

In late October, a report was released by the Centre for ADHD Advocacy Canada (CADDAC) and was reported in the Ottawa Citizen, on the CBC, and likely in other newspapers and television newscasts. This report gave the Ontario educational system a failing grade for its failure to fully recognize and support students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Many SEAC members do support a regime in which exceptionalities are formally recognized and this is what the CADDAC report recommends for ADHD. Lacking that recognition in Ontario, CADDAC reports that the child has no legal recourse if the Board does not provide special education services to that child.

However, it is important that the messaging to the OCDSB community about the issue, as presented, not cause confusion about the access to special education services for OCDSB students who do have ADHD (/ADD) . Superintendent Dawn Paxton met with me about this issue, and we agree that it is important that parents understand the following:

- 1) a child that has another exceptionality can also be accommodated for his/her ADHD (ADD) issues. Note: Many children with ADHD also have an exceptionality recognized in Ontario legislation;
- 2) some children can be accommodated on behaviour issues—but not every child with ADHD / ADD has the level or severity of symptoms which would require this designation;
- 3) children who fit neither of these categories but show hyperactive / attention-deficit behaviour which impacts their learning can still receive special-education services. The parent and teacher should work together to determine which accommodations best fit the student's needs, and how these should be expressed in an Individual Education Plan (IEP), just as for other children who receive services.

How Parent should Proceed

- If your child is experiencing learning difficulties, and you think they might have ADHD or ADD, speak to the teacher to see what similarities exist between your observations of your child at home, and in other settings, with the teacher's observation;
- - and/or talk to your doctor about your concerns and what the teacher has reported. (There are other difficulties that might have some of the same symptoms as ADHD.)
- Either way, rating charts can be used to determine whether the difficulties relate to ADD/ADHD that will better help to define the child's needs.
- You and the teacher should now be in a better position to determine what accommodations might help your child to learn more effectively, and to create an Individual Education Plan (IEP) reflecting those accommodations.

If you are not satisfied with the conversations you are having with the teacher, talk to the Principal. If you still have concerns, you can talk to the Superintendent for your school.

Additionally, Superintendent Paxton provided the names of some books that parents might find helpful.

Book Resources:

“Lost at School” by Ross W. Greene

“The Explosive Child” same author

The CADDAC web-site provides an extensive list of accommodations, some of which could be helpful for particular children:

<http://www.caddac.ca/cms/page.php?66>

Local Support Groups

- Learning Disabilities of Canada supports children who have ADHD as well as those with Learning Disabilities. The local chapter holds **parental support/ education meetings on the 1st Thursday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM**

<http://ldao-c.ncf.ca/>

The report in question can be found at <http://www.caddac.ca/>

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