

LDAO Celebrates the 30th Anniversary of Bill 82

Bill 82, the *Education Amendment Act, 1980*, received Royal Assent on December 12, 1980. The passage of Bill 82 meant that, for the first time in Ontario, all children with disabilities had access to publically funded education, and school boards were required to ensure provision of special education programs and services. The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO), then known as OACLD, was very instrumental in the public pressure for special education legislation, and influenced the inclusion in the final version of two important principles: that no child be excluded from public education, and that there be a fair and impartial appeal process available to parents. While the law was not perfect, there was a great deal of optimism when it passed.

Since the enactment of Bill 82, parents have had access to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process which can formally identify students as needing special education programs and services. From the beginning learning disabilities have been included in the categories under which 'exceptional pupils' can be identified, and students with learning disabilities continue to make up the largest group (over 40%) of students who are identified.

Bill 82 also set up the frameworks for Individual Education Plans (IEPs), school board Special Education Plans and Special Education Advisory Committees to school boards (SEACs). Currently there are Learning Disabilities Association representatives on 34 school board SEACs in Ontario.

Much has changed in the world of education since 1980. Ongoing international research has been documenting evidence-based teaching techniques and strategies for students with various types of learning disabilities. LDAO will continue to work with a range of partners in education toward the goal of improving educational outcomes for students with learning disabilities, and enabling them to reach their full potential.