

# THE IMPACT OF LEARNING DISABILITIES ON FRIENDSHIPS

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I often receive anxious phone calls regarding the impact of LD on kids' social skills. The social isolation and rejection are more upsetting to families than math and reading difficulties. The average child spends 1000 hours per year in the classroom but that is less than 20% of their waking hours. The overwhelming majority of time is spent in the school hallways, bus rides, lunch room, at home and in community activities. These are the social battlegrounds...kids with learning disabilities are seldom victorious.

A recent LD online article, written by Rick Lavoie, states that finally researchers are investigating students with good social relationships and asking *How?* The traditional method has always been to examine students with poor social skills and ask *Why?* These studies are providing caregivers with valuable information and insights.

Upon reviewing these studies, it becomes obvious that there are significant differences in friendships based on gender. Boys it seems seldom discuss school issues or classes during non-school hours. They tend to talk about sports, common interests, and girls. They avoid topics that are highly personal. Conversely, girls enjoy talking about school and willingly

share intimate details of their personal life and home life. Girls also discuss topics of similar interest, absent friends and boys.

The research suggests that girls and boys have very different traits they admire or like about friends. Girls enjoy the company of girls who are friendly, warm, fashionable and care about their personal hygiene. Boys, on the other hand, don't care about personal hygiene but value qualities such as loyalty and courage as long as there are similar interests.

Teachers can be very valuable partners in assisting kids to improve their friendships. There is a proven correlation between a child's social acceptance at school and their academic performance.

These are some suggestions that came from the studies:

- ⇒ Teachers should not tolerate bullying or teasing
- ⇒ Teachers need to provide encouragement and praise
- ⇒ Classmates are resentful when teachers are unwilling to help LD students with accommodations that would help them enjoy academic success
- ⇒ Teachers need to emphasize the commonalities among all students as it leads to understanding and acceptance of all.

⇒ Teachers need to take care when selecting and assigning note takers, homework buddies etc. as this can put the LD student in a vulnerable position for mistreatment. Only willing and nice students should be used as buddies or peer tutors.

In early childhood, friendships are based upon who has the best toys and who lives on my street. However, As kids mature, greater demands are put on friendships and more factors come into play. Some of these factors are:

- ⇒ Intimacy (sharing secrets)
- ⇒ Loyalty (trust, support and commitment)
- ⇒ Affection (generosity and kindness)
- ⇒ Similarity (common interests and hobbies, commonality in gender, IQ, age, and attitudes)
- ⇒ Reciprocity (kids are willing to support their friends but they insist that this support be returned)

It is important that parents and teachers work together to promote, foster and enhance the social skills of students with learning disabilities.

**"IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO  
 RAISE A CHILD"**

This information was taken from an article in LD Online written by Rick Lavoie .

## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW!!!

1. The LDA of Peel is holding its annual conference at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga on November 6, 2008 from 9:00 to 4:00 pm. The conference focus is upon ADD and ADHD issues. This year's guest speakers are outstanding. Dr. Kenny Handleman is a medical professor as well as a psychiatrist who treats teens and children with ADD. The other guest is Ron Morrish, an international speaker on behavioural issues.
2. **Good News/Bad News:** I have reached that \$\$\$\$ level that the government needs me to collect GST. Good for me and my successful business - Bad for your pocket-books!!!
3. GST will now be added to your invoices. Remember that the tutoring fees are tax deductible.
4. There is now an option on my Web Site to pay using PayPal, for those who may wish to use it.