



Europe's Children Our Concern asbl

supporting children and young people with learning difficulties

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde

“Together we can make a difference”

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ECOC Newsletter No. 73 – December 2008

If you have news that you would like us to pass on, or if you would like us to publicise an event or mention a resource that you have found useful, please send us the details: ecoc@ecoc.be.

For a quick read, just click on headings below to be taken straight to the relevant item.

[ECOC update](#)

[News from other organizations](#)

[Resources](#)

[Conferences and events](#)

ECOC - update

Recognizing & Reaching Children with Learning Difficulties, AD/HD and Related Conditions across Languages and Cultures



Presenters at our October 2008 conference: Dr Laurent Victor, Dr Steve Chinn, Sari Solden and Dr Ellen Littman. For full description of the day, go to our website: www.ecoc.be.



Richard "Chalks" Corriette, president of ECOC, with some fellow delegates plus some other scenes from the day. Thanks to Isabelle Howe, ECOC volunteer, for the photographs.

- Celebrations for the Festive Season

Children's St Nicholas party. "Fantastic" is how the ECOC president described this December 6 event. Around fifty children, some with physical disabilities and others with learning disabilities, gathered together at Autoworld in the Cinquantenaire to welcome in St Nicholas in the traditional fashion. They came from Les Coccinelles, La Cité Joyeuse and Claire Martin, schools that focus on children that need extra support. A big thank you to Autoworld for all their contributions and to ECOC volunteers, "Chalks" Corriette, Carol Humphrey, Laura Steenson, Patricia Vandenplas and Sarah Venter, who helped the party go with a zing.

Carol singing at the European Union. A fine tradition, begun some years ago by former ECOC president, Kay Labatte, and now organized by Carol Humphrey. Carol writes "The choir is composed of EU staff, stagiaires, husbands, wives, friends, who come together to bring a festive atmosphere to the EU buildings and to raise money for good causes. This year the proceeds will be shared between ECOC and the Giraffe Project." Singing is now well underway, with many events arranged to take place in the midday period at a variety of EU establishments.

- ECOC library

Many thanks are due to the bookshop **Treasure Trove** which for several years has housed the ECOC library. With the retirement of its owner that arrangement has now come to an end and the books have been moved to a temporary home. We will let you have details of the permanent home once that is established. In the interim, anyone wishing to borrow a book should contact ECOC on ecoc@ecoc.be.

News from other organizations

Dyslexia International, a Brussels based organization, is soon to pilot an online training module for teachers, in French and in English. The module has been developed in collaboration with ministries of education, academic researchers and local associations and is called "Dyslexia – how you recognize it and what to do." This initiative forms part of Dyslexia International's preparations for UNESCO's World Dyslexia Forum, to be held in 2010. For further information see the website, www.dyslexia-international.org.

NASEN Awards to celebrate inclusive practice (www.nasen.org.uk). Now in its sixteenth year, the following were the 2008 winners:

- **Children's Book Award** (sponsored by Inclusive Technology) – Best Friends, illustrated by Mark Chambers, Tango Books
- **Special Educational Needs Academic Award** – Achievement and Inclusion in Schools by Kristine Black-Hawkins, Lani Florian and Martyn Rouse
Routledge

- **Book to support Teaching and Learning** – Pupil Book Award (sponsored by Educational Solutions) - This Life Readers and Resource Pack by Jayne Garner, AXIS Education

Book to support Teaching and Learning – Teacher Book Award - Start Write, Stay Right! by Alison Harris and Janet Taylor TTS Group/Special Direct

Book that supports SEN and Disability Issues Award (sponsored by Rising Stars) - Inclusion in the Primary Classroom by Margaret Collins, Optimus Education

Inclusive Resource for Primary Classrooms Award – All Around Learning Circle Time Activity Mat, Learning Resources Ltd

ICT Accessibility Award (sponsored by UK Trade & Investment) - SUMS Maths Sums Online

Dyslexia - Project Neurodys: an initiative to build the largest biological database on dyslexia worldwide which should put Europe in the forefront of research in this area within three years. It involves nearly four thousand children and links fifteen different research groups and clinics from nine countries. To read more go to www.neurodys.com.

Students with Disabilities – a growth market? A recent article by Joanne Laucius, published on November 27 in *The Ottawa Citizen*, highlights the growing number of students with disabilities now attending Canadian universities. She suggests that several factors come into play, including the growth in disability rights legislation, the different ways of learning that technology allows, and demographics which are leading to a decline in traditional student enrollment. These factors hold true in Europe too so it would be interesting to see if a similar movement can be detected here.

Language Development. A recently published article in *Science Daily* (November 9, 2008; www.sciencedaily.com) reports that scientists from the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics have identified the first gene – CNTNAP2 – that is associated with specific language impairment (SLI) which effects up to 7% of pre-school children. In another, and seemingly contrary development, two scientists (Bernard Crespi, a biologist at Simon Fraser University in Canada, and Christopher Badcock, a sociologist at the London School of Economics) have been questioning whether gene mutation is, in fact, the key to understanding cognitive disorders. For full details of their theory of brain development see Benedict Carey's article in *The New York Times* (November 10, 2008; www.nytimes.com.)

ADHD – Two Role Models. From the academic world comes **Dr Edward M Hallowell**, a psychiatrist and author based in the United States, who has been treating the disorder for 25 years and who has ADHD himself. Dr Hallowell says that the deficit based medical model can result in low self-esteem, whereas, properly managed, the condition can bring benefits. "It's not an unmitigated blessing, but neither is it an unmitigated curse, which is usually the way it's presented." From the world of sports, comes Olympic super athlete, **Michael Phelps**, whose ADHD clearly has not got in the way of his success. In fact, with the energy and focus that sometimes comes with the condition, Michael is probably one who would agree with Dr Hallowell on its benefits.

Resources

By no means a definitive list, but a quick look at some new titles and training resources on offer.

All Special Kids: ASK (www.allspecialkids.org)

ASK is a Geneva-based network that supports the families of children with special needs and learning difficulties. ASK is running a series of lectures and seminars in Geneva and Bern from January to March, covering a range of learning disabilities. For full details see their website.

British Dyslexia Association (www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

The 2008/2009 BDA Dyslexia Handbook

A perfect resource for those with dyslexia, their families and teachers.

Order by calling BDA on +44 (0) 845 251 9003. £10

Jessica Kingsley Publishers (www.jkp.com)

Challenging the Gifted Child

An open approach to working with advanced young readers

Author: Margaret Stevens

Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-84310-570-1, 192pp, October 2008, £15.99, \$22.95

Asperger Syndrome and Employment

What people with Asperger Syndrome really really want

Author: Sarah Hendrickx

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-677-7, 152pp, November 2008, £13.99, \$19.95

Hints and Tips for Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Useful strategies for home, school and the community

Author: Dion E Betts and Nancy J Patrick

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-896-2 192pp, 2008, £12.99, \$19.95

Quick, Easy and Effective Behaviour Management Ideas for the Classroom

Practical and do-able strategies that work

Author: Nicola S Morgan

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-951-8, 128pp, 2008, £16.99, \$29.95

Routledge Teachers (www.routledgeteachers.com)

Dyspraxia in the Early Years

Identifying and supporting children with movement difficulties

Author: Christine MacIntyre

Paperback, ISBN 978-0-415-47684-3, 128pp, November 2008, \$37.95

Stenhouse Publishers (www.stenhouse.com)

More Tools for Teaching Content Literacy

25 new instructional strategies

Author: Janet Allen

Paperback, ISBN 978-157110-771-8, 46pp, 2008, \$12 (flat rate shipping \$5.00)

Zitstil (www.zitstil.be) and Letop (www.letop.be)

For the Dutch speakers among our readership, don't forget to check out the websites of these two organisations, both of which provide information, support and training in their field. For Zitstil it's ADHD and for Letop it's learning difficulties.

Conferences and events

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

January 10 2009

Understanding AD/HD – Strategies for Success at Home and School

An evening workshop held in Paris

Full details from michelle.bennani-smires@orange.fr

March 30 – April 1 2009

The 9th International ADDISS Conference

“The Spirit of ADHD: Resilience, Hope, Opportunity, Success”

Royal National Hotel

London, England.

Full details: www.addiss.co.uk

If you are interested in presenting at this conference, email your submission to info@addiss.co.uk

Autism

February 26 – 28 2009

Meeting of Minds – 3

A conference on Autism+ for researchers, parents, professionals, people with autism

Herning Congress Centre

Herning, Denmark.

Full details: www.meetingofminds.dk

Dyslexia

February 24 - 28 2009

The British Dyslexia Association's 7th Annual Conference

“Dyslexia – Making Links”

Oxford, England

Full details: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Educational Technology

January 14 – 17 2009

BETT

Olympia

London, UK

The world's largest educational technology event. Full details: www.bettshow.com

Learning Disabilities

February 25 – 28 2009

The 46th Annual Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America

Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Full details: www.ldanatl.org

With all good wishes for the Festive Season

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