be reevaluated and documentation provided. A college that receives no federal funding (directly or indirectly) may not be required to provide academic accommodations. In that case, the college or institution will usually have services available for students with academic issues, but they may be the same for all students attending the college, and not based on having a disability.

Do You Have a Struggling Reader?

For children ages 5-9, LDA's Early Reading Profile (ERP) can assess reading skill acquisition and offer instructional recommendations. The ERP:

- Summarizes a young reader's strengths and weaknesses in phonological processing and basic reading skills
- Indicates whether the reader may be at risk for future reading difficulties
- Provides recommendations for reading instruction

Please contact Wendy Sweeney, LDA Assessment Coordinator, at ws@ldaminnesota.org or 952.582.6020 for more information.



Federal Ban on Phthalates!

In a major victory for parents and children's health advocates, Congress passed legislation in August establishing the first-ever national standards for lead and phthalates in toys and child care articles.

The new law, called the Consumer Product Safety Reform Act, permanently bans three types of phthalates from toys and certain child care articles and temporarily bans three other types of phthalates, pending scientific review. The legislation will also ratchet down the allowable levels of lead in toys over a three-year period.

Phthalates are ever-present, found in toys, soft plastics, cosmetics, lotions, and many other products. They have been linked to changes in the reproductive system, as well as liver and kidney damage.

Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, a key player in passage of the bill, stated, "This is historic legislation that will protect the safety of our children, and it is long past time to get these toxic toys off our shores and out of our stores. This bill finally makes it criminal to sell recalled products, bans lead in children's products, and I hope will give parents some peace of mind that the toys in their children's hands are safe."

Retailers and manufacturers including Wal-Mart, Toys-R-Us, Lego, Evenflo, and Gerber have announced plans to phase out phthalates. Several states have also passed laws restricting phthalates in children's products, and they are also banned or restricted in the European Union and more than a dozen countries around the world.

Last year Minnesota passed a phase-out of phthalates with a two-thirds majority in both houses, but the bill was vetoed by Governor Pawlenty. However, Minnesota children will now be protected under the new federal law.



LDA Minnesota works to achieve a healthy and clean environment with statewide partners and is a founding member of Healthy Legacy Coalition. Healthy Legacy supports the production and use of everyday products without toxic chemicals, while advocating for safe alternatives across Minnesota.

Where do Your Candidates Stand on Controlling Toxic Chemicals?

Candidates for the Minnesota House of Representatives will focus on many important issues this election, including global warming, the economy, and education. Don't let them forget about toxic chemicals and their impact on the health of Minnesotans.

The Healthy Legacy Coalition, in which LDA participates, works for "Safe Products, Made Safely," to reduce the impact of chemicals, particularly on the developing brains of our children. The Coalition is asking candidates to promise to work for a cleaner environment. Check healthylegacy.org to see if your candidates have signed this important pledge:

As a candidate for the Minnesota House of Representatives, I recognize the threat toxic chemicals pose to our health and environment. I also believe Minnesota's economy and workforce will benefit from investing in clean, less toxic industries that are safe for our workers, consumers, and environment. If elected, I will support policies that:

Advance the research and development of green chemistry to promote innovation and investment in clean technologies and safe chemicals and consumer goods that create Minnesota jobs.

Protect the health of Minnesota citizens from unnecessary exposures to toxic chemicals by requiring the phase out of toxic, persistent, bioaccumulative chemicals in products and production processes and promoting safer alternatives.

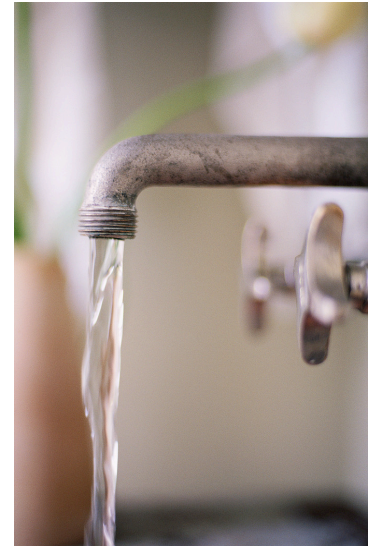
Ask Your Candidate to Take the Pledge

Toxic chemicals don't belong in our products, our water, or our bodies. They are contributing to increases in diseases such as cancer and asthma. They are also strongly linked to learning and developmental disabilities in children.

1. Harm to our health and water is preventable. The most effective way to prevent new threats to health is to eliminate exposure to cancer-causing substances and other harmful toxins. New laws replacing toxic chemicals with safer alternatives will help reduce the number of people who develop diseases and disabilities.
2. Safer products create economic opportunities. Incentives for research and development of safe chemicals and consumer goods will place Minnesota on the cutting edge of emerging global markets.
3. Safer products create economic opportunities. Incentives for research and development of safe chemicals and consumer goods will place Minnesota on the cutting edge of emerging global markets.

