

LDA Minnesota Learning TIMES

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Avoid Slipping on the Summer Learning Slide

Children are capable of learning all year long, summer included: the fascination of seeing fireflies blinking at night, queries about why we shoot fireworks on the Fourth of July, figuring out how long the ride to the lake will take. These are among the countless occasions for children to learn during the summer. However, our school calendar is an artifact of the days when up to 85 percent of Americans were connected with agriculture for their livelihood and children were needed to help on the farms. Today only 3 percent of families earn their living directly through farming, yet our kids continue to have a three month gap in their formal learning each year.

While there are many positive things about this break, such as opportunities for outdoor activities, camp, and family vacations, it is important not to neglect on-going learning during the summer. Only approximately 10 percent of students nationwide participate in a formal summer school, or attend schools with a non-traditional, year-round calendar.

Research indicates that students who do not engage in summer school or other intentional activities to retain their skills will lose ground. The two biggest areas of loss are math computation and spelling; skills that are based on remembering facts and procedures through frequent use. For example, **on average, without structured practice, children lose 2.6 months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills.** This is true regardless of family resources (Cooper, 1996).

Reading presents another picture. Children in middle- or upper-income families tend to make gains in reading proficiency over the summer, while children in lower-income families tend to lose ground in their reading proficiency. This can be attributed to the availability of books at home and a stronger habit of reading for leisure, both of which are closely associated with increased financial resources. A recent study showed that two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading is directly related to unequal summer learning opportunities (R. Fairchild, J. Smink, 2010).

Maintaining learning levels critical to academic progress

Students with a Learning Disability (LD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or other learning challenges are likely to also experience a "summer slip" without planned activities that not only provide practice using academic skills, but also maintain study habits and organizational skills. Often these skills and habits are a part of an Individualized Learning Plan for those students. It is valuable to continue use of structures that support school-year learning throughout the summer.

A range of options that families can employ to ensure that their children avoid the summer learning slide may include setting up daily study times for practicing things that require rote practice, such as spelling words and math facts; weekly trips to the library; involving kids in a summer activity that involves math such as planning a road trip or keeping score at a ball game;

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Summer Learning Tips

Help kids learn anytime, anywhere! Parents don't have to spend a lot to help prevent the learning loss associated with a long summer break. Here's some affordable learning tips for maintaining those learning levels so your student doesn't fall behind this summer.

Find a summer program that fits your budget.

Many programs are offered at schools, recreation centers, universities, and community-based organizations and often have an educational or enrichment focus.

Visit the library. Checking out books that interest your child encourages daily reading. Libraries have on-going summer programs that are usually free.

Take a day trip to the park, museum, zoo and nature centers. Choose a place with an educational theme.

Go camping and learn about nature.

Practice cooking to learn math. It helps teach fractions and measurements. Add and subtract costs of recipe items while shopping at the grocery store.

Play ball! Intense physical activity and exercise contribute to healthy development.

Do a community service project. Teach your child how to volunteer in your community and show compassion to others.

Start a piggy bank savings account. Practice math skills daily.

Keep a schedule. Continue daily routines during the summer with structure and limits. The key is providing a balance and keeping kids engaged.

Prepare for Fall. Find out what your child will be learning during the next school year by talking with teachers at that grade level. Preview concepts and materials over the summer.

Summer Learning Continued

planting a garden; and setting aside time each week for family members to share what they have been reading and ask each other questions about their books. Answering questions (and looking up the answers when they don't remember) about the plot, setting, or characters will help in guiding your child to read more closely and with greater comprehension. Also, setting weekly goals for numbers of pages read, letters (or e-mails) written, number facts mastered, and so on, with a modest reward attached, can help motivate kids to keep their skills sharp.

In addition, many community programs are available which cultivate children's interest while keeping their learning minds active through local museums, theater and arts organizations, and nature centers. Your child's teacher is also a good resource for which summer programs students in past years have enjoyed.

While summer is a great time for fun, fresh air, and free time, keeping your child connected with what they learned during the school year can also offer fun ways to nurture family connections and reduce the stress associated with the start of the new school year in the Fall.

Did You Know?

Research shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of the summer

LDA Minnesota offers a summer enrichment program which focuses on academic achievement and/or remediation at our *Blast Off for Success* camp held in August. Call 952.582.6000 or visit ldaminnesota.org for details.



