

# Family Basics

A Parent's Guide by SchwabLearning.org





## **Family Issues:** A Parent's Guide by Schwablearning.org

Whether you and your child are just starting out on the LD journey, or you've hit a new roadblock, our *E-ssential Guide to Family Issues* will help you understand how to address your child's special needs while nurturing your marriage and enlisting help from other family members. This collection includes articles and interviews featuring experts in the field — all written especially for SchwabLearning.org. You'll also find a list of suggested resources on this topic.

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 **A Parent's Guide to Family Issues****Dr. Osman, How do learning disabilities affect family dynamics?**

*In 2002, SchwabLearning.org featured a series of interviews with Betty Osman, Ph.D. about relationship issues and dynamics that arise in families whose children have learning disabilities. The following is an excerpt from that series.*

**SchwabLearning.org Asks:**

The focus of identification and management of learning disabilities (LD) has been and continues to be primarily academic — how children's strengths and weaknesses affect achievement in school. Yet parents often report that LD affects life at home, as well. Do learning disabilities really impact family dynamics? If so, how?

**Betty Osman, Ph.D. Answers:**

From the moment parents become aware of their child's learning disability (LD), another dimension is added to the family system. While a young person's problems may seem most apparent at school, they quickly become "a family affair" in every sense of the word.

Life in the family of a child with LD is complex and challenging, involving practical and emotional issues. There are medical and educational decisions, financial pressures, and time constraints — all likely to represent additional responsibilities for parents. And the inherent concern, disappointment, anger, self-recrimination and blame — typical emotions in response to a child's problem — also contribute to the pressures frequently disruptive to the family equilibrium and divisive to a marriage.

While some may think parental bonds are strengthened in the face of adversity, unfortunately, the opposite is true. Many parents have a difficult time accepting their child's problems and reconciling their own differences in response to them, while trying to manage daily life at home and in their respective careers. Parenting a child is never easy, but a strong relationship is required to withstand the additional stress of raising a child with special needs. This is even more challenging when one parent is given, or assumes, the role of case manager with less than maximum support from other family members.

A boy in my office, an eight-year-old with a variety of learning issues, seems to know just how to exasperate his mother. He's ready for a fight when she awakens him in the morning, refuses to get dressed until pushed and prodded, lets the hamster escape, and teases his sister until she cries — all before breakfast. Then he frequently misses the school bus, a great inconvenience for his mother who is late for work. His mother, in turn, has been criticized by her husband and even her parents for "being too easy on Jeremy," with the implication that she created his problems.

The reality, of course, is that she did not. Parents cannot cause a child's learning disabilities, nor can they cure them. They can indeed help but not by blaming one another or themselves.

In another family, a mother suspected her third child wasn't developing as quickly as his brothers had. His language was somewhat delayed, and he didn't seem the least bit interested in learning to read in first grade. Although Robbie's mother was concerned, his father insisted that nothing was wrong. He was convinced that Robbie was "just lazy," remembering that as a boy he had not liked school either.

“It is a parent's response to a child as well as the child's qualities and traits that contribute to the personality of the family.”

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## Dr. Osman, how do learning disabilities affect family dynamics?

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When Robbie was in third grade, his father had unrealistic expectations for his son, refusing to believe that he couldn't achieve like his other children. "He's smart; I know he could do it if he tried harder," he would say. "I had similar problems when I was young."

He also had little patience with his wife's efforts to help their son. He accused her of "spoiling" Robbie and being "overprotective." He resented the time she spent on his homework, accusing her of contributing to Robbie's dependency and, therefore, to his disability. The resentment put an additional strain on the marital relationship and drove the father even further away from his son.

This story illustrates two points: The first is that parents, most frequently mothers, are the first to suspect that a child is "at risk" for learning, even before he enters school. They may not know to whom to turn for advice, though, particularly if their concerns are summarily dismissed by pediatricians, grandparents, and neighbors as merely "the anxious parent syndrome." The second point is that just as children need readiness to learn to walk and read, some fathers need time to accept and deal with the reality of a child's learning disability, particularly if they had similar problems when they were young. It is almost as if they were reliving those difficult years through their children — and it's painful.

