



Europe's Children Our Concern asbl

supporting children and young people with learning difficulties

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde

“Together we can make a difference”

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If you have news that you would like us to pass on, or if you would like us to publicise an event or mention a resource that you have found useful, please send us the details: ecoc@ecoc.be.

For a quick read, just click on headings below to be taken straight to the relevant item.

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ECOC Update

– our future role

ECOC has seen many changes over the last two years, with the closing of the office and the moving on of several key volunteers. In addition, and happily, there has been progress in many schools in recognizing different learning needs and in providing the necessary learning support. What is ECOC's role in the future? We shall be working on developing a new mission over the coming few weeks, and would be delighted to hear from you, our readers, as to what you feel ECOC is all about.

- What do you perceive as our strengths?
- How can we best use our organization to serve the needs of the children and young people who have learning disabilities?
- How do we best work with the many other organizations in the field?

If you want to add your voice to this debate, just drop a line to the newsletter editor:
maggie.inglis@skynet.be.

- our events

Recognizing & Reaching Children with Learning Difficulties, AD/HD and Related Conditions across Languages and Cultures

This was the title of our one-day conference held in Brussels on October 8 this year. Jointly sponsored by ourselves and ADHD Belgium, and part-funded by the King Baudouin Foundation, the event attracted an audience of some sixty people from a variety of backgrounds: teachers, child psychiatrists and psychologists, parents and others interested in the field of learning disabilities.

The four speakers were:

- **Dr Laurent Victoor from Belgium.** A child and adolescent psychiatrist and specialist consultant for children, teenagers and adults with AD/HD.
- **Dr Steve Chinn from the United Kingdom.** An expert in dyslexia and mathematics, and dyscalculia,
- **Sari Solden from the United States of America.** A psychotherapist, whose specialisms include gender issues affecting women and girls with AD/HD, and inattentive AD/HD.
- **Dr Ellen Littman from the United States of America.** A clinical psychologist who works across the spectrum of attention disorders and specialises in women's and girls' issues.

Coming from a variety of disciplines and from different cultural backgrounds, all four speakers gave the same very strong message. When working with children and young people who have AD/HD or learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, it is essential to adopt an individual and multi-layered approach. What works for one young person might not work for another and a thorough understanding of the environment within which each operates – family, home, school – is essential. All were adamant that there are no quick fixes, but that an early diagnosis can make the world of difference.

After describing to the audience the many characteristics of AD/HD and learning difficulties related to mathematics, the four had a wealth of suggestions for how to help people with these conditions, to enable them to live productive and successful lives. They looked at the range of actions that can be taken in the classroom and at home to build a calm and non-threatening environment, the kind of accommodations that can be made to allow for the slower processing of information, and the need to build confidence. Dr Victoor spoke of the role of medication (mostly Ritaline in Belgium) and the immense difference it can make – with the proviso that individual circumstances have to be taken into consideration and dosage checked regularly. Dr Littman too acknowledged the effective role that such medication can play within the pattern of treatment.

In the discussions that followed the presentations, many participants felt that learning difficulties were not properly understood in Belgium – “AD/HD is something invented in America” seems to be a common belief. Other voices, however, felt that the situation was really changing, and that more and more teachers were going on courses to improve their skills in this area of learning. We heard from our transatlantic colleagues that there is still enormous scepticism in the USA and some resistance to their work.

As always at this type of event, the participants enjoyed the opportunity of meeting colleagues and exchanging ideas and experiences. These kinds of gatherings are effective ways of keeping the issues of AD/HD and learning disabilities at the forefront of educational developments.

For the full conference write-up, please go to our website: www.ecoc.be.

News

USA Presidential Election 2008. Want to know where the candidates stand on learning disabilities? Go to <http://nclld.org>.

AD/HD Family Resources. Coming up in the next few months:

AD/HD Parenting Classes, with Dianne Zaccheo, Designed for families encountering AD/HD.

Date: November 6, December 4, January 8, February 12.

Time: 18:30 – 21:30

Venue: International School of Brussels, 1170 Brussels (www.isb.be)

Cost: €20 per session. Free for paid up members.

For more information contact Joanne Norris, adhdresources@gmail.com.

The Trouble with Maths, with Dr Steve Chinn. A 4-day course for primary school teachers, maths teachers and tutors.

Date: December 9 and 10; May 5 and 6

Venue: To be announced

For more information contact Joanne Norris, adhdresources@gmail.com

The European Parliament. The European Peoples Party and the European Democrats are holding a morning hearing on “Teacher Quality: Does it Really Matter?”, which includes a session on teaching students with special needs, presented by Florian Colceag, IRSCA Gifted Education, Romania. For more information, see epp-ed-info@europarl.europa.eu.

Dyspraxia. A recent survey of more than one thousand education professionals, carried out by the Dyspraxia Foundation in the UK, showed that just over three quarters of them had never been offered specific training to help identify, understand or support children with dyspraxia. Over half reported a lack of awareness of the condition within their school. To read more, go to www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk.

Resources

By no means a definitive list, but a quick look at some journals and new titles on offer.

Science Daily. Two interesting on-line reports from this US publication:

How do we educate young children with Down Syndrome? Researchers at the University of Denver are conducting a new study that will compare two early literacy intervention approaches. For more information see <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/10/081024144105.htm>

Technology: giving children more control over what they learn. This is an EU-funded i-class project, made up of 17 partners from the EU, together with representatives from Turkey and Israel. more information see <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/10/081027144645.htm>

LD online. Subscribe to this online service for comprehensive coverage of news and information on learning disabilities and AD/HD. www.ldonline.org.

Education Week. A research project in Kentucky, USA, has some interesting data on the efficacy of digital aids for mathematics for students who have learning disabilities. See the October 20 2008 edition for the write-up. www.edweek.org.

The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service – ADDISS (www.addiss.co.uk)

The Tipping Points

What professionals should recognize as the social impact of ADHD

Author: Phil Anderton PhD

ISBN 978-0-9554033-2-3. £11.49 (£9.99 + 1.50 P+P)

Jessica Kingsley Publishers (www.jkp.com)

Fun with Messy Play

Ideas and activities for children with special needs

Author: Tracey Beckerleg

Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-84310-641-8, 160pp, October 2008, £12.99, \$19.95

Dietary Interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders

Why they work when they do. Why they don't when they don't

Author: Kenneth J Aitken

Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-936-6, 272pp, 2008, £16.99

Concepts of Normality

The autistic and typical spectrum

Author: Wendy Lawson, foreword by Lucy Clark

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-604-3. 160pp, 2008, £14.99, \$24.95

How to Make School Make Sense

A Parents' Guide to helping the child with Asperger Syndrome

Author: Clare Lawrence

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-664-7, 128pp, 2008, £12.99, \$19.95

Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum

A practical resource of play ideas for parents and carers, 2nd edition

Author: Julia Moor

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-608-1, 304pp, 2008, £13.99, \$21.95

Routledge (www.routledge.com)

Success with Inclusion

1001 teaching strategies and activities that really work

Author: Glynis Hannell

Paperback, ISBN 978-0-415-44534-4, 184pp, 2007, \$47.95

Stenhouse Publishers (www.stenhouse.com)

Effective School Leadership Through Reflective Storytelling and Enquiry

Author: Fred Steven Brill

Paperback, ISBN 978-157110-766-4, 184pp, 2008, \$19 (flat rate shipping \$5.00)

Conferences and events

Assistive Technology

- November 11 2008
Assistive Technology Conference
London, UK
Full details: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

November 12 – 15 2008

The 20th Annual CHADD International Conference

Anaheim, California USA

Full details: www.chadd.org (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

March 30 – April 1 2009

The 9th International ADDISS Conference

“The Spirit of ADHD: Resilience, Hope, Opportunity, Success”

Venue to be announced

Full details: www.addiss.co.uk

If you are interested in presenting at this conference, email your submission to info@addiss.co.uk

Dyslexia

- November 16 – 18 2008
Second All European Dyslexia Conference
Luxembourg
Full details: www.dyspel.org/eda/
- November 19 2008, 14:30 – 18:00, with reception to follow
Presentation – “Dyslexia and Teaching Children with Dyslexia” – by Dr Duncan Milne
Waterstone’s bookshop, Blvd Adolphe Max 71, 1000 Brussels
Full details: www.dyslexia-international.org

Dyslexia and Visual Impairment

- November 22 2008
The 15th Annual Symposium – “Dyslexia and Visual Impairment: finding the common ground”
University of Westminster, London, UK
Full details: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Learning Disabilities

February 25 – 28 2009

The 46th Annual Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America

Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Full details: www.ldanatl.org

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