



VOLUME 1, Issue 2

SPRING 2006

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Dates of Meetings

Chairperson's Update Sarah MacDermott

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the second edition of the WAADF newsletter.

WAADF's second AGM was held at the September 7th Forum meeting and included voting for your new Board members. All nominated members were elected unopposed to the following positions: Sarah MacDermott (Chair), Ritu Campbell (Vice-Chair), Helen Bolton (Co-Secretary), Sandra Gray (Co-Secretary), Suzanne Midford (Treasurer), Sabrina De Beer (Ordinary Member), Jane Klinken (Ordinary Member), John Wray (Ordinary Member), Alana Maley-Berg (Ordinary Member), Jane Lesslie (Ordinary Member) and Robyn Weinstein (Ordinary Member). Thank you everybody for your time and commitment to WAADF especially given the demands of everyone's professional and personal commitments.

This year we farewell Wendy Marshall who was our founding Secretary. Wendy has been an invaluable Board member who has taken the lead in creating and fine tuning many of the processes that have enabled WAADF to evolve into a functioning organization. We will miss Wendy and wish her well as she gets ready to welcome her second baby. At the same time, we are fortunate to be able to welcome Helen and Sandra as Co-Secretaries. In addition to their great experience as practitioners in the field they are also incredibly well organized and creative ~ thanks to you both for taking on this very important position!

The Board continues to work towards preparations for our presentation at the 2nd World Autism Congress in Cape Town South Africa. The conference runs from October 30th to November 2nd. I have the honour of presenting a paper on behalf of WAADF's Board and membership. The paper will review and discuss WAADF's history, membership, objectives and achievements so far. Several other WAADF members will also be attending as private delegates or as representatives of their employment organizations. We will look forward to providing a review of the conference on our return. All in all there should be a good representation from various members of the "Autism community" in WA.

There are interesting discussions coming up at the quarterly Forums. Di Shepherd, Senior Policy Officer DSC, was WAADF's invited speaker at the September 7th meeting. Di presented an overview of the upcoming changes to DSC's eligibility policy for individuals aged 6years (or in 1st year at school) or older and entering their system with a diagnosis of Autism but without an Intellectual Handicap. Following Di's presentation there was opportunity for discussion and many issues were raised. Di will be providing more information as a result of this discussion and full details will be attached to the September 7th Forum minutes. Glynis Dixon will also present (date not yet set) a review of her attendance at the research conference in Canada earlier this year. On a slightly different

tangent, some of you may have seen the August 8th SBS Insight program "Understanding Autism". It included a range of speakers including families, Donna Williams, Margot Prior and our own John Wray! There was a lot of subsequent online "chat" with a lot of postings from families. If you're interested, postings can be viewed at www.news.sbs.com.au/insight go to Insight Archive and select August 2006. SBS has provided WAADF with a copy of the video and it will go into the WAADF library for anyone who missed the program and would like to see it.

The Board continues to work towards developing WAADF's role and membership services. We are very interested to get feedback from all members as to how you see WAADF's role and what sorts of membership services would benefit you and other prospective members. As usual, we are always happy make use of the skills and talents of our members to advance projects both big and small so please feel free to contact myself or one of the other Board members with your ideas or direct assistance.

Finally I would like to say a personal "Thank You" to all of the 2005-2006 Board Members. A small organization like WAADF relies on the creativity and personal efforts of individuals, and this has certainly been provided by our board members. We have achieved a lot in the two years since incorporation and this has been the result of the vision and team work of all involved.

Thanks everyone, you are a

wonderful group to work with ...and there are so many interesting things yet to be done!!

The Board looks forward to seeing you at the next Forum meeting on December 7th, usual place and usual time!

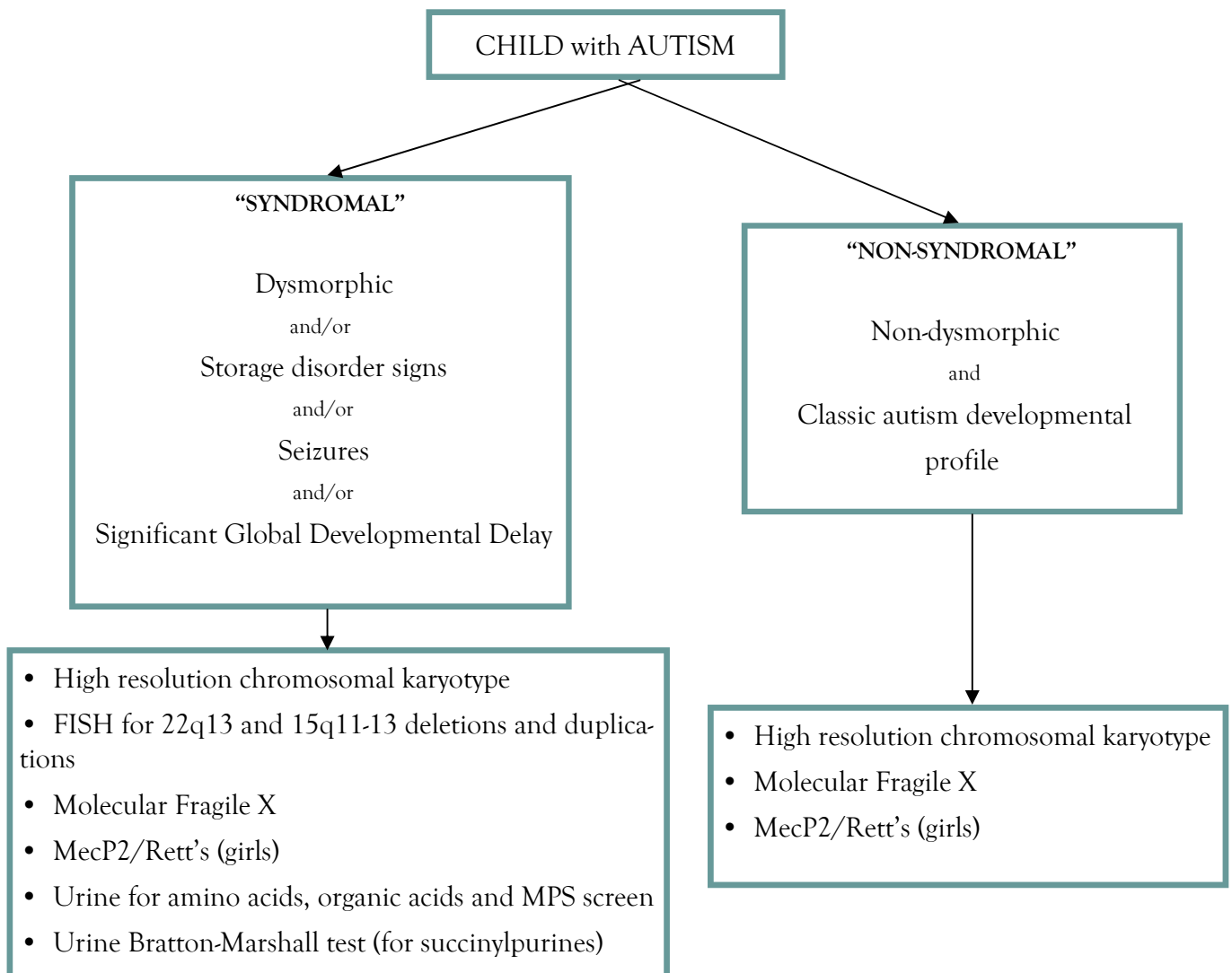
Regards,
Sarah
Sarah MacDermott

There is guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening, we shall hear the right word.....

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Algorithm for Investigation of Children

The following flow chart was developed by Dr John Wray and Dr Kulkarin after consultation the metabolic and genetic laboratories at PMH as a recommended algorithm for referring paediatricians to consider prior to referral of a child for Autism Spectrum diagnostic assessment.....



NB: If child with autism develops seizures, or significant global developmental delay emerges, then further investigation is warranted as per left box

Call for Case Presentations

We're always on the look-out for volunteers to share diagnostic case studies with members at the WAADF meetings. In the past we have had wonderful presentations from our members on topics such as elective mutism, visual impairment, Down Syndrome and semantic-pragmatic disorder. These presentations not only make our meetings more interesting, but add to the professional development of our diagnostic community. If you have a case to present, don't be shy! We'd love to hear from you. Please contact the WAADF agenda coordinator, Ritu Campbell on ritucampbell@bigpond.com. Cheers!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES:

Autism behavioural Intervention Queensland (ABIQ)

6-7 October 2006 Brisbane QLD.