As we know, family members are interdependent. It is a parent's response to a child as well as the child's qualities and traits that contribute to the personality of the family. Yet too often, parents blame themselves, attributing their child's difficulties to their inept or inadequate parenting. In reality, children are born with temperaments and personalities that contribute to their interactions with each of their parents — and their siblings, as well.

Just as teachers modify classroom curriculum to accommodate children with special educational needs, parents can adjust family life to enhance a child's self-image and strengthen the family system overall. To begin this process, parents need to become consumers — to educate themselves about the nature and manifestations of their child's difficulties. Merely knowing that a child or adolescent has "LD" is of little help to anyone.

On the other hand, specific information about what the child can do and where problems are likely to occur will foster understanding and acceptance. I have seen many parents who acknowledged that in their ignorance, they were angry and even punitive with their child before identification of the problems, attributing behavior to laziness, resistance, or even defiance. However, once informed, they were able to share the burden with their child with LD, understand and accept the feelings of their other children, and educate members of the extended family. Everyone benefits!

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### About the Author

**Betty Osman, Ph.D.**, is on the staff of the White Plains Hospital Center, Department of Behavioral Health, Child and Adolescent Service. She has authored several books, journal articles, and videos. Dr. Osman serves on the Board of Directors of the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

 **A Parent's Guide to Family Issues****Marriage under Pressure**

Raising a child who has a learning disability (LD) requires a lot of time and energy from parents. At times, the whole family may be caught up in the whirlwind of adjusting to life with LD. In this situation, it's easy to neglect your marriage. Remember it's essential to nurture your relationship during such challenging times. Partners who understand and support each other can better help their children and each other. Having a strong, healthy marriage also gives your children a sense of security.

**Follow your Tracks**

When focusing on your marriage, you may find it useful to imagine two different tracks running parallel to each other. Track One includes a couple's outward behavior and actions — things that are easy to observe. Track Two runs parallel to Track One but involves deeper feelings under the surface. For every behavior on Track One, there are corresponding emotions at work on Track Two.

**Track One: Watch for Warning Signs**

When a child has LD, his relationship with one or both parents can intensify. This is normal and expected. However, pouring extra energy into your child's well being can make it easy to ignore signs of stress in your marriage. Try to stay aware of how you and your spouse are behaving.

There are some common warning signs to be aware of. For example, do you or your spouse:

- Devote most of your time, energy, and attention to your child and have “nothing” left for yourself or your partner?
- Avoid being at home and find excuses to stay away?
- Seem to be addicted to drugs, alcohol, food, work, or exercise?
- Have trouble communicating with your partner without blame, anger, defensiveness, or frustration?

It's best not to ignore signs like these, hoping they'll disappear. Try to face problems together and resolve them as soon as possible. It takes courage to ask your partner about his behavior. It can be even harder to admit to your own shortcomings.

There are many ways to improve how you behave with each other and your family. Often, a licensed marriage counselor or clergy member can help you change the patterns you've fallen into. Let's explore some steps you can take right now.

- **Work as a Team**

It's critical that you and your partner both understand your child's LD — and how you can help him. Whenever possible, participate in these activities together:

- o Back-to-school night and Open House

“Partners who understand and support each other can better help their children and each other. Having a strong, healthy marriage also gives your children a sense of security.”

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## Marriage under Pressure

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- o Parent-teacher conferences
- o IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings
- o Your child's medical appointments
- o Seminars about learning difficulties

Doing this allows each of you to hear information directly and ask questions. You'll also get a clear sense of what's involved. That way, you can make better decisions as a team. If you handle the day-to-day management of your child's LD, your spouse will better understand the work you're doing.

As the father of a second grade student explains, "By attending the parent-teacher conferences with my wife, I found there were some tasks I was comfortable volunteering for. I offered to complete most of the paperwork, which I'm good at. That left my wife more time to help our daughter with her homework."

- **Give Each Other Some Space**

It takes energy to help your child and maintain your marriage. To stay healthy, you and your partner may need time away from each other and your responsibilities. Try to give each other a break from parenting duties on a regular basis. Then, use your free time to enjoy activities, hobbies, or social plans that help you relax and recharge.

When you and your partner are together, be sensitive to each other's need for space and privacy. One stay-at-home mom cringes when she describes how she used to greet her husband when he returned home from work. "He was barely in the door when I'd unload all the problems I'd had with the kids that day," she admits. "He'd give me the silent treatment all evening." After several arguments about this, she realized he needed to settle in before helping her. She found that if she let him unwind for a while, then he was happy to play with the kids while she fixed dinner. They learned to wait and discuss problems at less hectic times of the day.

- **Rediscover Each Other**

When your child's needs demand your time and energy, romance may be the last thing on your mind! But rekindling your relationship is critical if you and your partner are to stay strong and happy.

Make it a point to schedule regular dates with each other. Your time together can be as simple as taking a walk after dinner or as special as the two of you getting away for the weekend. Use this time together to rediscover each other. Avoid talking about your child's problems. To accomplish this, hire a sitter or enlist help from other family members.

### Track Two: When actions and feelings don't match

Often, a person's behavior reflects what he feels inside. But if you and your partner are stressed and have lost touch with each other, one or both of you may behave in a way that hides your true feelings. From there, communication often breaks down and your marriage suffers. There are steps you can take to understand each other better.

- **Understanding Your Partner**

If your partner's behavior frustrates or confuses you, there may be a "disconnect" between outward behavior (Track One) and inner feelings (Track Two). One woman recalls how her husband's silence bothered her as she struggled to help their son who has AD/HD. She thought back to another time when her husband seemed aloof and unconcerned. It was before she had surgery. "He didn't seem to care about my operation. Months later he admitted how afraid he had been that something would happen to me during surgery. He couldn't tell me at the time."

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## Marriage under Pressure

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That memory prompted her to ask him how he really felt about the current situation with their son. Professional counseling helped him sort through and express his emotions. “It turned out my husband felt guilty because he couldn’t solve all of our son’s problems,” she explains.

This story is not uncommon. Like many men in our culture, her husband needed encouragement to verbalize his feelings. And when he did speak up, he expressed a sense of inadequacy for not being able to protect his wife during surgery, or end their son’s struggle. Men often prefer to look for immediate solutions rather than learn to understand and manage a problem over time.

Finally, consider the different emotions you’ve felt about your child’s LD. Your spouse may be processing his feelings in a different way. And his past experiences may influence his reaction to your child’s LD.

### • Helping your Partner Understand You

Sharing information honestly and in ways that are comfortable will help you and your spouse understand each other better.

Try expressing your feelings to your spouse in an honest, non-threatening way. Remember your partner is not a mind reader! Make it clear to your partner what you do — and don’t — expect from him. For instance, you might tell him you want to talk about your feelings, but you don’t expect him to give you answers. In general, women tend to verbalize their feelings more than men do. Women are comfortable “thinking out loud” and appreciate being heard. Often, all a woman wants is an outlet, not the solution to a problem.

If your partner seems to have a hard time hearing you talk about feelings, try writing him a note to express yourself. This will help you focus on what’s important and give him time to consider your concerns without having to respond right away.

### Looking to the Future

Working to repair and strengthen your marriage can be hard work. The path to a better marriage is seldom smooth; you’ll encounter bumps and detours along the way. But if you and your partner agree on your overall goal, the journey will be a bit easier. “Some of the couples I counsel make a clear commitment to stay married,” a therapist relates. “Once they set that as their goal, then the other pieces fall into place.”

Your marriage is a union of two people with individual needs. Your child and family situation are also unique to you. Working together, you and your partner will find the best path to take. The reward comes when your understanding and love for each other deepens. There’s a good chance your marriage and family will not only survive — but also thrive — from the challenging experience you are going through.

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### About the Author

In her role as Writer/Editor for Schwab Learning, **Kristin Stanberry** provides information, insight, strategies, and support for parents whose children have LD and AD/HD. She combines a professional background developing consumer health and wellness publications with her personal experience of coaching family members with learning and behavior problems.

 **A Parent's Guide to Family Issues****Top Tips for Dads Getting Involved**

Policy makers and educators agree that a child is more likely to succeed in school if her family is involved in her education. Parent participation usually means mothers' involvement in school-related issues because many fathers have been reluctant to get involved.

In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education focused on the interaction of fathers and school. Results showed that kids were more likely to do well academically, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school if fathers were involved in their education. If dads had a high involvement in schools, kids were less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled. Overall, the results show that fathers can be a positive influence in their kids' education.

**Here are 10 Top Tips for Dad's Involvement:**

1. **Maintain a healthy and loving relationship with your wife or partner.** It's the most important thing you can do to support your child with LD or AD/HD . Adult and family relationships become stressed when a child is identified with a learning difference. Your child will do better if the adults present a united approach.
2. **Create an environment in your home that promotes open communication** about your child's LD or AD/HD. Your child is the main player in understanding the learning issues and must be an active participant in the development of a management plan.
3. **Get information about your child's LD or AD/HD.** Learn the appropriate words to describe how your child processes information. Never use demeaning remarks to describe her learning difficulties.
4. **Attend your child's school conferences and/or special education IEP meetings.** Fathers' participation at meetings can change the dynamics of the discussion significantly and influence the outcome for the positive.
5. **Be positive and supportive when solving problems.** Acknowledge your child's difficulty, but model resilient behavior. It's possible to learn to manage issues as difficult as reading, writing or math.
6. **Emphasize the things she can do, rather than what she can't.** Every child needs to feel like an expert in something. Help your child identify her talents and support her interests.
7. **Emphasize quality of interactions with your child** rather than the amount of time spent together. Work schedules can be quite hectic, and there can be a lot of pressure to "just spend time together." You don't necessarily need to spend long periods of time together to create wonderful memories that last a long time.
8. **Follow through on promises made to your child with LD or AD/HD.** Having LD can feel like riding a roller coaster. The fewer the unexpected upsets or disappointments, the better.

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## Top Tips for Dads Getting Involved

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9. **Model patience and understanding** by showing your child that you can remain focused even during times of distress. Ignore negative behaviors and reinforce positive strides. Parenting a child with LD or AD/HD may be very taxing on one's patience.
10. **Don't be afraid to seek support** from other parents or professionals. There are no hero awards for the dad who "goes it alone" and refuses to seek advice from others. Your child will recognize your distress and may feel like she's let you down.

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### About the Author

**Brian Inglesby, M.A.**, Licensed Educational Psychologist, works in the San Francisco Bay Area serving economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students and families. He enjoys the areas of learning, assessment, educational planning, and guiding parents through the IEP process.

 A Parent's Guide to Family Issues

## Talking with Family about Your Child's Learning Disability: Challenges and Rewards

"I'm having a hard enough time coping with Jason's learning disability myself, so why do I have to talk to my family about it, too? They think I'm just being overprotective. I really don't think they'll understand. Couldn't it make things worse at home for Jason?"

**Why Should You Talk to Family Members?**

Coping with a child's learning disability (LD) is stressful for any parent, and the last thing you need is another demand on your time and energy. But avoiding talk about your child's LD can send a message to well-meaning family members that you're hiding something — feeling ashamed, embarrassed, or guilty.

“Telling the 'secret' often produces great relief for everyone involved.”

How will family members take the news? Some will accept the problem and offer support right away. Telling the “secret” often produces great relief for everyone involved. And since learning disabilities are often inherited, it may even help other family members understand the reasons they may have had problems when they were in school. Others may disagree or deny there's a problem at all. And some may even blame you or your child. How you approach family members depends both on their current understanding of learning disabilities, and on their willingness to accept that your child has LD. Regardless of the approach you take to informing family members, there are many reasons why educating your family about LD can help your child and you personally:

- To break down barriers that separate families because of misinformation or misunderstanding.
- To provide a common knowledge of how your child learns — his strengths, as well as challenges — and why he acts as he does.
- To exchange harmful labels (eg., dumb, lazy, inattentive) for terms that describe his talents and help to build self-esteem (eg., creative thinker, star athlete, skilled at math).
- To help set realistic expectations for your child.
- To reduce feelings of isolation for you and your child.
- To expand the home support system for you and your child.

**Find Your Allies**

Begin by talking to those in your family who understand and accept the situation. Together, you can decide how to work with resistant relatives. You and your child can depend on these “allies” to support you and reinforce the message with other family members.

Keep information simple, and avoid using educational jargon. Help family members identify some strategies to help your child succeed in his interactions with them. Remember how overwhelming even basic information was when you first began learning about learning disabilities? Give everyone a chance to think about what

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## Talking with Family about Your Child's Learning Disability: Challenges and Rewards

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you've shared. It won't be easy if the person is in denial — doesn't believe or accept what you're saying. Then you'll need lots of patience and an outside support system to get you through the process.

For most of the family, education isn't something that can be done effectively in one talk. As questions arise, take advantage of the opportunity to answer thoughtfully. Some people may want to learn more on their own, so be ready to provide resources for them — articles, educational programs, and support groups.

Remember to include your child in discussions so he has a chance to tell his own story, in his own way. It's probably better if you do this after you know how others will respond to him. Are they likely to doubt what he's telling them, or will they understand and be able to offer him support? Remember to have him talk about his strengths and talents, as well as his LD.

### Talk with Siblings

Talking to the brother or sister of your child with LD may be the hardest job of all. Siblings often feel jealous of all the extra attention a child with LD needs — extra help on homework, tutoring, time spent at school — and may be quick to express anger or make comments that can hurt. Parents have to balance the demands of all their children, not just those with special needs.

When speaking to a sibling, consider the age of the child, use language that's easy to understand, and speak positively and factually. Reassure all your children that each one is special and loved and find ways to show them you mean what you say. The structure and positive discipline that help kids with LD function better can benefit all kids in the family. So have routines apply to everyone, and that way no one will feel singled out or left out!

### Dealing with Denial

You may feel sure a certain family member loves your child. So why can't she understand his special needs? You may gain insight if you ask yourself some questions about the person who's in denial.

- Is she afraid for your child? Does she find it too upsetting to think about the problem and how it might affect your child's chances for success?
- Does she feel guilty because she wasn't sympathetic enough to your child's struggles in the past?
- How was she brought up as a child? How were individual differences recognized and addressed in her family?
- Did she have trouble learning as a child, too? Since LD often runs in families, will she now have to face her own problem?
- Did you overwhelm her with too much information? Some family members don't need to understand every detail in order to help.

If your spouse or partner denies the problem, it can put distance between your child and him. Your child may feel rejected if a parent accuses him of being "lazy" or "stupid." Or your spouse may blame the problem on your family or your parenting skills. Either of these reactions can have a harmful effect on your child and your marriage.

If your spouse can't accept what you're telling him, perhaps another family member or a trusted teacher could help him understand. If communication about your child's problem doesn't improve, consider professional marriage and/or family counseling right away.

**“Remember that you had to work through your own feelings ... to face your child's LD. Allow family members time and space to work through their feelings, too.”**

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## Talking with Family about Your Child's Learning Disability: Challenges and Rewards

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Once your spouse seems receptive, help him learn what LD is and what it is not. When he seems ready, help him discover ways to get involved.

As you reflect on possible reasons for each family member's reaction, you'll think of better ways to approach each of them. For instance, if your mother sometimes cares for your child after school, she may want to know some basic tips for helping him with his homework. But explaining your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) may overwhelm her.

Remember that you had to work through your own feelings — some of them painful — to face your child's LD. Allow family members time and space to work through their feelings, too.

### Highlighting Your Child's Strengths

Would it be easier for certain family members to focus on what your child does well, rather than what he struggles with? If so, praise them for wanting to boost your child's self-esteem. Then ask how each person would like to support your child's skills, talents, and interests. For example:

- Does your child share a love of science with his dad? They might go to a science museum or build a project for the science fair together.
- Reassure aunts, uncles, and grandparents that showing interest in your child's hobbies and activities is a great gift. Simple gestures, such as showing interest in the child's opinions or sharing secret jokes, will help him feel special.
- Encourage your other children to cheer their brother on at games and remind him what he's good at. Some siblings resent this responsibility, so rewarding their efforts is very important.

### Aiming for Acceptance

While it's important to educate family members about your child's LD as soon as you comfortably can, do it on your own timetable — when it feels right for you.

Communicating with your family about LD is an ongoing process. It will take time for each family member to feel comfortable in a new role with your child. Don't be discouraged if some never fully understand his LD. As long as they give him their love, acceptance, and attention, he'll feel special. In time, each person can find positive ways to support and interact with him.

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### About the Authors

**Ann Christen** is a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor with extensive clinical experience working with children and families affected by learning difficulties, focusing particularly in familial issues. She is the mother of three grown daughters, two of whom have LD and the third who is severely disabled.

In her role as Writer/Editor for Schwab Learning, **Kristin Stanberry** provides information, insight, strategies, and support for parents whose children have LD and AD/HD. She combines a professional background developing consumer health and wellness publications with her personal experience of coaching family members with learning and behavior problems.

 A Parent's Guide to Family Issues

## Kids and Career — Making Hard Choices

The phone call came at about 4:30 that afternoon, in the middle of a staff meeting. The receptionist called me out of the meeting with a concerned look on her face. "It's your babysitter, Ann, and she sounds upset."

I raced for my desk, heart pounding. What could have happened now? I picked up the phone and was greeted by my babysitter, whose voice was obviously distorted with sobs or tears.

"I'm so sorry, Ann, but you have to come pick them up right now. I just can't manage. They're too wild." They were my three darling daughters, eight-year-old twins and a four-year-old — all wonderful, loving girls, all with the hyperactive type of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).

“Their energy wore out everyone, from their teachers and their grandmothers, to their dance teachers and their sitters!”

As I gathered my things and headed for the sitter's house, I thought about my options. This sitter was not the first who had quit in frustration. Others had done the same. Everyone agreed that my girls were bright and fun, lively and pretty, but everyone also thought that they were too "hyper." Their energy wore out everyone, from their teachers and their grandmothers, to their dance teachers and their sitters! The pediatrician had little help to offer. None of the girls did well on Ritalin® or any other of the stimulant drugs we had tried to calm them down and help them concentrate and focus.

It was with a heavy heart that I picked up the kids that day and consoled the apologetic sitter. My kids were a handful, no one knew that better than I! I think the thing that hurt the most, and that haunts me to this day, is the image of those three sitting on the sitter's couch, looking bewildered and ashamed, not sure of what they had done to get the sitter so upset.

That evening, after a long talk with my husband, I made a decision that changed my career forever. **I decided that I had to be at home when my girls were at home, so I quit my job.** For many years after, when the school day was over, my work day had to be over, too. My decision to be a "stay at home" mom was made for me by the special circumstances that my girls' AD/HD created in my life.

The decision about whether to work outside the home or not is one faced by every parent. So many factors play into that decision, and every parenting magazine discusses the issue from countless angles. What those articles seldom mention is the very pressing, everyday reality of parents of kids with AD/HD. Kids have special needs, homework is almost always a special challenge, and childcare is often problematic, too. **Childcare issues for kids with AD/HD are complicated by a host of problems other parents can't imagine.** Even the most understanding of bosses grows tired of an employee being called away on family crises again and again! How many babysitters have to quit before Mom has to quit?