Parent Corner: Social Skills and School Success

Social skills is a broad term for “getting along with others.” Social skills and learning both play a role in a child’s academic success. For children with learning difficulties and/or ADHD, social skills are a challenge. The good news is that skills in these areas can be taught directly to children. Parent Coach, Tina Fiegal offers further insight on this topic for parents and/or caregivers.

Q. How do “social skills” relate to a child’s success in school?

A. A child who lacks social skills can suffer rejection at school, which can be very hard on his or her self-esteem. When the child with ADHD is asked to work cooperatively on a project, others can be cruel without realizing it, which can take this child out of his educational “game.” When the child feels the pursuant anger, it’s just very hard to concentrate on school work. Effort and grades can suffer, and the child’s true potential can be masked by overly emotional responses to being rejected. Having a tantrum because someone didn’t let you in the game on the playground doesn’t get you what you want, but these kids don’t yet have the perspective to understand that.

Q. If a child is having difficulty learning or applying appropriate social skills, how can parents help their children learn these skills and apply them?


A. Parents can role model specific recent situations, where they play out exactly what happened, and then replay the scene in a way that helps the child be received more positively by peers. Parents can switch roles with the child, so he can see the situation from the other person’s perspective. This helps to build empathy, a trait that is often weak in children with LD and ADHD. Parents can help their kids to notice others’ interactions, too, so on the next trip to Target, they can ask the child to be alert to interactions, giving opinions about how things should go between people. Also, at-home videotaping of the “good way” and the “not-good way” helps kids whose learning is enhanced by physical movement and visuals. They will love acting out the scenes, and can play them over and over!

Parents can watch for their child’s successes at home and be sure their child is aware of what he did right and how it affected others. When you ... I feel ... because ... is a perfect phrase to use. “When you approached me while I was on the phone, and noticed that you needed to wait for me to stop talking, I was very impressed! You helped me get done sooner so I could give you my full attention!” The use of direct teaching, role playing, assigning authentic tasks, and heartfelt appreciation can improve not only outward behavior, but the child’s sense of himself as a valued member of his family and his school.

Q. How are the social skills needed at home and at school alike? How are they different?

A. Social skills at home are more intimately applied, such as learning to take turns with family members while playing a game. The setting is more relaxed, there are fewer people involved, and ideally, there’s patience and support for learning. At school, where many more people are in a room, distractions can play a big part in one’s ability to control the impulse to speak or invade someone’s space. It’s much harder to apply social skills where the stimulation is greater, and sorting out the environment is much more complex.

Additionally, peers can have a wide variety of patience levels with kids who lack social skills, which creates more complexity. Expectations at school need to be extremely clear, merely because the possibilities for “messing up” are so plentiful. Building a culture of respect for all in the classroom will go a long way to help the child with LD or ADHD learn the boundaries, and the other children to avoid over-reacting to their friends (who are often also a lot of fun!)



Tina facilitates a parent coaching series at LDA Minnesota for parents looking for atypical parenting techniques for their child’s typical behavior. You can view complete listings of workshops, support groups, and other services at lda.minnesota.org.

2nd Annual Regional ADHD Conference Takes Shape

LIVING, LOVING, AND LEARNING WITH ADHD

LDA Minnesota's 2nd annual Regional ADHD is Saturday, April 16. Last year over 200 parents, adults with ADHD, and professionals gathered to learn and be inspired. With keynote speaker, Ari Tuckman, and 21 breakout sessions to choose from, this year is sure to repeat last year's success. A highlight for many attendees was the opportunity to network during lunch with other parents, adults, or professionals. Also popular was the ADHD Bookshop. New this year will be a silent auction, with proceeds used to support ADHD services at LDA Minnesota. A wide variety of break-out presenters and exhibitors will enable attendees to explore the diverse experiences, approaches and programs found within the ADHD community. LDA Minnesota does not recommend or endorse any specific programs or strategies, whether educational, psychological, or medical.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2011

9:00 am - 4:30 pm

**Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis - Park Place
St. Louis Park**

Keynote Speaker

Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA, Author

Topic: Acceptance is Empowering

Choose among 21 breakout sessions • Gain opportunities for networking • Discover new resources • Informational Exhibits • LDA Book Store • Silent Auction • CEUs available

Register online at ldaminnesota.org or by calling LDA client services at 952.582.6000 or email us at info@ldaminnesota.org. Cost: \$135 per person; \$115 each for two or more family members.

