

LDA

Learning Disabilities Association of New York State, Inc.

1190 Troy-Schenectady
Road
Latham, NY 12110
518/608-8992
Fax: 518/608-8993
statelda@ldanys.org
www.ldanys.org

LDA Regional Affiliates:

**LDA of the Capital District
(aka Wildwood Programs)**
2995 Curry Road Extension
Schenectady, NY 12303

LDA of Central New York
722 West Manlius Street
East Syracuse, NY 13057

**LDA of the Life & Learning
Services**
339 East Avenue, 4th Floor
Rochester, NY 14604

LDA of Long Island
44 South Elmwood Avenue
Montauk, NY 11954

LDA of the Mohawk Valley
401 Columbia Street
Utica, NY 13502

LDA of New York City, Inc.
27 West 20th Street,
Room 303
New York, NY 10011

LDA of the Southern Tier
112 Nanticoke Avenue
Endicott, NY 13760

LDA of Western New York
2555 Elmwood Avenue
Kenmore, NY 14217

**Chartered by the Board
of Regents of the
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Education, Medical,
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Needs.**

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MEMO IN SUPPORT April 9, 2010

A.10089/S.7070-- An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to regulation of toxic chemicals in children's products

One in seven New Yorkers has a Learning Disability. A learning disability is a neurobiological disorder, meaning there are differences in brain structure and/or function in a person who has learning disabilities. These differences lead to difficulty in learning.

Exposure to environmental toxins is the single largest preventable cause of learning disabilities. These include heavy metals, such as lead and mercury, and other chemicals linked with neurological harm, such as PCBs, BPA and others. The impact of learning disabilities on our society and culture is enormous. Over half of the detainees in juvenile detention facilities have a learning disability. Up to 60% of adolescents in treatment for substance abuse have learning disabilities. 48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed. 50% of females with learning disabilities will be mothers (many of them single) within 3-5 years of leaving high school. 44 percent of the TANF (welfare) population were found to have a learning disability. 31% of students with learning disabilities will be arrested 3-5 years out of high school.

Of the more than 80,000 chemicals in commerce, about 3000 chemicals are produced in quantities greater than one million pounds. Yet no governmental authority is empowered to effectively evaluate the safety of these chemicals and if necessary, take action to protect the public from harmful chemicals in everyday consumer products. Children are especially vulnerable to environmental toxins, and the incidence of learning disability and other neurological impairments such as autism continue to rise at an alarming rate. It is essential that government take prudent measures to ensure the public health by initiating a process to protect children from the worst of these chemical hazards.

While the mission of LDANYS is closely associated with advocacy for appropriate supports and services for persons with learning disabilities, we also strongly support policies and practices that help **prevent** learning and other developmental disabilities. This legislation will take an important step towards the prevention of such disabilities by helping to remove hazardous toxics from the common products used by vulnerable children. The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State therefore supports this bill, and urges that it be enacted into law.