More information: enquiries@abiq.org

Raising the ceiling for Children with autism and Disorders of Relating and Communicating.

November 10th, 11th & 12th www.icdl.com

An international conference in Virginia USA featuring Dawson, Greenspoon, Mundy & Bauman. SCDC will host broadcasted segments of this conference.

Progress & Challenges in the Behavioural Treatment of Autism

Association for Behaviour Analysis International

2-4 February 2007 Boston, USA

More info: www.abainternational.org/autconf

The WA Autism Register an update by Emma Glasson & Glenys Dixon

Since January 1999, the WA Register for Autism Spectrum Disorders has collected diagnostic and demographic information on newly diagnosed cases in WA. Specific information include:

The diagnostic methods and criteria used:

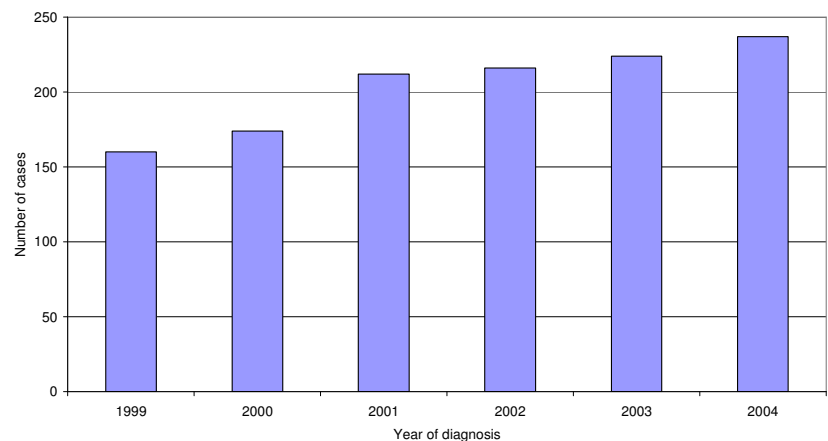
- Date of birth (or year of birth), gender, primary language at home
- IQ (verbal and non-verbal) and/or developmental abilities
- Other cognitive assessments
- Comorbidity (the presence of other conditions)
- Language assessments
- Adaptive behaviour

Between 1999 and 2004, the Register collected diagnostic and demographic information for 1223 children, adolescents and some adults who were newly diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Over this time, 76% all cases were diagnosed with autism, 19% with PDD-NOS, and 5% with Asperger syndrome. The median age at diagnosis was 4 years of age (range 15 months to 50 years) and males

outnumbered females with a ratio of 4.6 to 1. Each year, the number of new cases diagnosed has increased slightly (see Figure).

Thanks to all the clinicians and administrators who regularly help the Register to achieve its goals. We are currently finalising the numbers of cases diagnosed in 2005 and the next annual report

Number of ASD diagnoses in WA, 1999-2004



Joint Attention an article by Dr Sally Clifford (Clinical Psychologist, Disability Services Commission)

Joint attention, or the ability to coordinate attention to a social partner and an object or event of mutual interest is an important developmental milestone which emerges between 9- to 14- months of age. These behaviours are exemplified by gestures such as pointing or alternating gaze between an object or event and the partner's face for the purpose of sharing, as if to say "do you see what I see, isn't it wonderful?" Another form of triadic coordination of attention is requesting, which has an instrumental function and is used in order to achieve a goal (Bates, Camaioni, & Volterra, 1975), as if to say "I want that now!"

A notable feature in the development of these non-verbal communicative behaviours in children with autism is that they are significantly delayed and/or impaired, emerging at a mental age of 17- to 30-months (in comparison to the typical 9- to 14-month period; see Travis & Sigman, 2001). More strikingly, children with autism also show an atypical pattern of shared attention - with requesting being less impaired, and joint attention being absent or severely impaired (DiLavore & Lord, 1995; Dawson et al., 2004). Prospective screening studies have demonstrated the importance of joint attention in the prediction of a later diagnosis of autism (Baron-Cohen, Allen, & Gillberg, 1992). Failing the 3 items 'pretend play', 'gaze monitoring' and 'pointing' (the latter two being joint attention) on the Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT) at 18-months carried an 83.3% risk of developing autism (Baron-Cohen et al., 1996).

It is well recognised that joint attention has important ramifications for later language development amongst children with typical development and children with autism (e.g., Travis & Sigman, 2001). More recently, it has been found that impairments in joint attention are related to later impairments in social responsiveness (e.g., helping behaviours) amongst children with autism (Clifford & Dissanayake, 2006). Thus we know that problems in joint attention have important developmental consequences for children with autism.

The truth is that, despite advances in our knowledge in this area over the last thirty years, we still have contradictory interpretations for this robust and predictive behavioural indicator of autism. Recent research is beginning to understand what it is that may lead to the joint attention impairment, with one of the key players being shared affect (Clifford & Dissanayake, 2006; Mundy, 2003). Thus perhaps Leo Kanner had it right in 1943- that these

children are born with an "innate inability to form the usual, biologically provided affective contact with people" (p.250).

References

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- Baron-Cohen, S., Cox, A., Baird, G., Swettenham, J., & Nightingale, N. (1996). Psychological markers in the detection of autism in infancy in a large population. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, *168*, 158-163.
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- DiLavore, P., & Lord, C. (1995). 'Do you see what I see? Requesting and joint attention in young autistic children', poster presentation at Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Indianapolis.
- Mundy, P. (2003). The neural basis of social impairments in autism: the role of the dorsal medial-frontal cortex and anterior cingulate system. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *44*, 793-809.
- Travis, L., & Sigman, M. (2001). Communicative intentions and symbols in autism: Examining a case of altered development. In J. Burack, T. Charman, N. Yirmiya, & P. Zelazo (Eds.), *The development of autism: Perspectives from theory and research* (pp. 279-308). Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

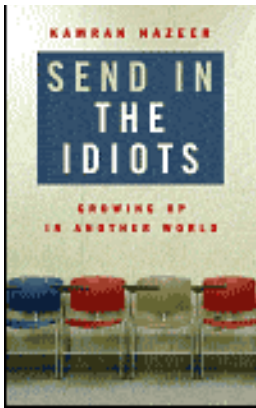
Book Review submitted by Mary Oates

**“SEND IN THE IDIOTS:
growing up in another world”**

Kamran Nazeer

pub: Bloomsbury. 2006.

ISBN 0 7475 7910 5 240 pp



Whilst recalling his early schooling as a four-year-old in New York where he attended a special class for autistic children Kamran Nazeer writes.... “The reason why Mrs. Russell stopped reading newspapers in 1982 was Craig...”. Nazeer is reminding us of the era before we recognised the range of abilities that occur within the autism spectrum. Nazeer’s young classmate Craig was echolalic. The teacher Mrs. Russell never followed Craig’s request, to “send

in the idiots” whilst she read the newspaper to her small group of children, but she eventually ceased the reading routine. Meanwhile Nazeer was the four-year-old who always sat on the white line of the red carpet. He writes a lot about his need for local coherence.

The book is particularly interesting because it tells much more than the author’s own story. Nazeer tells us about four of his classmates who in the intervening years have devised ways of overcoming their fears of the world and living with some independence. The book is about the lives of these four young people through those vital school years and then the subsequent challenges that they meet whilst learning to adjust to others and live independently. Although Nazeer’s own parents do not feature directly in the book it is clear that they have maintained contact with several of his schoolmates’ families indicating how much parents of autistic children need to support one another.

Years later Nazeer reconnects with Mrs. Russell and the school’s

Director and both deliberately make eye contact with him and say that he is no longer autistic. By then he has a Ph. D. in the Philosophy of Law. Choosing not to work as a lawyer or an academic he now works with the British Civil Service as a policy advisor. He has learned to manage his condition and found a niche where he can be successful. We can assume that he has Asperger’s syndrome.

There are some explanations in this book that may be illuminating for both carers and practitioners. “Conversation” for one. Nazeer tells us how he eventually learned to put his didactic logical arguments aside and “do” conversation. His classmate André managed differently by talking through his puppets. Nazeer also explains so well and personally how he still needs to seek some immediate security via a known and familiar object and activity. For Nazeer straightening the paper clip in his pocket gives him some respite from the scary stuff around him. He is cautious about the theory of mind explanations for autism, but that detail is less significant given the real purpose of the book which is to tell the story of these four children.

One of the four families has had to live through the tragedy of their daughter’s depression and eventual suicide. Elizabeth’s parents share their story with Nazeer to the extent that they are able. It is a poignant story bringing home the uncertainties of supporting a child visibly struggling to cope with life.

This book is the voice of someone who is obviously highly intelligent and who has managed to find ways around many hurdles. It joins the several other biographies in this field, and adds some insights into “how the world seems” for a person living with autism.

Book Review submitted by Jura Tender

“ANIMALS IN TRANSLATION”

Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson

Harcourt – Harvest 2006



This book is fascinating due to the insight it gives into Temple’s perception and thinking, as well as the facts it tells about animals. When one mother asked me about the strange way her child looks at items, noticing detail and not the whole, I could only explain it after reading the book. When I showed her where my ideas came from she took down details to purchase the book, commenting, rather resignedly - “Well, I have a dog, and I have a child with Autism, so I will have to read it”.

Despite the analogy which can be rather demeaning on the surface, it is most informative. It is full of hypotheses as to why the ASD child perceives the world in a different way, mostly based on animal studies and concepts of evolution, and it is full of examples from Temple’s own experience.

Temple is a scientist and the book is full of examples from research in psychology, in animal behaviour, in neurology, with comments on Temple’s reactions to the situations she comes across. I was fascinated by her theory of perception: it helps to understand how our

children perceive the world. I was fascinated by her savant stories, both human and animal, and feel that it should inspire us to teach our children more diligently as we may be underestimating their capacity. I will no longer eat chickens after finding out how they are genetically selected for size and having read about the rapist killer roosters, and I agree with her comments on bureaucracy which puts processes and procedures ahead of common sense outcome measures, and thus fails to meet their aims. I saw a lot of similarity between the meat packing industry regulators in the US and the big Commissions back home.

I can recommend this book as intelligent-fun reading, to while away a long plane trip for example. It may also make you more perceptive when next doing a diagnostic assessment. It is best summed up by a quote from *Nature*: “ At times it is difficult to work out whether this is a book about animal behaviour with insight from autism, or a book about autism that uses animal behaviour to explain what it is like to be autistic. A major achievement of the book is that it does both.

Let's Talk About... Research!

J Med Genet. Published Online First: 13 July 2006.
doi:10.1136/jmg.2006.043166

Array-based comparative genomic hybridization identifies high frequency of cryptic chromosomal rearrangements in patients with syndromic autism spectrum disorders

Marie-Line Jacquemont¹, Damien Sanlaville¹, Richard Redon², Odile Raoul¹, Valérie Cormier-Daire¹, Stanislas Lyonnet¹, Jeanne Amiel¹, Martine Le Merrer¹, Delphine Heron³, Marie-Christine De Blois¹, Marguerite Prieur¹, Michel Vekemans¹, Nigel P Carter⁴, Arnold Munnich¹, Laurence Colleaux¹ and Anne Phillippe^{1*}

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² The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Uruguay

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Accepted 21 June 2006



Abstract

Introduction: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) refer to a broader group of neurobiological conditions, Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). They are characterized by a symptomatic triad associating qualitative alteration in social interactions, defect in communication abilities and repetitive and stereotyped interests and activities. Prevalence of ASD ranges from 1 to 3/1000 individuals. Despite several arguments for a strong genetic contribution, molecular basis of a great majority of cases remain unexplained. About 5% of autistic patients have a chromosome abnormality visible with cytogenetic methods. The most frequent are 15q11-q13 duplication, 2q37 and 22q13.3 deletions. Many other chromosomal imbalances have been described. However most of them remain undetectable using routine karyotype analysis, thus impeding diagnosis and genetic counselling.

Material and Methods: We investigated 29 patients presenting with syndromic ASD using a DNA microarray constructed from large insert clones spaced at approximately 1 Mb intervals across the genome.

Results: Eight clinically relevant rearrangements were identified in 8 patients (27.5%): 6 deletions and 2 duplications. Altered segments ranged in size from 1.4 to 16 Mb (2 to 19 clones). No recurrent abnormality was identified.

Discussion: These results clearly demonstrate that array-CGH should be considered as an essential aspect of the genetic analysis of patients with syndromic ASD. Moreover, besides their importance for diagnosis and genetic counselling, they may allow the delineation of new contiguous gene syndromes associated with ASD. Finally, the detailed molecular analysis of the rearranged regions may open the way for the identification of new autistic spectrum disorders genes.

Have You Heard About...? New Resources




A national strategy for children of parents with learning difficulties

What is Healthy Start?

Healthy start is a national initiative to support children of parents with learning difficulties and those practitioners who work with these families. Healthy Start is funded by the Commonwealth Government under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy and has been created to help existing services give families the learning support they need. The Healthy Start network will build a network of professionals to connect and share expertise across health, disability, family support and children's services in a number of Learning Hubs (about 10 in WA), so building capacity to support/include parents with a developmental disability and their children.

I am hub convenor for the Disability WA Learning Hub - we aim to bring together those who are working with children with disabilities who *also* have parents with learning difficulties/disabilities, whether in early intervention or school age. We currently have only a few members and are ready to welcome more of any discipline who have an interest or caseload in this area. We will probably network via email/occasional forums and are hoping to run a workshop later in the year on best practice in working with parents with learning difficulties/disabilities.

You can join the Healthy Start Network by logging on to the Healthy Start Website <http://www.healthystart.net.au> to

receive twice-yearly news updates and other important information from the Healthy Start Team. The website has lots of useful information so check it out. You are welcome to contact me to join our Learning Hub - this enables you to also join the Healthy Start listserv which provides opportunities to discuss practice, research, information and ideas in parenting with a learning difficulty with fellow Learning Hub Members throughout Australia and the Healthy Start project team.

Abigail Lewis, Therapy Focus,

abigail.lewis@therapyfocus.org.au

Library Updates

Autism Asperger's Digest Magazine

Publisher: Future Horizons Inc
www.FutureHorizons-Autism.com

Edition: March – April 2006

FEATURES:

Boosting Self-Esteem in the Autism Spectrum Child Cathi Cohen L.C.S.W.

Six steps to nurturing positive self-esteem

Weird Can be Wonderful

Jennifer McIlwee Myers

The uses of special interests: special interests are pathways for learning

Dr. Mark's Mental Messages for Success

Mark Cooper, Ph.D., L.P.C.

What we think DOES make a difference

Seeing the Light Jennifer & Daniel Hoffiz

Sensory processing imbalances contribute to many of the challenges of ASD

REGULAR DEPARTMENTS:

GF/CF: Plain and Simple

Back to basics Lisa Lewis, Ph.D

Simply Good Ideas

The enigma of Autism behaviors: Enabling Success and finding solutions

David Freschi

Autism: The Way I See It

Innovative thinking paves the way for AS career success Temple Grandin, Ph.D

Finding the Words

Dyspraxia: Part 2. Kids at the articulation stage Marge Blanc M.A., CCC-SLP

Ask the Experts

Video game self-control skills

Dr Steven Richfield

Postcards From the Road Less Traveled

Ready for K and Beyond Ellen Notbohm

Inspiration Autism Jennifer Abeles

Horse Sense: Wisdom shared by Autistics already winning the Race of Life

Disaster preparedness Stephen Shore

Autism Asperger's Digest Magazine

Publisher: Future Horizons Inc
www.FutureHorizons-Autism.com

Edition: May - June 2006

FEATURES:

Inclusion of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Updates and other thoughts. Shirley Cohen, Ph.D

More children than ever are being diagnosed with autism/Asperger's. Are we prepared for inclusion of so many more children?

Up A Creek Without an Idiom

Tori Gallagher

Tori and George return with another dose of humor about everyday life with a child on the spectrum. **25**

Reasons to use Visual Strategies

Lind Hodgon M.Ed., CCC-SLP

If effective communication is our goal, we need to

use more than our voices with individuals with ASD. We need to use visual strategies too!

Other Child, Other Mother Cheri Brackett

Reflections from a mother whose child lives outside the bell curve of typical development.

Autism Around the World – U.K.

Two Sets of Autistic Behaviours Seem to be Caused by Different Sets of Genes

REGULAR DEPARTMENTS:

GF/CF: Plain and Simple

Back to basic: How to do an elimination diets Lisa Lewis, Ph.D

Simply Good Ideas

The enigma of Autism behaviors: Enabling Success and finding solutions. Part 2: Parent Behaviors David Freschi

Autism: The Way I See It

Rudeness is inexcusable Temple Grandin, Ph.D

Finding the Words

Helping your visual child become Verbal! (Part 1) Marge Blanc, M.A., CCC-SLP

Ask the Experts

Choosing a social skills program

Jennifer Jacobs, M.S., CCC-SLP

Postcards From the Road Less Traveled

Pomp and Circumstance Ellen Notbohm

Inspiration Autism

Rings, Romance and Resonance Jennifer Abeles

Horse Sense: Wisdom shared by Autistics already winning the Race of Life

Disaster Preparedness, Part 2

Stephen Shore

Special Education Law

Three-Year IEPs: Fact or Fiction? Part 2

Reed Martin, J.D.

Autism Spectrum Quarterly – The Magajournal

Publisher: Starfish Specialty Press, LLC
www.starfishpress.com Edition: Spring 2006

FEATURES:

The Autism Response Team: A Concept Whose Time Has Come Dennis Debbaudt and Matt Brown

The three-part series will focus on what an autism response team wish and what it does.

The Autism Speaks – NAAR Merger: An Interview with Ann Boeker Gibbons Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Ph.D.

The straight scoop on a powerful new organization in the autism community

Implications of the Schaffer v. Weast Decision Michael John Carley

An update on the Supreme Court decision regarding burden of proof

Calling a Truce in the Spectrum "Wars" Michael John Carley

The founder of GRASP, Inc. takes a candid look at

the challenges that go beyond functioning level, and the harm that can be caused by bipolarization.

Getting to Know the Family Savant Robert Hughes, Ph.D.

A father takes a tongue-in-cheek approach to the myths surrounding the savant image, and shares his insights regarding what really matters.

More Tips on Using IDEA 2004 to Improve Outcomes for Children

A special education attorney elaborates on five additional tips improving outcomes for children with special needs.

Wayne D. Steedman, Esquire

Guidelines for Finding the Right School

An autism specialist brings her experience to bear on a very important issue.

Sheri S. Dollin, M.Ed.

REGULAR DEPARTMENTS:

You Too?!

Common Stories form an Uncommon Parent: The Love Language of Autism Alyson Beytien

Tips for Translating Research into Practice

Jennifer-Twachtman-Reilly, M.S., CCC-SLP

Spotlight on Best Practices

The Power of Friendship: The Story of Willie and Jamie

Tara Tuchel, M.S., CCC-SLP

Celebrations of Excellence and Originality

An Interview with Valerie Paradiz

Liane Holliday Willey, Ed.D.

Research Newsdesk

The Cutting Edge: From Research to Practice

Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Research Briefs

New Member Section

We enjoy having new friendly faces at our WAADF meetings, and would like to intro-



Loman Timms

Hi my name is Loman Timms and I am a clinical psychologist. For the past 15 years I have worked at Andrea Way Child Development Centre, Bentley Community Health Service and recently I have also joined the team at State Child Development Centre.

At Andrea Way CDC I have a general client caseload as well as undertake complex developmental assessments with the team, which includes assessing the possibility of autism as a differential diagnosis. At SCDC my role is primarily in educational assessment but I am also participating in complex developmental assessments.

I look forward to meeting you at WAADF meetings.

Waitlist Times

State Child Development Centre:

Preschool: 3-4 months
School Aged: 18-24 months

Andrea way CDC:

Preschool: 6-12 months
School Aged: 9-12 months

Private Practice:

within weeks- up to 1 month

Disability Services Commission:

Metropolitan

Preschool: 4-5 months
School Aged: 16 months

Country

Preschool: 3-4 months
School Aged: 9-12 months

**We're on the web! Visit
www.waadf.org.au**

Dates of Meetings

Forum Meetings are held on the **first Thursday** of the last month of the quarter:

Venue: Conference Room
State Child Development Centre.
Time: 9.00am-11.00am
Next meeting: Thursday 7th December

Board Meetings are held every 4-6 weeks.
Please contact a Board Member if you have any issues you would like discussed.

Chairperson:

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vegemite@westnet.com.au

Vice Chairperson:

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Secretary:

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

To keep the newsletter coming out quarterly, we need your help!

Please forward contributions for the next newsletter to Sabrina de Beer by mid November to allow for early December publication.

sabrind@dsc.wa.gov.au