VISIT LDAMINNESOTA.ORG FOR DETAILS.

Thanks to our corporate sponsors for their financial support.



ADHD Corner: Interview with Ari Tuckman

LDA presents the 2nd annual Spring Regional ADHD Conference on Saturday, April 16, 2011. This one-day conference includes 21 breakout sessions. This year's keynote topic, *Acceptance is Empowering*, is presented by Ari Tuckman, a private practice psychologist, specializing in diagnosing and treating children, teens, and adults with ADHD, anxiety, and depression. He is also nationally-recognized author of *More Attention*, *Less Deficit* and *Integrative Treatment for Adult ADHD*. We asked Ari to provide some further insight.



LDA: In your years as a psychologist with a focus on ADHD, what have you learned about what works in treatment?

AT: In the 1990s, if you knew three things about adult ADHD you were an expert. Now you need to know four things. The knowledge base has improved, but is still nothing to brag about. Adults need a practical approach, and that is a good fit with my style. It helps to be comfortable with a more direct problem-solving approach, being able to get to the nitty-gritty details of what clients need to do, and not get lost in psychodynamics. The psych talk is important too, but not the best starting place. Before having an ADHD diagnosis, adults may have been ill-served by therapists who focus on secondary issues, such as fear of success; issues which, while important, don't explain enough of what is going on. The ADHD needs to be addressed first. With kids and adolescents, I use the same approach, focusing on practical problem-solving, though of course parents and teachers are also involved in treatment.

LDA: What do you think are the best protocols to diagnose ADHD?

AT: I find the best approach is a thorough interview – one that runs a couple of hours, not 15 minutes. I find out what is going on, performance now and in the past, and see if the pattern looks like ADHD. Sometimes it looks like anxiety, depression, or just “in over their heads.” If possible, it helps to also interview others, such as a spouse or close friend of an adult; parents, teachers, or coaches of a child. Testing for Learning Disabilities at the same time can identify rule-outs, or find a co-occurring condition. ADHD rarely travels alone. There may be a LD, depression, anxiety or other condition along with the ADHD. My philosophy is to start with the most obvious and if that doesn't quite hit the mark, let's see what else is going on. Treating ADHD won't address a LD, but if the ADHD is a bottleneck to performance at school or work, it is important to address the ADHD as well as the LD.

LDA: Do you still find resistance to the diagnosis of ADHD?

AT: ADHD has become better known so there is less stigma attached to it. It is important to talk with kids about both their strengths and challenges; self-knowledge is important for everyone. Being direct is important: no sugar-coating, discuss terms the child can understand and express hope for their future. If you can frame it that way, it is better.

For adults, resistance comes out of lack of knowledge. Twenty years ago, the public was not widely aware of ADHD as an adult condition, even in the clinical community. Now, many adults are being diagnosed through their kids, what I call a 2 for 1 diagnosis. One of my clients even received the suggestion to seek an ADHD assessment from his employer. This speaks to the fact that it is better known. An assessment and diagnosis is the real turning point. It's easier to create effective strategies when you know the cause of the difficulties. ADHD is at its worst before you know you have it.

LDA: How do you address the idea that kids will grow out of ADHD?

AT: Some people do, in their late 20's when their brain catches up. But most people maintain enough symptoms to retain the diagnosis as adults. The key is to deal with the present symptoms. A child who learns to adapt to their ADHD may continue to have ADHD as an adult, but will find it easier to live with, having learned to absorb it into the fabric of his or her life.

LDA: How does ADHD contribute to or challenge an intimate relationship?

AT: ADHD makes people less consistent. That means the non-ADHD partner takes up more slack than they might choose to. This can result in dynamics like resentment and anger on the part of the non-ADHD partner, as well as avoidance and minimizing on the part of the ADHD partner. It is important to have both partners involved in treatment, learning about ADHD, and finding ways to work together.

LDA: What should the audience expect to hear from you at our ADHD Conference on April 16?

AT: Practical strategies, not just theory and nice ideas. By better understanding ADHD in a more sophisticated way, they will have strategies they can employ that night.

Early-Learning Students Take Home Books of Their Own as Another School Season Ends!



“The single most significant factor influencing a child’s early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school.” -National Commission on Reading

For the past four years, LDA has been the Minnesota affiliate of Raising A Reader, an early literacy development program that increases children’s exposure to books and reading before they enter Kindergarten. **Through partnering sites**, we distribute bright-colored book bags filled with a variety of books, including multi-cultural and multi-lingual vocabulary-building materials that go home from school with each child. Parents are trained in fun, interactive ways to share books with their children, and the book bag and its contents become a child’s favorite toy. The result is an irresistible request: **“Please read to me!”**

Based on early childhood research, the Early Literacy Program at LDA reaches out to families living in poverty and those with limited literacy or English proficiency. Strategies for parents who do not read English are included in parent and staff trainings. Access to books is essential to reading development. However, children from low-income families have extremely limited access to books. A recent study by First Book shows that while in middle-income neighborhoods the ratio of age-appropriate books per child is 13 to 1, **in low-income neighborhoods, the ratio is 1 book for every 300 children.**

Pre-school students taking home blue book bags at the end of the year party at Phyllis Wheatley Community Center



Pre-school readers gather for story time with LDA Parents as Partners Program Manager, Susan Hallam

Program Benefits

The program prepares parents through workshops, practical hands-on strategies, and literacy materials to support their child’s early reading skill development. It supports preschool teachers through training and materials to encourage parents’ efforts at home and to incorporate early literacy strategies throughout their programs.

The program’s major goal is to support the early literacy development of pre-school children so they will be better prepared to succeed in school.

Community Sites Partner for Early Learning

Collaboration with Early Literacy partners, such as Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, begins with staff training and an introduction to the program. Parents attend a kick-off event where they learn about language development and why exposure to books is critical to development even in the infant years; as well as effective strategies for sharing books such as “book cuddling.” Through the Early Literacy program, LDA provided 65 red Raising a Reader bags at Phyllis Wheatley, each containing four new multi-cultural books, an *I Love to Read* DVD, and a classroom pocket chart. Red book bags are rotated throughout the year. The program ends with a celebration where each child receives his/her own blue bag for library trips to continue reading routines at home.

Here’s what our families have been saying about the program:

“I can tell my child enjoys reading more because of the Raising a Reader program.”

“The book bags made us feel more together and gave us an opportunity to communicate more.”

Thank you to our 2010-11 Early Literacy Partners

HIRED
Buffalo Montrose Adult Basic Education
P.I.C.A. Headstart program
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center

Math Sequence Activity

Having math difficulties? For many students with math disabilities, complex and multistep math problems are particularly difficult. Even children who did well in their early school years, such as easily learning basic arithmetic facts, may reach fourth grade and suddenly find math next to impossible.

To experience how a young student with a **math disability** might feel working out a problem that requires the integration of math skills, give yourself one minute to solve both problems below.

Instructions:

- A. Multiply the third number in the first row by the seventh number in the third row.
- B. Add this result to the fifth number in the second row.
- C. Add to this total ten times the fourth number in the third row.
- D. Subtract the eighth number in the first row from the result.

Problem 1: 6 5 8 7 4 5 6 8 4
3 2 1 9 5 6 4 2 1
6 5 1 5 1 3 2 3 5

Problem 2: 7 5 4 9 9 5 4 4 1
2 5 1 4 8 9 6 6 8
5 7 5 7 5 7 6 8 2

Source: Horizon Academy, Roeland Park, KS

Did you find the quiz difficult? The thing is, none of the calculations were difficult by themselves. They are simple math facts. With the slightest time pressure added in, simple math problems may become complex and overwhelming. Success in mathematics, particularly in later grades, also depends on language and writing skills to interpret word problems or master complex symbolism. Imagine adding these complexities to the problems above.

Through our classroom connections, LDA Minnesota works with students in small groups or even individually to identify each learner's unique strengths and give them tools they need to be successful with grade level material.

Correct answers: 1) 63; 2) 98

Blast Off for Success with LDA Summer Camp!

We are now taking registrations for our summer camp program for students entering grades 1-6 in Fall 2011.



Camp Blast Off is offered at the end of the summer break as a way to give a child a jump-start for the new school year. Regardless of a student's learning levels, research has shown that all students experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Our summer camp program provides:

- Small group tutoring for math and reading
- Social skills-building activities for positive peer experiences
- Science explorations, dramatics, games, and other creative hands-on activities
- Camp counselors that are licensed instructors with expertise in teaching students who have learning challenges, including learning disabilities and ADHD.

Camp Weeks: Aug. 8-12; 15-19

NEW! Extended Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

(pre- and post-camp care available)

Early-bird Fees: \$575 per child through May 1

Camp is held at LDA Minnesota located in Golden Valley

Call 952.582.6000 or visit ldaminnesota.org for more details

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.

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

LDA Minnesota serves individuals of all ages who are experiencing learning difficulties, their families, teachers, and other professionals who serve them. LDA's deep expertise in serving persons with Specific Learning Disabilities, such as Dyslexia or Dyscalculia, and those with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) allows our staff to provide expert, individualized service for *any* struggling learner.

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 a 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**, 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 75% of the individuals LDA serves are economically disadvantaged.

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)
- Dyslexia Testing for children, youth, and adults
- 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 and counseling for youth and adults with LD and/or ADHD
- Tutoring for persons of all ages with or without a diagnosed learning disability

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

www.ldaminnesota.org

LDA Calendar at a Glance

- April 5** **ADHD & Workplace Concerns Webinar**
Evening: 7:00 – 8:00 pm
- April 16** **Spring ADHD Regional Conference**
(see inside for details)
- April 20** **Adult Basic Education Webinar**
Topics: Understanding assessment results; How different learning problems impact learning; Putting assessment recommendations into practice
- April 26** **Parent Concerns Around Teenage ADHD Workshop**
Evening: 7:00 – 8:30 pm
- May 3** **ADHD & Workplace Concerns Webinar**
Evening: 7:00 – 8:00 pm
- May 24** **Parent Concerns Around Teenage ADHD Workshop**
Evening: 7:00 – 8:30 pm
- May 25** **Adult Basic Education Webinar**
Topics: Understanding Intelligence; Adult ADHD: the myths, facts and realities
- June 7** **ADHD & Workplace Concerns Webinar**
Evening: 7:00 – 8:00 pm
- On-going**
Weekly Thursday Adult ADHD Support Group
New topics each week - First Session is **FREE!**
Daytime: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm; Evenings: 7:00 - 8:30 pm
(evening group does not meet the last Thur. of each month at LDA)
- Weekly Tuesday ADHD Spouse/Partner Support Group**
Daytime: 12:00 - 2:00 pm - First Session is **Free!**
- One-to-one ADHD counseling**
For individuals, couples, and families looking to discuss issues related to ADD/ADHD that interfere with life success.
Call to make an appointment at 952.582.6000

Visit ldaminnesota.org for complete workshop and support group listings
or view our **NEW** online calendar for up-to-date LDA information

DID YOU KNOW? Approximately 3-5% of Americans have ADHD and 1 in 19 between the ages of 6-22 has a LD.

Mark Your Calendar!

Join us for the 2nd Annual

Spring ADHD Regional Conference

Saturday, April, 16, 2011

Time: 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Location: Doubletree Hotel - Minneapolis
St. Louis Park, MN

Keynote Speaker: Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA, Author
Acceptance is Empowering

21 Breakout sessions • Learn from the experts • Gain networking opportunities
Discover new resources • Exhibits • LDA Bookstore

Visit ldaminnesota.org for details

Register online or call LDA client services at 952.582.6000
Email info@ldaminnesota.org to receive conference updates

For parents or caregivers of children with ADHD, adults with ADHD, professionals,
and anyone interested in learning more about it!
CEU credits available.

Interested in becoming a sponsor or vendor? Email info@ldaminnesota.org

Thanks to our corporate sponsors for their financial support.



LDA Minnesota Partners & Community Sites

Minneapolis Public and Non-public Schools

- Anishinabe Academy
- Bethune Elementary
- Bryn Mawr Elementary
- Hope Academy
- Lucy Laney Elementary
- PICA Headstart
- Prestige Academy
- Risen Christ School
- San Miguel School

Metro Area Partners

- Christ's Household of Faith School
- Fraser PICA Headstart
- HIRED Teen Program
- Higher Ground Academy
- Quest Academy
- Phyllis Wheatley Community 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:

