



ldabc • Learning Disabilities Association of British Columbia

Re: Early identification of learning problems top priority, education minister says
By Janet Steffenhagen, Vancouver Sun April 11, 2011

Dear Minister Abbott,

The Learning Disabilities Association of BC (LDABC) is delighted to learn of your intentions to take the needs of children with learning disabilities most seriously as reported in the Vancouver Sun April 11, 2011.

We wish, in particular, to acknowledge your statement, "...from the perspective of brain development, our best opportunity is kindergarten to Grade 4. The sooner assessments are made and difficulties are diagnosed, the better off we are."

After years of advocating for early identification and intervention, LDABC welcomes the news that The Ministry of Education plans early screening for learners with unexplained difficulties.

Families can now look forward to the day when schools no longer delay the referral of a child suspected of having a learning disability for an in depth evaluation.

Several research-based interventions are available to address LD, a neurological disorder that affects 1 in 10 British Columbians with average to above average intelligence yet who struggle at school and later in life, especially with reading and writing.

Comprehensive teacher training is vital, as is hiring specialist teachers to lead remediation and thus ease the load on classroom teachers.

We have compiled a significant body of research that supports what you are recommending and would be happy to provide any information you may need that proves the importance of this direction.

We recognize there are challenges that must be addressed in developing a full range of educational programs and services, notably financial. Nevertheless, it remains the legal responsibility of school boards and the Ministry of Education to ensure that a full continuum of appropriate educational programs and services for individuals with learning disabilities is available.

Fortunately the cost-benefits to this new approach will be measurable within just a few years, not just in the educational system but overall.

We commend and thank you for taking this step.

Thealzel Lee
Chair - LDABC