



# Learning Disabilities & ADHD Network

CALGARY REGION [www.ldadhdnetwork.ca](http://www.ldadhdnetwork.ca)

## 2023 Advocacy Toolkit

**Be Heard!**

**Help to amplify the voices of  
Learning Disabilities & ADHD!**

# Introduction

Let's ensure that Alberta political representatives know about issues important to individuals and families with Learning Disabilities (LD) and ADHD. We want better access to:

- early assessment, diagnosis and treatment;
- educational supports; and
- workplace accommodations.



## The Toolkit

Three action sheets related to Learning Disabilities and ADHD, and how they impact mental health, education and the workplace are included in this toolkit.

Each action sheet contains key facts and a set of Action Commitments to ask your political representative to gauge their level of support for Learning Disabilities and ADHD. Pick the action sheet(s) that is most relevant to your lived experience.

Share the facts and ask questions when you:

- write an email or letter;
- attend a townhall meeting, debate or constituent event;
- phone or
- request a meeting with an MLA.

## Why your voice matters

Every time you ask a question about Learning Disabilities (LD) or ADHD, whether at your front door, on the phone, in an email or at a local community event - you are raising awareness about LD and ADHD, reducing stigma and creating connections for those who may not feel safe sharing their own story.

*You are also helping to build relationships for future advocacy efforts and keeping governments accountable.*



# Learning Disabilities & ADHD Action Sheet

## Learning Disabilities (LD) & ADHD in Mental Health

### Did you know?

- Learning Disabilities and ADHD are the most common childhood neurodevelopmental conditions. Learning Disabilities are lifelong and ADHD persists into adulthood 90% of the time.
- Nearly 80% of adults and up to 44% of children with ADHD have at least one coexisting mental health issue. This is much the same for the LD population.
- ADHD symptoms, especially in women, are often misdiagnosed as other mental health issues.
- One in four women with ADHD have attempted suicide.
- Most physicians are untrained in screening/diagnosing ADHD.
- Psychologists' fees for diagnosing Learning Disabilities are often prohibitive for families so their children remain undiagnosed and barred from supports.
- ADHD medication & treatments are not covered by Alberta Health Care.

### Action Commitments for Mental Health

1. Would you commit to training in ADHD for physicians and professionals working in mental health, to reduce misdiagnosis, wait times for assessments and increase access to treatment?
2. Would you commit to funding Learning Disability assessments for children to ensure early identification, reduce wait times and increase access to intervention?



# Learning Disabilities & ADHD Action Sheet

## Learning Disabilities (LD) & ADHD in Education

### Did you know?

- Educational outcomes for students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are generally poor when compared to typical students.
- Almost 1/3 of students with ADHD do not graduate high school but post-secondary students with Learning Disabilities or ADHD who receive educational supports are successful. That means that with proper support, they could be successful in Kindergarten to Grade 12 as well.
- Most educators are untrained in recognizing, supporting or teaching students with Learning Disabilities or ADHD, though they all have these students in their classes.
- Despite provincial guidelines, there is no consistency across Alberta schools as to if, when and how they support students with learning challenges.
- Most educators are not trained in how to teach one of the most basic life skills - reading - according to the extensive body of research called the Science of Reading embodied in the Structured Literacy approach, further disadvantaging students with learning challenges.

### Action Commitments for Education

1. Would you commit to ensuring that all pre-service teachers in Alberta are mandated to complete courses in teaching students with learning challenges and are explicitly trained in science-based approaches to teaching reading as a certification requirement?
2. Would you commit to ensuring that the Structured Literacy elements of the English Language Arts & Literacy (ELAL) curriculum are preserved in future iterations of curriculum redesign?



# Learning Disabilities & ADHD Action Sheet

## Learning Disabilities & ADHD in the Workplace

### Did you know?

- Individuals with Learning Disabilities (LD) or ADHD are
  - less likely to be employed and often earn less;
  - more likely to be fired and more likely to get laid off;
  - more likely to experience higher levels of workplace-related stress;
  - and more likely to quit their jobthan their neurotypical counterparts.
- Employees and employers are often unaware of how neurodiversity impacts productivity, both positively and negatively.
- Implementing simple workplace strategies and accommodations can often be a triple win for the employee, employer and the economy.
- Employers are often unaware that the Alberta Human Rights Act recognizes Learning Disabilities and ADHD as disabilities that require them to implement accommodations.

### Action Commitment for the Workplace

Since the Alberta Human Rights Act recognizes Learning Disabilities and ADHD as disabilities, would you commit to ensuring that employers are made aware that they must accommodate for these challenges?

