



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities December 2014

President's Message



Greetings, CLD Members,

I am happy to report that the 2014 CLD conference was a huge success; kudos to all who contributed to this fine work. I would especially like to thank **Judy Voress, Cathy Thomas, Brian Bryant and the conference committee; Joe Boyle and the Local Arrangements Committee; Diane**

Bryant for organizing the excellent program; and each of you who attended and presented at the conference. The quality of your work in the field was evident from your excellent presentations.

Let me share some of my observations about the conference. First, we met expectations in number of attendees, with over 200 participants. We had a large number of returnees to the conference, along with some new attendees, many from Pennsylvania and surrounding areas. If you are new to the organization, it is our hope that you will stay engaged in CLD and plan to attend next year's conference in Las Vegas.

I was impressed with the level of interaction at the conference. Although many of us engaged in sightseeing, it was not at the expense of conference attendance. The Interactive Paper sessions were full, and there was a buzz in the room as you shared your work with one another and spent time talking with new and old acquaintances. The Round Table presentations were also active, with good discussions among participants. Here again, the commitment of the members of our organization was evident, and the level of discourse about the field of LD was high.

Another observation is that CLD currently has a nice mix of younger professionals and members with a strong institutional knowledge of CLD and the field of LD. The Leadership Academy continues to engage young professionals and provides opportunities for mentorship and leadership development. The number of current and former participants who attended the conference and are actively engaged in leadership is impressive. If you are relatively new to the field, this

is a great time to become actively involved in CLD. Please feel free to contact me or other members of the board about joining a committee.

Philadelphia was an excellent venue for the conference, with reasonable costs and good facilities. It provided a nice mixture of business and pleasure. Once again, congratulations for everyone's contributions in making this year's conference such a success.

I am looking forward to the work we have planned for next year. We will be finalizing our revision of *Best Practices and Conference Guidelines*. In addition, we will be considering new ways to promote CLD and increase membership. Each CLD committee has outlined the work its members hope to accomplish over the coming year. I thank everyone for the work you do to make this an outstanding organization!

Sincerely,

Steve Chamberlain
2014–2015 CLD President

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Editor's Note: This column provides readers with immediate access to evidence-based strategies on current topics that can easily be transferred from the pages of LD Forum into effective teaching practice in CLD members' classrooms. Authors who would like to submit a column are encouraged to contact the editor in advance to discuss ideas. Author guidelines are available on CLD's website.

5 Ways To ...

Reduce Stress for Parents of Students with Learning Disabilities

Yun-Ju Hsiao

Washington State University–Tri-Cities

Kyle Higgins

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Parenting children with learning disabilities (LD) can result in higher degrees of stress than raising children without unique learning needs (Dyson, 1996; Pentyliuk, 2002; Shechtman & Gilat, 2005; Spratt, Saylor, & Macias, 2007). Families of children with LD can experience negative emotional reactions (e.g., parental guilt about being the biological cause of their child's disability, less time spent with their other nondisabled children), discordant marital relationships, and high family tension (Dyson, 2010). Research indicates that various external factors are associated with the parental stress experienced in families with one or more children with LD. This stress is related to the ongoing demands and challenges that occur before and after their child's diagnosis—which are usually associated with difficulties the child experiences academically, socially, and emotionally—as well as conflicts within the family (e.g., disagreement between the parents about appropriate assessment, behavior plans, placement; Pentyliuk, 2002). These parents often report a lack of support and resources from their extended families or society, as well as difficulty communicating with their child's school (Dyson, 2010). With school playing such an important role in the provision of support for parents of students with LD, educators need to consider and apply strategies to help parents reduce their stress. The following five tips to support and assist parents of students with LD will be beneficial for families and their child.

1 Support Parents During Diagnosis and Assessment Process. Children with LD usually are not diagnosed as having a disability until they enter school (Altarac & Saroha, 2007; Dyson, 2010). For parents, a learning disability diagnosis is unanticipated because they typically see their child as developing along predictable norms (Dyson, 2010). Involving and supporting parents of children with LD in the process of assessment provides parents with more understanding of their child's specific learning needs and helps them deal with the stress surrounding parenting a child with LD (Pentyliuk, 2002). Before the assessment, educators should explain what occurs during the process. After

the assessment and before the first meeting, parents should be informed that they will meet with a multidisciplinary team who conducted the assessment. This information prior to notification helps parents prepare psychologically and thus reduces the sense of being overwhelmed (Pentyliuk, 2002). When explaining the assessment results of the child, educators should use visual representations (e.g., graphs, charts) and non-technical terms to help the parents gain an understanding of their child's strengths and learning difficulties. Moreover, teachers must provide parents as much background information as possible so that they begin to understand the difficulties (and successes) their child may face in school. The more information and examples parents are given, the more concrete their understanding of their child's learning processes and the less stress they will experience at this initial stage of understanding what this diagnosis will mean over time.

2 Organize Parent Sharing/Counseling Groups. Parent counseling groups provide emotional and social supports to parents of children with LD, reduce their stress, and provide a sense of connectedness rather than loneliness (Shechtman & Gilat, 2005). One suggestion for the construction of these groups is to include parents of older students with LD who have navigated the system successfully along with parents of students with a recent diagnosis of LD and pair them with each other as a mentoring support system. During the first few meetings, teachers should actively participate to assist the group members in establishing group rapport and norms. In the following meetings, the focus should shift to the unique issues parents encounter related to parenting a child with LD. Teacher facilitators may use a story, scenario cards, photos, or open-ended questions to describe a dilemma or problem parents may face. Doing so

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(**Five Ways To**, continued from page 2)

helps to initiate discussion; the teacher then serves as a moderator as parents talk about various issues. These activities help parents self-disclose their feelings or emotions, especially negative ones toward their child, family, or the school, in a safe environment with others who are experiencing similar difficulties or successes (Kroth & Edge, 2007; Shechtman & Gilat, 2005). This sharing helps the parents develop trust in one another as well as offers insights into the factors contributing to their stress (Shechtman & Gilat, 2005). These insights can lead to plans for dealing with the stress factors. Suggested topics for the group meetings include general educational information (e.g., definition, types or etiology of LD, characteristics of LD, teaching strategies), definitions of stress and conflict, structures of social support (e.g., family, friends, school based), and future parental expectations for their child. The goal of the group is to provide parents with a safe place to discuss stresses and stressors (Shechtman & Gilat, 2005).

3 **Work with Parents to Address Child's Social/Emotional Needs.** Parents of children with LD have indicated that they experience demands from others to help their child not only academically but also socially and emotionally (Pentyliuk, 2002). In one study, parents whose child with LD exhibited behavior problems reported a higher level of stress (Lardieri, Blacher, & Swanson, 2000). Educational recommendations addressing these problems often are not implemented consistently in the school setting, however, and rarely include suggestions for addressing the child's behaviors at home (Pentyliuk, 2002). Educators thus must address behavioral needs in addition to academic challenges. Teachers and members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team should discuss the child's social and emotional needs and interactions with family members and other children. Based on this discussion, team members should make recommendations about how parents can deal with these issues at home. Providing parents with training in the areas of social skills development and creation of home behavioral plans can reduce parental stress in these areas (Dyson, 1996; Park, Alber-Morgan, & Fleming, 2011). For example, the development of a home behavioral plan should start with teachers building a trusting relationship with parents. Teachers and parents should then collaborate to (a) design a behavioral intervention plan (e.g., conducting

functional behavioral assessment, discussing goals, designing procedures), (b) implement the plan, and (c) revise the plan to ensure its effectiveness (Marshall & Mirenda, 2002; Park et al., 2011). To ensure that school recommendations are implemented appropriately in school and at home, teachers should communicate regularly with parents concerning their child's social/emotional needs and encourage parents to discuss regularly with the teacher. This ongoing monitoring of behavior and support for correct responses lessens the stress parents may have regarding better understanding of the whole child (Byrd, 2011; Pentyliuk, 2002).

4 **Build a Systematic Line of Positive Communication with Parents.** Parents of children with LD usually have more frequent interactions with the school, compared to parents of children without disabilities (Dyson, 2010). However, in addition to formal communication (e.g., IEP meetings, annual reviews), other interactions between the school and family usually are based on an as-needed rather than a systematic basis, typically when a crisis arises or when there is something wrong at school (Pentyliuk, 2002). These negative crisis interactions with the school add more stress on the family (Dyson, 2010). Nevertheless, parents have indicated that communication with the school is important to them in supporting their child (Pentyliuk, 2002). Teachers should build a systematic line of communication with parents to address their daily need for informal contact. This communication reduces parental stress and engenders trust in that it is continuous and predictable and occurs over time, not just when trouble occurs. The format can vary, including daily communication notebooks sent home with students to share information with parents (Davern, 2004), weekly/monthly phone calls to share something positive (e.g., progress made by the child, a job well done; Graham-Clay, 2005), or a simple daily report card that focuses on target academic or behavioral areas (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & McDougal, 2002; Fabiano et al., 2010). Figure 1 contains a sample of a daily behavior report card that could be used to communicate with families. Frequent informal communication provides the parents with a whole picture of their child on a regular basis, helps parents develop realistic expectations, and allows the teacher to provide support and remediation when expectations are not met, thus reducing parental stress over time (Nichols & Read, 2002).

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Daily Behavior Report Card		
Date: _____		
Student: _____		Rater: _____
Goal of the Day: (describe the behavior in positive and observable terms) _____ _____ _____		
Student Performance for the Day: 		
Student's Reflections	Teacher's Comments	Parent's Comments
Signature: _____	Signature: _____	Signature: _____

Figure 1. A sample daily behavior report card.

5 Provide Local and Community Resources for Parents. A major factor contributing to parental stress is the lack of social support from extended family, friends, or society. This usually results in the social isolation of parents (Dyson, 2010). Information concerning community-based programs (e.g., existing community organizations, local association for learning disabilities, community parent support groups, support group for siblings) that focus on learning disabilities can help parents of children with LD and should be provided by the school (Dyson, 2010). Unfortunately, not every community has these resources. In this case, the school can provide parents with online resources or information regarding websites such as the *Parent Training and Information Center* (PTIC) or *Community Parent Resources Center* (CPRC; www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center). These centers offer parents disability-related information (e.g., school services, legal rights of parents and their child, policies). *Parent to Parent (P2P) USA* (www.p2pusa.org) provides a one-to-one match with experienced parents who offer emotional support to parents as well as assistance in finding appropriate information and resources.

Conclusion

Various studies have indicated that parents of children with LD reported a higher level of stress than parents of children without LD (Dyson, 1996; Lardieri et al., 2000; Pentyluk, 2002; Shechtman & Gilat, 2005; Spratt et al., 2007). Although many factors contribute to stress felt by parents of children with LD, schools and teachers can address some of those factors by providing the appropriate supports to parents as they work with their child to experience school success and as their child transitions into the world. By using the five tips provided in this article, teachers can work with parents in a positive manner, thus contributing to stress reduction.

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2014 “Must Reads”

from the CLD Research Committee

The Research Committee of CLD, chaired by **Dr. Deborah Reed** from the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University, initiated two new endeavors in acknowledgement of the outstanding work published in CLD’s journals, *Learning Disability Quarterly* and *Intervention in School and Clinic*. In consultation with the editors, the committee selected a “Must Read” from each journal published in print between July 2013 and June 2014. This year’s awardees were:



Nelson-Walker, N. J., Fien, H., Kosty, D. B., Smolkowski, K., Smith, J. L. M., & Baker, S. K. (2013). Evaluating the effects of a systematic intervention on first-grade teachers’ explicit reading instruction. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 36*, 215–230. doi:10.1177/0731948712472186



Olinghouse, N. G., & Colwell, R. P. (2013). Preparing students with learning disabilities for large-scale writing assessments. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 49*, 67–76. doi:10.1177/1053451213493172

The authors were recognized during the awards ceremony at the CLD conference and presented their work during the Research Committee’s “Must Reads” session. The Research Committee encourages all members of CLD to take a minute and read these articles!

2014 CLD Leadership Academy Members

Over the past four years, CLD has inducted advanced doctoral students and early career scholars into a two-year Leadership Academy. Selected candidates specialize in learning disabilities and have demonstrated the potential to take on leadership roles in the CLD organization and within the field of special education. Leadership Academy members are currently serving in a variety of capacities, including as chairs of CLD’s 11 committees, officers of state chapters, and members of the *LD Forum* editorial board. A record number of applicants for the 2014 Leadership Academy cohort were

submitted. The Leadership Development Committee would like to welcome the following Leadership Academy–Cohort IV members:

- **Rachel Hidalgo** and **Lorraine Mento**, doctoral students at Temple University
- **Min Kim, PhD**, from East Tennessee State University

We thank **Sheri Berkeley**, **Steve Ciullo**, and **Peggy King-Sears** for serving as mentors to members of Cohort IV.



36th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities, 2014

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

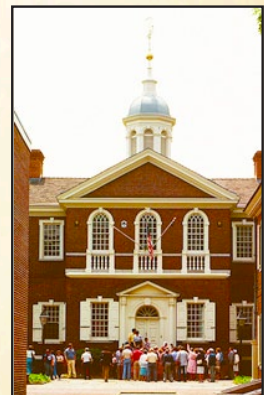
Conference Highlights

The 2014 Conference in Philadelphia occurred in early October, and we are pleased to say that about 200 people attended! The conference offered participants a variety of **panel, round table, and interactive paper discussions** across two days, during which evidence-based practices were shared and discussed. Other highlights of the conference include the following:

- 🐟 **J. L. Wiederholt Keynote Speech** by **Dr. Naomi Zigmund** (a video of her speech is coming soon)
- 🐟 Closing session presentation by **Dr. Grace Zamora Durán** (see CLD's website for a copy of her slides about Office of Special Education Programs updates)
- 🐟 Presentations to the winners of the **Teacher of the Year**, the **Floyd G. Hudson Award**, and the **Outstanding Researcher Award**
- 🐟 New inductees into CLD's **Leadership Academy**
- 🐟 New format for the **Must Reads** session
- 🐟 Session for starting a local CLD chapter
- 🐟 Leadership development sessions for **doctoral students** and **early career faculty**
- 🐟 CLD's Committee meetings focusing on committee business
- 🐟 Yummy box lunches (included in the registration fee)
- 🐟 **Networking**
- 🐟 CLD's business meeting during which a **new slate of nominees** for Vice President and Secretary was announced (watch for the election ballot coming soon, and see the bios of candidates in this issue of *LD Forum*)
- 🐟 And much, much more!!!

A big thanks goes to the Local Arrangements Committee and all of the participants for making this conference in Philadelphia a bell ringer! And, for information on next year's conference in Las Vegas, go to the CLD website and also check page 9 of this issue of *LD Forum*. **Proposals are due by February 1, 2015.**

Best,
Diane P. Bryant
2014 CLD Conference Program Chair
CLD President-Elect





36th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities, 2014

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2014 CLD Award Winners

At the 2014 CLD Conference in Philadelphia, the Research Committee and the Leadership Development Committee were pleased to honor several members for their hard work on behalf of and for students with LD in the areas of research, teaching, and service. Below is a list of the award winners:

Outstanding Research Award: Dr. Min Wook Ok,
The University of Texas at Austin

Floyd G. Hudson Service Award: Dr. Peggy King-Sears,
George Mason University

Teachers of the Year:

- **Annemarie Dempsey,** *Colorado CLD*
- **Blake Sammons,** *Texas CLD*
- **Nancy Schwab,** *Virginia CLD*

Below, please find a note from the Texas CLD President Dr. Theresa Dorel about the winner of their Teacher of the Year Award, Blake Sammons:

This year, Texas CLD was proud to announce Blake Sammons as the Texas Teacher of the Year. Blake is a high school ELA collaboration teacher who had amazing results on the high stakes testing. Blake shared his journey with conference attendees. As he spoke, Blake disclosed that he has a learning disability and ADHD. He shared his struggles as he attended school and thanked his parents for believing in him and attending

his countless ARD (IEP) meetings. He reminded everyone of the true reason we are part of the Council for Learning Disabilities. His message was poignant. As we remember the students we work with who have LD, never forget their potential. Never forget that we are here to help all students achieve so that one day they may be standing before a room full of professionals and accept their award.

We would like to offer one more congratulations to all of this year's CLD award winners and our heartfelt gratitude for all of the work that you do for students with LD. All of you remind us why we do the work that we do.

See the CLD website (www.cldinternational.org) for information on these awards and the deadlines for next year's awards. We look forward to your nominations!



Blake Sammons receives his Teacher of the Year Award.

Thank You to the Conference Sponsors!

CLD would express our sincere gratitude to the 2014 conference sponsors:

- Becker's Parent/Teacher Store
- Donald D. Hammill Foundation
- Drexel University
- Lindamood-Bell
- Lissa Hattersley
- Marvel Furniture
- Mike's Print Shop

- Mike's York Street Bar and Grill
- PRO-ED, Inc.
- Temple University
- Texas Chapter-Council for Learning Disabilities
- The University of Texas at Austin

For information on sponsorships available for the 2015 CLD Conference in Las Vegas, please contact: **Maria Peterson** (mbpeters@tamusa.tamus.edu)

2015 BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION: CANDIDATE BIOS

Dear CLD Members:

Our upcoming elections will take place between **January 15 and February 1, 2015**. A link for electronic voting will be sent to the e-mail address you have on file with CLD. To ensure that all CLD members have the opportunity to vote, members who have not provided an e-mail address on their membership form will receive their voting forms through the mail. The positions open this year are that of Vice-President and Secretary. In my role as Nomination-Election Committee Chair, I am introducing the candidates for these two leadership positions (listed in alphabetic order).

Silvana Watson, PhD

Vice-President Candidates

Kathleen Pfannenstiel, PhD, currently serves as co-chair of the Professional Development Committee and is beginning her second year in this role on the Board of Trustees. Dr. Pfannenstiel has been a member of CLD for the last seven years and has been active in the organization. She was part of the inaugural Leadership Committee, served as a Local Arrangements Committee member for two years, and served as a member of the Research Committee in selecting proposals for the conference. In addition to her involvement in CLD, Dr. Pfannenstiel has taught special education from elementary through high school in both inclusive and self-contained settings. She earned her doctoral degree in special education in 2011 from the University of Texas. For the last seven years she has worked at the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risks at the University of Texas at Austin as a project manager of three RTI mathematics interventions. Dr. Pfannenstiel is also an adjunct professor and lecturer at Southwestern University and the University of Texas, where she teaches in the Department of Special Education. Her research interests are in the areas of mathematics, self-determination, and self-regulation for students with LD. She is also interested in breaking down the research-to-practice gap by working closely with educators to better the field of special education through evidence-based practices for students with high-incidence disabilities.

Deborah Reed, PhD, is an assistant professor at Florida State University and the Florida Center for Reading Research. From 1993 to 2003 she served as a secondary teacher and reading specialist. Since 2003, Dr. Reed has been active in the field as a researcher and technical assistance provider. In 2010, she earned her PhD in special education at The University of Texas at Austin and was awarded CLD's Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award for her dissertation study. That year, she was asked to join CLD's Research Committee and was subsequently named the committee chair in 2012. Dr. Reed has more than 25 peer-reviewed journal articles and serves on the editorial

boards of three journals, including *Learning Disability Quarterly*. Her current research interests include appropriate uses of reading data in instructional decision-making, literacy demands of science classes, and effective instruction in correctional settings. She is running for the position of Vice-President because she wants to continue the momentum built by the current leadership and further contribute to building the newfound vibrancy of CLD. Her experience in building participation within CLD, leading new initiatives, improving internal collaboration, and expanding the organization's outreach make her well suited for this new role.

Secretary Candidates

Brittany L. Hott, PhD, is an assistant professor of special education at Texas A&M University–Commerce, where she is responsible for teaching research methods and assessment courses. Dr. Hott's current projects focus on secondary mathematics interventions for students with learning and behavioral disabilities. She was a member of CLD Leadership Academy–Cohort 1 and has served in varying capacities, including as assistant editor of *LD Forum*, Local Arrangements Committee Chair in 2013, and Leadership Development Committee Co-Chair. She is also an active member of the Research Committee. Dr. Hott earned her doctoral degree from George Mason University. She is excited to run for CLD Secretary and to be a part of the outstanding CLD team committed to improving outcomes for individuals with learning disabilities.

Chad A. Rose, PhD, is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Missouri–Columbia. His research focuses on the intersection of disability labels and special education services within the bullying dynamic, unique predictive and protective factors associated with bullying involvement among students with disabilities, and bully prevention efforts within multi-tiered systems of support. Over the past 5 years, Dr. Rose has authored or co-authored 30 peer-reviewed manuscripts and 6 book chapters that are directly or tangentially related to his immediate area of research. At the present time, he is serving as the principal investigator on a project titled Using SEL to Reduce Bullying Among Students with Disabilities, which was funded through the National Institutes of Health and the Human Development Loan Repayment Program. He has been actively involved with CLD since 2011, when he was selected as an inaugural member of the Leadership Academy. In his four years with CLD, and in addition to his involvement with the Academy, Dr. Rose has served on the Professional Development Committee and delivered CLD's first webinar. He would like to be selected as the Secretary for CLD because he fundamentally believes in the values and mission of CLD, and he knows that he can make notable contributions to the existing leadership of this great organization.

**2015 Planning: Save the Date for the
37th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities**

October 1 & 2, 2015

Tropicana Hotel • Las Vegas, Nevada



Join CLD in Las Vegas!!! Attend the conference!!!

- Concurrent skill-building sessions on research, interventions, teacher preparation, and policies for students with LD
- President's Awards reception and interactive poster sessions on evidence-based practices
 - Networking opportunities with local, state, and national educators in LD



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CLD NEWS & NOTES ...

► **Call for Proposals for the Outstanding Researcher Award** is currently available! The Research Committee of CLD is currently seeking outstanding manuscript-length papers on learning disabilities based on a doctoral dissertation completed within the last 5 years. The deadline for submission is **May 1, 2015**. For more information, visit the ORA website (<http://goo.gl/YOG23q>).

► **Save the Date:** The Maryland CLD and Maryland CEC will be hosting a literacy-themed conference on **January 31, 2015**. For more information, please contact **Roberta Strosnider** (rstrosnider@towson.edu).

► **Call for Proposals for the 2015 CLD Conference** in Las Vegas, Nevada, is currently available! Proposals are due by

February 1, 2015. For more information or to submit a proposal, visit the CLD 2015 conference webpage (<http://goo.gl/sGSHMv>).

► **LD Forum** is currently seeking manuscript submissions and individuals to serve on the editorial board. For more information, visit the webpage (<http://goo.gl/PcgWUI>) or contact **Joseph Morgan** (ldforum@unlv.nevada.edu).

► Check out **the latest issues** of *Learning Disabilities Quarterly* and *Intervention in School and Clinic*! Also, consider submitting your work for publication in our flagship journals!

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