

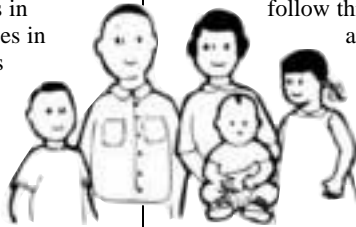


# Nebraska Newsbriefs

## What is IDEA and why is it important?

reprinted from LD Online

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that secures special education services for children with disabilities from the time they are born until they graduate from high school. The law was reauthorized by Congress in 2004, prompting a series of changes in the way special education services are implemented. These changes are continuing today and they affect the delivery of special education and related services in your state. The IDEA Partnership can help you keep up with the changes and possibly influence future decisions.



The law itself is detailed and complex, but here are some key components:

- History
- Purpose
- Components
- Helpful information about aspects of the law
- The law
- More information

### History

IDEA has undergone several changes since it began as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), or Public Law 94-142, in 1975. This law originated as a way to insure that students with disabilities receive an appropriate public education.

IDEA has been updated about every five years since its beginnings, the latest of which is the 2004 reauthorization. The reason for this consistent updating is to give us a chance to see how the law plays out in practice, and what we need to do to make it more clear, efficient or effective. In 1986, for example, the infant and toddler component was added, and in 1990, transition planning became a requirement.

Several ideas have become part of the special education vocabulary because of this law, including FAPE (free appropriate public education), IEP (individualized education program) and LRE (least restrictive environment). These concepts have been built into the special education system to insure equal access to education for all students.

In 2006, another change was made when final regulations were released for IDEA 2004. For years, schools were required to

wait until a child fell considerably behind grade level before being eligible for special education services. Today, with the release of the final regulations of IDEA 2004, school districts are no longer required to follow this 'discrepancy model,' but are allowed to find other ways to determine when a child needs extra help. This is being implemented throughout the country through a process called Response to Intervention.

### Purpose

The reauthorization of IDEA 2004 (Section 601(d)) states that the purpose of the law is:

- (1A) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living;
- (1B) to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected;
- (1C) to assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities;
- (2) to assist States in the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- (3) to ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities by supporting system improvement activities; coordinated research and personnel preparation; coordinated technical assistance, dissemination, and support; and technology development and media services; and
- (4) to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Note: The phrase "further education" is

new in 2004, as is the increased emphasis on effective transition services to promote successful post-school employment or education.

### Components

IDEA is divided into four sections, Parts A - D.

**Part A** defines the terms used in the law. "**Specific learning disability**" is defined as follows:

- **The term "specific learning disability" means** a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.
- **Disorders included.** Such term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- **Disorders not included.** Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Part B** gives money to states to provide services for eligible children and youth with disabilities, including the rules and regulations that states and school systems must follow to receive funds from the federal government.

This section outlines:

- evaluating children and determining eligibility for services
- notifying and involving parents
- working with parents to write IEPs
- providing services
- resolving conflicts between parents and the school system
- providing accessible text to students under NIMAS
- and more

**Part C** is the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities. Services that may be included in this program are family training, counseling, home visits, speech-language services, occupational therapy and physical therapy.

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*LDA of Nebraska is a non-profit nationally affiliated volunteer organization of parents and professionals dedicated to helping children and adults with learning disabilities. LDA does not endorse or recommend any institution, school, treatment or person.*

*We provide support, information and advocacy for our members.*

*Letters to the Editor may be sent to:*

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## From the President...

**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE.** We have an exciting conference coming April 10 of 2010! We are pleased to have Linda Tilton as our guest speaker. She is an outstanding speaker who gives teachers and parents simple take home ideas on how to improve student's learning. She has written 2 fabulous books to help educators and parents with new ideas on how to support their child's learning. **The Teacher's Toolbox** gives 700 strategies, tips, tools and techniques to help educators and parents teach various concepts to children. The other book, **Inclusion: A Fresh Look**, gives ideas about how to incorporate inclusion in your schools and what it takes to have successful inclusion.

Please look for further information about our upcoming conference. It will be well worth the time to attend and hear what Linda has to say. She will share many ideas with you on how to improve student learning which can apply to all children. Hope to see you there!