SAVE THE DATE! On Saturday, **November 15**, Healthy Legacy and LDA, in collaboration with national and state partners, will host a free public forum, *Healthy Lives, Healthy Minds: Environmental Impacts on Children's Development* at the U of M, in Minneapolis. **For more information and to register, visit healthylegacy.org/healthyliveshealthyminds.**

Are you concerned about health impacts and environmental causes? Interested in volunteering? LDA is currently seeking volunteers to form a workgroup with a passion for preventing harmful environmental toxins from affecting learning abilities. Please call Amanda at 925.582.6021 for more information.



ADHD Tips: Back-to-School

For Students with ADHD

By Ty Sassaman, Ed.M., LDA Learning Connections Specialist

Fall is here and that means back-to-school for many families; it could also mean back to the headaches of homework for some.

Current brain research shows that adolescent brains are still developing in some important ways, including the challenges of behavior and emotional regulation. Having multiple teachers and moving from class to class with various expectations for behavior and academic work can leave adolescents, and especially those with ADHD, feeling in the lurch.

So what can you do to help alleviate some of those challenges? Below are some strategies to make homework less of a hassle:

Staying Motivated

- **Self-reward:** Lots of math problems for homework? Offer one minute of “game time” for each problem done. Let the student tally up his own free-time as he works.
- **Learn how to prioritize:** Help your child to understand what assignments should take priority in his/her homework. Don't spend the whole night on a worksheet when a big report is due the next day!
- **Estimate how long a task will take, then time it:** You'd be surprised how different these two numbers can be!

Sustaining Attention

- Cycle from boring work to interesting or fun assignments
- Build in rewards
- Make getting the work done a game or competition
- Create a distraction-free environment
- Play calming music to block outside noise (you can even consider a white noise machine)
- Set mini-goals that you can easily complete toward your goal

Planning Strategies: Create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task

- Create a daily, weekly, and monthly study schedule.
- Assign start times to each task or assignment.
- Break assignment down into smaller, manageable tasks: If your child's list says “Get books from library. Write report,” break down what could be done that evening and plan out each stage of the project or report.

As the school year progresses, try a number of different strategies, keeping track of what works and what doesn't. No matter what, remember these three items:

1. Always stay positive.
2. Look on the bright side
3. Appreciate successes!

Want to Learn More? Join Ty for an upcoming ADHD workshop, **Homework: From Hassles to Strategies**, to learn about the changes in a teenager's brain and how parents and teens can use this information to support academic learning.

Upcoming dates include:

Tuesday, October 14

Thursday, November 13

Register online and view complete listings of ADHD workshops and support groups at ldaminnesota.org or call 952.922.8374.



Have You Checked Out the Home & School Checklist?

LDA Minnesota has developed the *Home and School Checklist* to provide an MRI of your child's learning abilities.

Since you are the expert on your child, this handy tool helps to engage dialogue between you and your child's teacher. This checklist works in several ways:

- 1) Facilitates communication between you and the teacher.
- 2) Sends the message that you are a valuable resource and part of the team.
- 3) Prompts the teacher to share with you effective classroom strategies that can help at home.

Download your personal checklist at ldaminnesota.org.

Thanks for *Playing-A-Round for Kids!*

Monday, August 25, 2008, marked LDA's inaugural golf classic, *Play-A-Round for Kids*, at Edinburgh USA. The event was a great success thanks to our sponsors, players, donors, and volunteers. Proceeds from the event will help LDA serve children with learning disabilities and other learning difficulties so that they become successful students.



Sponsors of the 2008 LDA Golf Classic



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Cheerleading Squad

LDA now offers personalized coaching for youths and adults with ADHD and/or Learning Disabilities.

An LDA specialist will guide and assist you in identifying your specific needs and developing goals and strategies in areas including:

- Career planning
- Study skills
- Job search and retention
- Goal-setting
- Post-secondary academic opportunities
- Organizational skills
- Independent living
- Communication Skills
- Self-knowledge and self-advocacy
- Social skills

Set goals, develop strategies, explore options, and learn how to choose the best alternatives to pursue your dreams and accomplish your goals. Services include personal 1:1 coaching, group sessions, and workshops.

For more information, contact Mike Anderson, Specialized Services Manager, at 952.582.6023; ma@ldaminnesota.org.

Visit Us!

www.ldaminnesota.org

Learn how you learn with our interactive, online presentation on the brain.

Discover the resources you need to help your child (or you) succeed at school, on the job, and in life.

Find out more about workshops and support groups for families and individuals with ADHD.

Volunteer at LDA and learn how you can help.

Examine the benefits of membership in LDA Minnesota and LDA America.

Purchase high-quality resources for parents, teachers, and other professionals.

LDA welcomes new staff:

Arty Dorman, Program Director

Julie Ritter, Learning Connections Specialist

....And *welcome back* from Iraq Deployment

Mike Anderson, Specialized Services Manager

Learn • Dream • Achieve

The mission of LDA Minnesota is to help children, youth, and adults with learning difficulties *learn* successfully, *dream* of possibilities, and *achieve* their goals.

Whom We Serve

A learning disability is a lifelong neurobiological disorder that causes a person to have trouble storing, processing, and/or producing information. Often, a person with learning disability has difficulty listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling, and/or organizing information. ADHD is a neurobiological disorder in which a person typically has developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, working memory, and/or executive function problems.

Through community-based programs such as **Learning Connections**, **Parents-as-Partners**, **Early Literacy**, **Transition Connections**, and statewide **Adult Connections**, LDA Minnesota provides services to children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities, attention deficits, and other learning difficulties. LDA offers public education and support and training for parents, teachers, and employers to improve the likelihood of successful outcomes for individuals with learning challenges. Many of LDA's services are offered free to the community; approximately 80% of the individuals LDA serves are economically disadvantaged.

In addition, LDA provides the following fee-based services:

- Assessments and consultations for children and adults for specific learning disabilities (SLD) or other learning difficulties
- Diagnostic assessments to determine the presence or absence of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- GED accommodations assessments
- Early Reading Profile for children ages 5-9 with reading difficulties
- ADHD workshops and support groups for parents and affected adults
- Coaching services for youth and adults with LD and/or ADHD
- Adult tutoring
- FREE ADHD information phone line 952.582.6035

We welcome your questions or suggestions. Please send to: info@ldaminnesota.org.



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www.ldaminnesota.org

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Upcoming ADHD Workshops & Support Groups

- FREE! Oct 16** What are Learning Disabilities and ADHD?
- Oct 21** What Makes for a Quality Assessment?
- Oct 28** Strategies for School
- Oct 30** ADHD Home and School Checklist
- Nov 6** Navigating the Money Maze
- FREE! Nov 10** Healthy Home/Healthy Legacy
- Nov 11** The Next Step
- Nov 13** Homework: From Hassles to Strategies
- Nov 18** Why is My Child Always Angry?
- FREE! Nov 20** What are Learning Disabilities and ADHD?
- Dec 2** Medications: Issues and Answers
- Dec 4** Strategies for Home
- FREE! Jan 6** Healthy Home/Healthy Legacy
- FREE! Jan 12-14** Money Management for Youth
- FREE! Jan 15** What are Learning Disabilities

All workshops and support groups meet 7:00-9:00 pm at LDA. Workshops are \$30 per person or \$40 for two family members, unless otherwise noted. Support group sessions are \$20.

Register by phone 952.922.8374 or online at ldaminnesota.org.

Do you have questions about ADHD? Call our ADHD information line at 952.582.6035. All calls are free and confidential.

DID YOU KNOW? 6–10% of Americans have ADHD, and 30% of those with ADHD also have an LD.

FREE Workshops at LDA!

Have you wanted to learn more about learning disabilities or ADHD?.... Do you suspect you or your child has a learning disability and/or ADHD?.... Has your child recently received a diagnosis of one or both of these disorders?

Join us for “What are Learning Disabilities and ADHD?,” a new free workshop held the third Thursday of every month at LDA Minnesota. If you are new to ADHD or LD, this workshop is for you. Learn what you can do to help you or your child succeed in school and life.

Other upcoming free workshops include

- Nov 10 & Jan 6** Healthy Home/Healthy Legacy
- Jan 12-14** Money Management for Youth (for ages 16-20 yrs.)

Please visit ldaminnesota.org for upcoming dates and a complete list of workshops and support groups this Fall and Winter at LDA.

Workshops and support groups are for individuals with ADHD and/or LD, including parents of children of all ages, adults and teens with ADHD, spouses, partners, family, friends, and colleagues. All workshops are open to and helpful for professionals, including teachers and administrators.

LDA Minnesota Partners & Community Sites

Minneapolis Public and Non-public Schools

- Anishinabe Academy
- Bryn Mawr Elementary
- Hall Elementary
- Longfellow Elementary
- Lucy Laney Elementary
- Lyndale Elementary
- PICA Headstart
- Parkview Elementary
- Pillsbury House
- Richard Green Elementary
- Risen Christ School
- San Miguel School

Metro Area Partners

- Christ’s Household of Faith School
- Brooklyn Center Schools
- Robbinsdale Area Schools\
- Salvation Army Childcare Center

Statewide Partners

- Healthy Legacy Coalition
- Minnesota Department of Education – Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education

LDA Minnesota is affiliated with these organizations:

