



## **ACT-NOW Newsletter, November 2005**

### **Education & Training**

In accordance with the project goals, ACT-NOW has provided training sessions for over 3,500 early childhood and early intervention professionals throughout Victoria from June 2004 - October 2005.

Training formats have included all-day conference, small workshops and series of consecutive lectures held during the day and evening.

Requested topics for 2005 have included:

- Understanding autism: research and strategies
- Emotional & behavioural problems and their management
- Communication & visual supports
- Early signs & screening
- Parents as partners: the parent perspective
- Sensory disturbance
- Dietary issues
- Current research
- Transition to school
- High Functioning Autism & Asperger's Syndrome
- Assessment instruments
- Outcome measures

Whilst the content of sessions has varied significantly in response to the ReACTs advice, the primary focus of our work has been on sessions that discuss the core features of autism and inclusive practice. The focus for 2006 has moved towards working in partnership with parents and discussion on how to raise developmental concerns with parents.

## Assessment & Diagnosis

Training in the Psycho Educational Profile - Third Edition has been provided in five regions. Approximately 50 clinicians from the E.C.I. sector have participated. ACT-NOW will continue to offer consultancy to clinicians who have participated in this training.

Training in the Autism Diagnostic Interview- Revised and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale was completed August 2005. This training will be offered by ACT-NOW to a further nine clinicians in August-September 2006.

## E.C.I. Professional Skills Training

### **Preschoolers with Autism: Parent Education and Skills Training Programme**

We are currently completing two rounds of this 20 week training in the Western and Gippsland regions. Fifteen clinicians from these regions have participated in the training programme. Pre and post training evaluations will be conducted with these clinicians to determine the outcomes of this 'see-one-do-one' training.

We are planning training in the Southern region in 2006. We are also looking at providing training for remote areas such as Warrnambool, Benalla, Horsham and Mildura.

We have been informed by E.C.I. agencies that approximately 26 of these groups will be rolled out across the state in 2006 by clinicians who have completed the training through ACT-NOW. In several of these groups, clinicians from the E.C.I. sector will be trained by their colleagues. We see this 'rolling out' of the training as an important indicator of our commitment to developing regional capacity and a significant contribution towards the development of mentoring across the sector. If you would like to participate in this training you can contact a member of your ReACT or ACT-NOW to determine where programmes are being run in your region.

ACT-NOW will continue to offer consultation to clinicians who are providing the 'Preschoolers with Autism: Parent Education and Skills Training Programme' within their service.

## ReACT Action Plans

All ReACTs have begun working on 'Regional Action Plans'. These working documents aim to address regional issues that relate to providing better outcomes for young children with autism and their families. These documents outline the visions and strengths of the region and detail relevant actions, time-frames and performance indicators.

Whilst the issues vary across the state, there are several that are consistent.

These include the need for:

- a planned approach to training for universal Early Childhood Services
- training on early signs & screening for G.P.s
- increased liaison with Paediatricians
- clarification of referral pathways

- consistent written material for families & professionals
- appropriate support for families from cultural & linguistically diverse communities
- a planned approach to the transition from preschool to school
- post diagnosis support for families

## Training Packages

Our team is currently working on developing several training packages. These packages will include power point presentations with imported video clips, handouts and further reading material. Members of the ReACT will have access to these training packages when they present sessions in their regions. Our aim in producing this material is to further develop the regions capacity to provide training in the future.

## Forum

ACT-NOW, in conjunction with DHS, held a state-wide forum in Melbourne on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Members of the ReACTs, Reference Group and several DHS representatives were invited. Approximately 70 people attended.

Dr Jacqueline Roberts, a New South Wales consultant, gave a presentation on *'What do we know about the most effective models of treatment and best practice in the management of young children with autism spectrum disorders and their families?'*

Representatives from five regions presented material on innovative practice in their region. These presentations are currently available on the website.

[<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/psychmed/units/devpsych/actnow/presentation.html>]

The ReACT then broke into regional groups and worked on their action plans. Feedback from members of ReACTs has been extremely positive, with many participants indicating the value of sharing regional information.

## Fact Sheets

Current fact sheets include:

- Sibling issues
- Effective Referral to GPs
- Psychoeducational Profile - Third Edition (PEP-3)
- Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity
- CHecklist for Autism in Toddlers (Chat)
- Overview of the Developmental Behaviour Checklist - DBC
- Autism and Surfing the Net
- Psychoeducational Profile Revised (PEP-R)

- Core Features of Autism: Play and Behaviour
- Core Features of Autism: Social Skills
- Core Features of Autism: Communication
- Early Features of Autism
- Glossary of Terms relating to Autism
- What is Autism?

Please contact us if you would like us to prepare a fact sheet on topics related to young children with autism and their families.

## ReACT Membership

Many people have expressed interest in the ACT-NOW project but do not have the time or capacity to become a member of a ReACT. The regions have addressed this by developing Associate Memberships. If you would like to become an associate member of you local ReACT and receive minutes of the meetings please contact Daniella Vadala [[daniella.vadala@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:daniella.vadala@med.monash.edu.au)]

## Aims for 2006

- Work with each ReACT to continue to develop a vision and action plan.
- Facilitate the ReACTs to drive the process.
- Assists the ReACTs to recognise and mobilise their regional strengths and resources.
- Further develop regional capacity.
- Continue with training programmes and fact sheets.
- Develop Understanding Autism training package.
- Develop secondary consultation through case studies on the website.

## For further information

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## Website

[www.med.monash.edu.au/psychmed/units/devpsych/actnow](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/psychmed/units/devpsych/actnow)

or Google:                      actnow monash