Deb Carlson; President LDA of Nebraska

## Things *not* to talk about at work

The old adage: "on the mind, out the mouth" can be a problem for people with learning disabilities. This is especially true in a work environment.

So what are a few topics/subjects to avoid talking about at work?

**Politics** - not everyone shares your enthusiasm for a particular candidate or cause. Save these discussions for friends and family.

**Money** - employers do not approve of employees talking about wages/salary. Also, don't talk about how you spend your money or your checking/savings account balance.

**Family Problems** - the big fight you had with your boyfriend or girlfriend is not

anyone else's business. If one of your parents or siblings has a problem they don't need you sharing that with your coworkers.

**Bathroom/Body issues** - don't discuss your bathroom habits with anyone else. If there is an issue you would talk to your Dr about, then don't talk about it at work.

**Don't repeat gossip about your boss or co-workers** - you would not want anyone to spread rumors about you so don't spread rumors about anyone else. If a co-worker is complaining about the boss or another employee don't join in.

**Don't swear** - if it is words you would not use around your mother then don't use them at work.

## What is IDEA

*Continued from Page 1*

**Part D** helps state education departments and other agencies improve how they work with children and youth with disabilities.

This section provides information and research that informs professional practitioners and families, including:

- teacher education
- operation of parent training and information (PTI) centers
- identification of best practices and promising practices
- development of technologies
- public dissemination of information

### **Helpful information about aspects of the law**

A series of documents from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), are available below. Please visit the *NICHY website* to access these documents.

- Assessment
- Behavior/Discipline
- Disproportionality
- Due Process
- Early Intervening Services
- Evaluations/Reevaluations
- Funding
- Highly Qualified Teacher
- IEPs/IFSPs
- Learning Disabilities
- Mediation

- Model Forms
  - Monitoring, Technical Assistance, and Enforcement
  - No Child Left Behind
  - NIMAS
  - Part C
  - Preschool
  - Prior Written Notice
  - Private Schools
  - Procedural Safeguards
  - Response to Intervention
  - State Complaint Procedures
  - Transition to Adulthood
- LD Online provides the following documents about important aspects of the law:

- NIMAS - *Go to Making the Written Word Easier for Readers with Print Disabilities*
- Response to Intervention - *Go to Response to Intervention: A Primer for Parents*
- The law

IDEA 2004 (Public Law 108-446) was passed December 3, 2004 and implemented July 1, 2005. The text of the law is *available for download* (905K PDF)\* and is 162 pages long. Laws are implemented through regulations which tell the school systems, the courts, and parents what each section means. The *final regulations of IDEA* are available from the Federal Register.

# Assistive Technology at Work

By: National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2006)

Although an immediate transition into an institution of higher learning is ideal for some students who relied on assistive technology in high school, many make the decision to enter the workforce after graduation. It is estimated that about 85 percent of students with learning disabilities (LD) transition directly from school to work.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, statistics addressing employment among people with disabilities indicate that the workplace consists of approximately 18.6 million people with disabilities, ranging in age from 16 to 64. This represents about 56% of all people with disabilities in this age category.<sup>2</sup> Given the vast number people with disabilities in the workplace, the potential for assistive technology (AT) to increase productivity is great.

This Info Brief addresses assistive technology on the job by outlining employers' and employees' responsibilities related to AT, identifying appropriate AT, exploring various types of solutions in the workplace, and providing a list of further resources.

## Providing assistive technology in the workplace: Who is responsible?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), local education agencies are responsible for providing AT to students with disabilities who could benefit from such accommodations. Once students finish school, the school district has the right to expect any AT devices that it lent to be returned.

However, in some circumstances, an arrangement can be made between a school system and an exiting student so that the student can keep the equipment. For example, if the AT is outdated by the district's standards, or if it has been customized specifically for an individual, the district may agree to sell the equipment at fair market rate. Even though this will require the student or an outside agency to spend money, the equipment can usually be acquired at a much lower price than if purchased new.

Although IDEA covers AT in the K-12 environment, legislation guiding accommodations in the workplace are not as prescriptive. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide "reasonable accommodations" to help employees that self-identify as having a disability perform the essential functions of their job so long as providing the accommodation does not pose an "undue hardship" to the employer. An undue hardship may relate to the expense or challenges involved with implementing the device into the existing infrastructure at work.



It is the responsibility of the individual to disclose his or her disability to an employer and request accommodations. The process of identifying specific accommodations should be a negotiation between employee and employer. Employers are not required to provide the exact accommodation requested by the employee. An employee may suggest an accommodation, and the employer may suggest an alternative recommendation, which the employee must consider. The employer has the right to request "medical" documentation and refuse letters from educational specialists. If the employee does not provide such documentation, the employer is not required to provide an accommodation.

If necessary, individuals with disabilities should contact the Human Resources office in their workplace to initiate a request for accommodations under the ADA. For additional information on ADA and the workplace, see *The Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Finding employment may seem like a job in itself. However, state vocational rehabilitation (VR) services help adults and youth with disabilities find and succeed in employment. Many high schools' special education coordinators include VR services in transition planning for students with Individualized Education Plans.

Local VR offices work within the community to evaluate client needs, make matches with employers, and offer support for success. If AT is required for success at a particular job, the device and training may be funded through the VR office. The VR case manager can serve as a liaison with the employer to arrange and integrate the AT and employee needs into the workplace. See the link below to find a state VR office.

## Identifying assistive technology needs: Creating a good fit

Adults with LD have provided many insights into successful employment strategies in books such as *Exceeding Expectations* and *Meeting the Challenge*. These and other books about adults with LD (see full list below), emphasize the need to find an environment and set of job duties that match their interests, work habits, and personality in order to succeed in a workplace.

For individuals with disabilities, understanding what they need in order to be productive and being creative and honest about their strengths and limitations is the key. Adults with LD and ADHD often need to try out several positions before they find and create a good fit. AT may be part of a creative approach to helping employees succeed.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service designed to

increase the employability of people with disabilities by providing individualized worksite accommodation solutions. It offers the following step-by-step process for identifying AT appropriate for your job:

1. define the situation
2. explore resources
3. choose the AT
4. implement AT accommodation(s)
5. monitor accommodations

The full process as described by JAN, which includes checklists and self-report questionnaires, can be found *here on the JAN website*. The original document on which JAN text is based can be found *here on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website*. JAN counselors are available for telephone consultations for individuals with disabilities who would like personalized guidance on employability issues, including identifying and securing appropriate accommodations at: 1-800-526-7234.

## Assistive technology solutions: What is available?

People often think about highly sophisticated and expensive devices that are designed to meet specific needs associated with a disability when discussing AT. However, AT can also be found in less complicated devices that are moderately priced, such as talking calculators. AT can even be found in existing technology, such as the spell checker feature of a word processor. The following list highlights various AT devices, some that are portable and some that enhance a personal workstation.

### Portable solutions

- Portable Spell Checkers check spelling on the go; many also have a dictionary and thesaurus, and some read text aloud
- Reading Pens scan and read aloud single words or lines of text from a page, also equipped with a dictionary
- Talking Calculators use as a standard calculator with the addition of reading the numbers and functions aloud
- Portable Word Processors draft documents or take notes with the support of spell check and other editing capabilities, some quite lightweight
- Digital Recorders document impromptu spoken instructions or other audio, download the audio file to a computer or other mp3 player
- Color Coded Jump Drives transport data from one computer to another, personalize a color-coding system to keep track of various sets of information
- Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) and

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# Simple Practices to Nurture the Motivation to Read

By: Linda Gambrell and Barbara Marinak (2009)

Honoring books for self-selection, sharing the excitement of read-alouds, building a balanced book collection, making your passions public, and providing rewards that demonstrate the value of reading are just a few simple but transformative suggestions that can nurture the love of reading in your classroom.

**In this article:**

- *Self-selection: "honoring" books*
- *Read aloud: share the excitement!*
- *Book collection: balance it*
- *Make your passions public*
- *Incentives: demonstrate the value of reading*

Research confirms that student motivation is a key factor in successful reading. In *Nurturing the Motivation to Read*, we examined the current research on reading motivation and engagement. A number of practical ideas for creating literacy-rich and motivating classrooms can be drawn from the findings. These simple but transformative suggestions include "honoring" books for self-selection, sharing the excitement of read-aloud, building a balanced book collection, making your passions public, and providing rewards that demonstrate the value of reading.

**Self-selection: "Honoring" books!**

Research has shown that whenever teachers do anything to make a book special - even something as simple as placing a book upright on a table - children are more likely to choose that book than any others. We suggest planning this type of self-selection by regularly "honoring" books. Here are some ideas that work:

- Highlight individual books as special just by choosing them for displays or to be included in book baskets.
- Provide a quick introduction to the books being "honored." Show children a book and then introduce - and endorse- it by reading a few pages or asking students questions to pique their interest. When you introduce books by instilling in children a desire to find out what's in them, those books fly off the shelves. They can become so popular that you might need a waiting list!

**Read aloud: Share the excitement!**

A teacher read-aloud is the oral sharing of a book for the purpose of modeling strategic reading behaviors and generating instructional conversation. Theories of child development suggest that the socialization of a read-aloud allows teachers and students to collaboratively construct meaning from text. Share the excitement of read-alouds by:

- Reading aloud a wide variety of



text. Include informational books, newspapers, and magazines in your read-alouds.

- Encouraging interaction during the teacher read aloud by inviting discussion. This "give and take" conversation around a shared text engages children in predicting, inferring, and thinking and reasoning.
- Inviting students to choose the teacher read-aloud title from time to time. Student choice can be managed by book talking several possible teacher read-aloud titles and allowing students to vote on the book they would most like to hear.
- Allowing students to read-aloud. Read-aloud is often used synonymously with teacher read-aloud. And though teachers should read-aloud daily, inviting students to occasionally read-aloud a self-selected text or portion of a text (e.g., book or magazine article) can be motivating for all. Allowing students to participate in the read-aloud will require some planning. Students should rehearse their read-aloud for several days at home or with a classroom buddy before reading aloud to the class.

**Book collection: Balance it!**

There is now wide agreement, among reading educators and researchers about the importance of exposing young children a balanced book collection. The International Reading Association (IRA) has taken the position that young readers should be exposed to a variety of genres, including picture storybooks, fiction and nonfiction material, magazines, and poetry (IRA, 1999). A few ideas for balancing collections include:

- Be sure to include a wide variety of informational books for reading instruction and in classroom libraries.
- Honor all print for instruction and self-selection. This should include reading and learning from fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines, and electronic sources.
- Celebrate student authors by "publishing" their work in the classroom library and/or news corner. The work of student authors should be as diverse as the class and might include fiction stories, wordless picture books, student created puzzle books, poems, informational books, comic books, how-to books, recipe collections, photo documentaries (student pictures paired with narration captions), post card collections, journals, and news stories (short article about important school or classroom events).
- Involve students in the selection of books for the classroom and/or school library. Review and discuss possible titles, invite discussion and debate, and vote for the new books that will be added to the library.

**Make your passions public**

Reading passions should be made public. Young children want to read and are curious about books with which they are somewhat familiar. Familiarity breeds reading motivation. When children talk about books they most enjoyed reading, they frequently mentioned that they got interested in a book because they had heard about it from a friend, read other books about the character, knew the author, or had read other books in the series. To make reading passions public, consider:

- Arranging and maintaining a "Wall of Fame." This bulletin board can be an ever-changing display of reading passions including student favorites (e.g., books, magazines, series.), teacher favorites, family favorites, and the principal's choices.
- Publish your Top 10. Everyone stays up late to enjoy Letterman's Top 10. Vote periodically and publish your classrooms Top 10 reading passions. The Top 10 can be a year-long activity by including the top 10 favorite fiction books, information titles, poems, magazines, and websites.
- Plan for small group discussion as a part of your self-selected reading time. As Gambrell (1996) notes, students need to share their enthusiasm about books with each other. Self-selection can be more motivating if students know they will have the opportunity to talk with friends about their choices.

**Incentives: Demonstrate the value of reading**

If your reading program uses incentives, consider using rewards that are proximal to reading. The importance of reading-related rewards may go beyond recognizing the relationship between reward proximity and the desired behavior. It could be that the real value of reading-related rewards is that both the desired behavior (reading) and the reward (books, self-selection, time) define a classroom culture that supports and nurtures the intrinsic motivation to read. Rewards that demonstrate the value of reading include:

- books
- increased read-aloud time
- increased time for self-selected reading
- increased library time
- time to talk about books
- book clubs

Honoring books for self-selection, sharing the excitement of read-alouds, building a balanced book collection, making your passions public, and providing rewards that demonstrate the value of reading are just a few simple but transformative suggestions that can nurture the love of reading in your classroom!

*reprinted from Reading Rockets*

# Fun & Games: Help ADHD Children Learn From Play

reprinted from *ADDITUDE*, living well with ADD and learning disabilities

Think play is just about having fun? Sure that's part of it, but attention deficit children can also learn valuable skills through play. Find expert recommended games, toys, and types of play to help ADHD children practice and develop critical attention, focus, and social skills.

Child psychiatrists and psychologists have long used play as a therapeutic tool for children with problems such as ADHD, and *anxiety disorders*. Many children who otherwise have trouble expressing themselves can do so through play.

Additionally, experts believe that parents can use play to help their children achieve impressive gains in attention and social skills. And while the market abounds with expensive and therapeutic toys and games specially designed to help children with ADHD, experts believe many conventional, inexpensive toys such as *Let's Go Fishing*, *Clue*, and *Chinese Checkers* can be just as beneficial.

## Ages 4-6: Fantasy Play

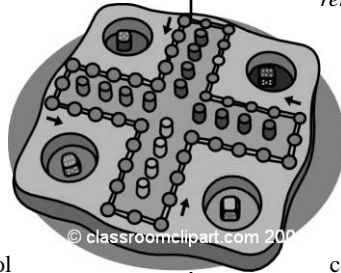
Doctor kits, stuffed animals, and action or monster figures enable children to act out roles, situations, and emotions. For children with ADHD, fantasy play is especially important because they may feel isolated and confused due to their inability to effectively communicate their experiences, fears, and concerns. Similarly, ADHD children tend to be *impulsive*, rather than anticipatory thinkers; that is, they act on their impulses before considering whether or not it's a good idea. That's one reason ADHD kids so often find themselves "in trouble" or without friends.

When skillfully directed by parents, *fantasy play* allows ADHD children to explore new experiences and feelings in a safe context. It also helps them learn to stay with a string of tasks long enough to bring them to a conclusion, as well as consider consequences before acting. Constant practice during play enables children to transfer these skills to real life.

## How Parents Can Direct Pretend Play

-- **Set time limits.** Plan ten-minute play sessions once a day - longer periods run the risk of the child falling out of attention, and the parent becoming frustrated. Use toys as props, and suggest that you make up a story about the toy or figure.

-- **Prompt your child.** Start with "Once upon a time..." and let your child make up and act out the story. You can even play one of the roles in the fantasy, interacting with your child's character.



-- **Encourage social behaviors.** Interact with your child in ways that encourage him to *rehearse social behaviors*, experience logical consequences and eventually anticipate outcomes. For example, say: "If the girl breaks all her toys, what will she have to play with?" ADHD children are so used to being chastised and can be more responsive to a correction when it's not directed personally at them.

-- **Redirect when necessary.** Every time your child veers of track, gently direct her back to the game - for example, say: "I was really interested in that horsey story. Tell me what happens next."

-- **Wrap things up.** If the child is not finished with the fantasy as the ten-minute period concludes, prompt the ending by saying things like: "Oh, it's getting dark. Time for horsey to get ready to go to bed," or "The boy's mommy is calling him to come home for dinner now." Take another minute to finish the story and put away the toys.

After a few months, you'll probably notice an improvement in your child's ability to *stick with the task*. At that point, you can step up the challenge gradually by making the themes increasingly more elaborate and even expand the venue of the game from the playroom floor to the whole house.

## Ages 6-10: Rehearsing Lifetime Skills

It's during the elementary school years that children learn to take turns, play by the rules, handle frustration, *failures* and more. These skills carry over to high school and beyond so this time is especially critical for children with ADHD to not fall behind their peers in this domain because it can set the stage for failure in the future.

ADHD kids with *lower frustration tolerances* and who have difficulty staying on task can often find themselves excluded from team sports and cooperative board games that can help them build these critical social skills. Parents can help by taking the place of peers and engaging their children in games that will help them develop more socially acceptable behaviors.

## Adapting Games for ADHD Children

Many popular games can be adapted for kids with ADHD, with rules multiplying and challenges increasing gradually over time. This approach enables ADHD kids to *master challenges* in increments, building gradually their capacity to stay with the game, follow complicated rules, and handle frustration and disappointment.

For example, you can break down Milton Bradley's *Let's Go Fishing* game into steps: --

First, encourage your child to just learn how to catch the fish. -- Once this step is mastered, race to see who can throw out his fishing pole first. -- Next, add on a cognitive challenge, like who can get four red eights first. -- Finally, change the game to something more interactive by allowing players to ask each other for cards they might need to complete a set.

The point is that the game grows with and also fosters the child's ability to maintain more detail.

## Simple Board Games for ADHD Children

The less complicated and more low-tech the game is, the better it works for ADHD kids. High tech games can be over stimulating, complicated games that end up being too frustrating. The following classic board games can help enhance ADHD kids' social and cognitive skills:

### MEMORY AND ATTENTION

*The Memory Game* (Milton Bradley): This simple game helps increase *attention span and memory*. It requires players match their cards with others that are turned face down. If you turn a card face up and it doesn't match your card, you have to put it back face down. The challenge is to remember the cards that have been put back down, so you can pair them with your cards when matches come up. Whoever gets the most matches wins.

**How to use it:** Gauge your child's frustration level with this game to see how long you can play while *keeping your child's focus*. With younger or less focused children, set up the game so that matching cards are closer together, they'll be more likely to find a match this way. Gradually increase the challenge by scattering the cards and forcing your child to go farther in the visual field to find a match.

### ANTICIPATING CONSEQUENCES

*Chinese Checkers:* Chinese Checkers works for ADHD kids because it's simple, yet it requires a bit of strategy. The challenge is simple; just get your men from this end to that end, but children will learn over time that if they *problem solve* and think ahead about where they're going, they can get there a lot faster.

### ANTICIPATING SUCCESS AND DEALING WITH FAILURE

*Chutes and Ladders* (Milton Bradley): Children with ADHD experience increased frustration over anticipating success and dealing with failure. Chutes and Ladders is an excellent way to help kids build frustration tolerance and *get over failures quickly*. The objective is simple: move the players along a trail toward the top of the board, climbing up ladders or sliding down chutes when you land on them. Frustration can result from landing

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# Success Outside of School

Help your child experience success and self-esteem in activities beyond the school walls.

By: Nancy Firchow, M.L.S.

## There's more to life than school

School can be a tough place for kids with learning difficulties. Academic demands, coupled with feelings that he's different from his peers, can lead to stress and frustration and may be the first step on the road to damaged self-esteem.

You know this recipe all too well. You watch your child work twice as hard as his classmates to complete homework assignments and see him equating academic difficulty with being a failure.

As an adult, you know that there's much more to life than school. You know that success and self-esteem have little to do with grade-point averages. But kids may have trouble seeing beyond the school routine. You can help your child gain some perspective, and a self-esteem boost, by guiding him toward activities that play to his strengths and offer opportunities for success.

When looking for ways to make your child feel successful, consider this: No one knows him as well as you do. **You understand his strengths, weaknesses, and interests better than anyone.** Use this knowledge when choosing activities, even if it means bypassing what all the other kids in the neighborhood are doing in favor of something more suited to him.

Finally, a key to success in any activity is that it's appropriate for his age or developmental level. Be sure to consider your child's level of maturity and his social comfort zone. If he feels more comfortable with slightly younger kids, investigate groups or classes that span a range.

## Suggested strategies

### Extracurricular activities



- Enroll him in activities outside school: Clubs, sports, art, and music offer athletic and creative opportunities for your child. With your guidance, let him select activities that he's interested in. Set him up to succeed by doing your homework before signing up.
  - For all extracurricular activities, *collaborate* with group leaders and coaches about your child's learning difficulties. The leader will be able to work with him more effectively, and he'll learn that a learning difficulty is not something to hide.
- Find out if a class or club is based on interest or aptitude - be sure that you're not enrolling your child who is merely curious about astronomy in a club for astronomy experts!
- Ask about the typical activities and match them with your child's energy level - classes with lectures or a lot of quiet time could be a poor match for a restless child.
- Attend a meeting or two with your child on a trial basis. Be sure the leader's style and pace are compatible with your child's.
- For a child who works best in small groups, consider private or semi-private lessons rather than large classes.
- If your child is interested in sports, let him explore a variety of options. Help ensure success by practicing new skills between team meetings. For the child who is uncomfortable in a team environment, consider individual sports, such as swimming, ice skating, or martial arts. These types of activities focus less on social skills and teamwork and offer many small milestones to mark success and improvement.

### Activities at home

- Give your child daily or weekly jobs: His success with regular chores will help him develop a sense of responsibility and the

knowledge that he's contributing to the family.

- If he's interested, let him help with special projects like painting or carpentry.
- For the child who has difficulty with organization or memory, set out everything he'll need to accomplish his daily or weekly jobs without nagging or frustration.
- Let your child teach you or others: Kids naturally love to teach and help others.
- Encourage your child to become an expert in something that interests him. Whether it's dinosaurs, or baseball, or rocks, or butterflies, nourish his innate curiosity by providing books and tapes and taking family field trips related to his interest.
- Let his teachers know about his special knowledge and expertise. Your child will love knowing more than most adults and will be delighted when you or his classmates come to him for answers.
- Play with your child: Play for play's sake is a great way to relax and have fun together.
- Let your child lead. Join him in activities that he enjoys and is good at. Computer or video games are an area where he may have more skill than you - let him show you how far he can progress while you're still stuck on level one.

Exposure to a wide variety of activities contributes to learning in fun and nonstressful ways. Don't force your child to excel, but let him enjoy many new experiences. Help him set realistic goals and celebrate the small achievements. With each success, you'll see your child gain confidence that will spill over into other areas of his life.

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# Joel Kudym Memorial College/Vocational Grant

Nebraska LDA Members are invited to apply for this scholarship.

## \$1,500 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO THE TOP APPLICANT

Congratulations to the 2009 Scholarship recipients, Zalika King and Jamie Stewart, from Omaha Central High School

### Scholarship Background:

Our family belonged to the Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska in the late 1980's and early 1990's because our son, Joel, had a learning disability. We still remember the support that all of us received by being a part of LDA. School was not easy for Joel but he had a strong desire to succeed and applied himself. He graduated from Central in 1996. Joel's life tragically ended

June 18, 1997. The Kudym family started a scholarship fund in 2002 with the First Annual Joel Kudym Memorial Golf Outing. Each year, family and friends celebrate Joel's life and raise money to help deserving students pursue their dreams of higher education.

### Scholarship Criteria:

Each year the scholarship committee ranks applications based on a variety of factors. Some of those factors include financial need, a strong will to succeed, community service and a good attendance record. The committee focuses on students who clearly communicate their passion to pursue a specific career and show interest in that career path either through

good grades in related classes, an experience in a part-time job (or volunteer work) or from a mentor. In the spirit of remembering Joel's efforts, hard-working students with average grades will be considered before students with high grade point averages.

We invite Nebraska LDA high school seniors to apply for this scholarship and wish you the best in your future goals. (The money can go toward college or a vocational school.) For a digital version of the scholarship application visit <http://www.kudym.com/joel> and go to the Memorial Scholarship page.

Fred & Judy Kudym and family

## Join LDA of Nebraska Today!

Includes National, State and Local Membership and Newsletters

### LDA-NEBRASKA Membership Application

Please make your check payable to LDA for \$30 and mail to:  
LDA-Nebraska, 3135 North 93rd Street, Omaha, NE 68134

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT \_\_\_\_\_ PROFESSIONAL \_\_\_\_\_ LD ADULT \_\_\_\_\_ FRIEND \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a change of address, please inform an LDA Board member.  
It costs almost one dollar per newsletter when they are returned  
and have to be remailed.

# Membership Memo

## CHECK OUT Our Website

<http://www.ldanebraska.org>

*It is still under  
construction . . . .  
but you can check for  
Events, Library List, etc.*

## Assistive Technology at Work

*Continued from Page 3*

### Cell Phones

These devices have a range of features such as alarms, calendars, calculators, and some even have global positioning systems. Combination PDA-Cell Phones are available, eliminating the need to carry two separate devices. Initial assistance may be required when programming a PDA or cell phone to meet personal needs; users should ask sales representatives or tech support (from the vendor or in their place of employment) to help customize the features and for demonstrations of how to use them.

For additional information on portable solutions, see *On The Go: What Consumer Products Can Do For You (If You Know Where to Look!)*.

### Workstation Solutions

- Text-to-Speech Software  
read electronic text, highlight words as they are being read, proofread your own writing
- Word Prediction Software  
get assistance in spelling and typing with a list of predicted words after a few letters have been typed
- Speech Recognition  
convert dictation to text if you experience difficulty typing or writing
- Spell and Grammar Check  
try various ways to use the spell and grammar check on the word processor; if it is distracting while writing, turn it off until the document is in draft
- Information Management and Communication Software  
organize e-mail messages, schedules, tasks, notes, and contact information, receive alerts for meetings and timelines
- Google Desktop  
search email and computer drives for files and folders

- Headphones  
manage distractions and concentration with soft music or white noise played through headphones
- Computer Accessibility Features  
customize your computer to fit your learning needs. Adjust the contrast and enlarge print and graphics on the screen; adjust contrast and background color schemes; adjust keystroke and mouse controls with "StickyKeys" and "MouseKeys" settings; create macros that automatically fill in commonly typed information (address, signature block, etc.).

For additional information on workstation solutions, see *Options: Turn Them On For Learning*.

### Making assistive technology work

It is the responsibility of an employee to initiate the process of identifying appropriate AT and to self-identify the disability to an employer when requesting AT as an accommodation on the job. Although many people with LD can facilitate this process independently, those with severe impairments may need to enlist the assistance of a job coach, VR case manager, or Human Resources specialist. Regardless of one's type or extent of disability, meaningful and fulfilling employment opportunities are available. Appropriate AT may contribute to success on the job.

*reprinted from LD Online*



## Fun & Games

*Continued from Page 5*

on a chute and going from leader to loser instantly.

**How to use it:** Take this opportunity to discuss successes (climbing ladders) and failures (sliding down chutes). Help children practice how to manage failure, and stress the importance of recovering quickly from disappointments.

### SOLVING PROBLEMS AND STAYING ORGANIZED

*Clue* (Milton Bradley): *Clue* is a crime solving game where players determine who committed a crime through process of elimination. This game forces children to think about the information they have and don't have -- a real challenge for kids with ADHD. They'll also learn to *use information to solve problems*, rather than act on their feelings before thinking about the consequences. Within the safe confines of a game like *Clue*, children learn quickly that impulsive actions usually are counterproductive. This game also practices *organization and prioritization skills*.

### "Nebraska Newsbriefs"

#### Advertising Rates:

Print-ready business card or business-card size ad:.....\$40

A ten percent discount will be given for ads that are paid in advance and run in four consecutive issues.

Mail copy and payment directly to:

"Nebraska Newsbriefs"  
c/o Maureen Penton  
5702 Mason St. - Omaha, NE 68106  
or E-Mail: [omahamoe@yahoo.com](mailto:omahamoe@yahoo.com)



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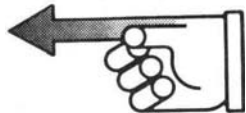
## SAVE THE DATE !

Make plans now to attend the LDA of Nebraska 32nd annual state conference on  
**April 10, 2010** at ESU#3 in Omaha.

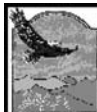
Our keynote speaker will be Linda Tilton, an international author, speaker and educational consultant with 30 years in the field of education. She is best known for her highly practical "take back and use" strategies designed to help every student succeed. Linda believes passionately that today's engaged student is tomorrow's lifelong learner. Linda Tilton is the author of several books including **The Teacher's Toolbox for Differentiating Instruction** and **Inclusion: A Fresh Look**.

Details will be available soon on our website, or email us at [ldaneb@yahoo.com](mailto:ldaneb@yahoo.com).

We look forward to seeing you there!



*Moving Reminder*  
 PLEASE DON'T GET LOST!  
 IF YOU MOVE LET US KNOW!



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