My girls are all grown now, and I can work whenever I want to. In thinking about those years, I grow wistful, remembering the wild little girls they were. It was hard to worry that whenever they were invited to play at a friend's house they might be sent home prematurely. It was hard to know that every fall, as the school year opened, I would have to spend lots of time with their teachers, ensuring that they knew about AD/HD and were willing to work with the girls and me.

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## Kids and Career — Making Hard Choices

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So often I wished it were different, that there were no “special accommodations” to be made, no explanations needed! But whenever I would get overwhelmed with all those “hard” feelings, I would look again at their wonderful, alive little faces and active bodies and feel reassured. They were just the girls they were meant to be, and I was thrilled to be their mom.

In time I figured out how to combine home life and my career. It was critical for me to be at home after school and through dinner time, but that left plenty of time for work while the girls were at school, and in the evenings after homework was done. My professional degree allowed me to be self-employed, and in time my private practice flourished. Clients were routinely pleased to discover that I had evening appointments available, and I missed the commute hours by working at such odd times.

I discovered that the local university had an excellent teacher training program, and for years I recruited women from the program to provide childcare when I had to work. Those young women were eager to learn about AD/HD, both the challenges and the rewards. They had loads of energy and were delighted to have a job that gave them valuable experience and training for their future careers. More than one novice teacher wrote her senior thesis on useful interventions with youngsters who have AD/HD.

Best of all, those young women enjoyed my daughters and were wonderful role models for them. I still shudder when I remember the day my last regular sitter quit, but the solutions we found were, in many ways, far more satisfying than I would ever have dreamed they could be.

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### About the Author

**Ann Christen** is a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor with extensive clinical experience working with children and families affected by learning difficulties, focusing particularly in familial issues. She is the mother of three grown daughters, two of whom have LD and the third who is severely disabled.

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## Resources

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### Learning Disabilities and Family Dynamics

**Books:**

Learning Disabilities and ADHD: A Family Guide to Living and Learning Together  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0471155101/schwabfoundation/>  
Betty B. Osman, Ph.D.

No Easy Answers: The Learning Disabled Child at Home and at School  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0553354507/schwabfoundation/>  
Sally L. Smith

### Getting Dads Involved

**Books:**

Fathering: Strengthening Connection With Your Children  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573240028/schwabfoundation/>  
By Will Glennon

Voices From Fatherhood  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0876308582/schwabfoundation/>  
By Patricia Quinn

### Kids and Work — Making Hard Choices

**On the Web:**

United Way: Family Friendly Workplace Guide  
<http://www.uway.org/sx6/family/family.htm>

WorkOptions.com: Flexible Work Arrangements  
<http://www.workoptions.com/links.htm>

**Books:**

Moms with ADD: A Self-Help Manual  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0878331751/schwabfoundation/>  
by Christine A. Adamec and Esther Gwinnell, M.D.

## Visit Schwab Learning's Online Resources

 SchwabLearning.org is a parent's guide to helping kids with learning difficulties.

We'll help you understand how to:

- **Identify** your child's problem by working with teachers, doctors, and other professionals.
- **Manage** your child's challenges at school and home by collaborating with teachers to obtain educational and behavioral support, and by using effective parenting strategies.
- **Connect** with other parents who know what you are going through. You'll find support and inspiration in their personal stories and on our Parent-to-Parent message boards.
- Locate **resources** including Schwab Learning publications, plus additional books and websites.

SchwabLearning.org—free and reliable information at your fingertips, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



**Sparktop.org™** is a one-of-a-kind website created expressly for kids ages 8-12 with learning difficulties including learning disabilities (LD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). Through games, activities, and creativity tools, kids

at SparkTop.org can:

- Find information about how their brain works, and get tips on how to succeed in school and life.
- Showcase their creativity and be recognized for their strengths.
- Safely connect with other kids who know what they are going through.

**SparkTop.org is free, carries no advertising, and is fully compliant with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).**

Schwab Learning is a nonprofit program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation.