



Europe's Children Our Concern asbl

supporting children and young people with learning difficulties

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde

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"Together we can make a difference"

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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 News

Scotch whisky tasting

On Friday 5 September ECOC is holding a ***Nosing & Scotch Whisky Tasting Evening*** at the British & Commonwealth Women's Club, 509 rue au Bois, Woluwé St. Pierre. Malcom Andrews, Whisky Expert, member of the Lions Club Brussels and Master Class Organiser, will introduce us to the whiskies. It starts at 19.00 and costs 15 euro for members and 20 euro for non-members. If you would like to attend please email ecoc@ecoc.be or telephone 02 770 16 02.

ECOC Conference – Recognizing and reaching children with learning difficulties, ADHD and related conditions across languages and cultures

ECOC will be holding a packed annual conference on Wednesday 8 October in conjunction with ADHD-Belgium asbl. Speakers include Steve Chinn, who has worked for many years with students with dyslexia and dyscalculia, and Cordula Neuhaus, a psychologist and pediatrician, who specialises in treating young people with ADHD. The all-day conference will be held at the MAI Conference Centre, 40 rue Washington. Please register as soon as possible to ensure a place – early registrations (before 15 September) will be rewarded with a discount price! All the proceedings will be simultaneously translated from English into French and Dutch.

More information from ecoc@ecoc.be or Chalks on 0478 482 023 or Joanne at adhdbelgium@gmail.com or 0494 177 403.

News

ADHD Awareness Week in the UK this year will run from 22 September to 28 September.

Updated report on ADHD prevalence in the US

The Centers for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics has issued an [Updated report](#) (pdf) on the prevalence of ADHD (July 2008) and diagnosed ADHD and learning disability (2004-2006) in the US.

More information: <http://www.help4adhd.org/>

Improvement of care for children with ADHD

An innovative programme is helping primary care physicians improve the care they provide for school-aged children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a study led by researchers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and published in the July edition of *Pediatrics*.

The study is the first to work with an entire community of primary care physicians and help them more accurately diagnose and effectively monitor treatment response of their patients with ADHD, said Jeff Epstein, director of the Center for ADHD at Cincinnati Children's and lead author of the study. Although community practitioners are the first point of contact for children with ADHD, the use of standardized evidence-based diagnosis and treatment guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) was infrequent at most of the participating pediatric practices before the study began.

The intervention consisted of a training programme developed by Cincinnati Children's on how to implement AAP diagnosis and treatment guidelines. After the doctors implemented AAP guidelines, the use of ADHD child assessment rating scales by parents and teachers reached nearly 100 per cent from 55 per cent and 52 per cent respectively. This led to more accurate diagnosis and fewer children being started on medication inappropriately. Systematic monitoring of patient medication response improved from a baseline of 9 per cent to over 40 per cent. For patients who were being monitored systematically, most had significant symptom reduction during the first months of treatment.

"An additional benefit of the intervention is that it appears that as a result of participating, physicians in the community are now better equipped to recommend alternatives to medication - such as behavioural therapy - engage families in setting treatment goals, and more effectively coordinate care with the child's school," said Dr Epstein.

"A significant problem is that guidelines, once published, rarely find their way quickly into clinical usage," Dr. Epstein said. "A large part of the problem is that no means exists for systematically exposing physicians to the guidelines and teaching them how to adapt them for use in their practices."

More information: <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/>

Over-identification of children with ADHD in London

A UK study has discovered that while teachers are important partners for health professionals in identifying and managing children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), they may be over-identifying children.

Diagnostic criteria for ADHD require that the symptoms are present both at school and at home. School assessments are generally carried out by rating scales and school reports. However, these may be unreliable, and a more structured approach should be taken to school assessment, suggest the authors of a new study.

The study set out to determine how informative teacher-reported symptoms of ADHD were in the final diagnosis. A retrospective review was undertaken of referrals for ADHD, or inattention in school, to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Team for the eastern sector of Tower Hamlets in London.

The diagnostic process and outcome was mapped for all the children. Of those for whom teachers suspected ADHD, an unstructured observation was performed by a CAMHS professional. Between November 2006 and October 2007, 52 children were referred to CAMHS with ADHD-like symptoms. Enough concern was raised over 14 children to warrant school observation. Of these, only five were diagnosed with ADHD, and one additional child was also diagnosed before a school observation was carried out.

The researchers comment that they are unsure why teachers may be over-identifying children with possible ADHD diagnoses.

They suggest that better educational resources need to be made available to teachers to help them accurately identify those children with ADHD, and that CAMHS teams should develop structured school observation tools or telephone interview schedules, so that identified children can be independently and expertly assessed in a classroom setting.

More information: [The Royal College of Psychiatrists](#)

Dopamine and ADHD

Emerging research suggests that a genetic change in a brain signalling pathway pushes dopamine, a natural neurotransmitter, in the wrong direction. This creates an effect similar to that of taking amphetamine, or 'speed' and may contribute to the symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Vanderbilt University Medical Center investigators discovered the alteration in the dopamine transporter and published their study in *The Journal of Neuroscience*.

"We believe that this is important evidence that ADHD can be caused by a functional deficit in the brain's dopamine signaling pathway," said Randy Blakely, director of the Center for Molecular Neuroscience.

The altered function of the transporter gene variant was discovered in two brothers with ADHD.

"It's like these kids are on amphetamine all the time," said Aurelio Galli, an investigator in the center. Amphetamine causes hyperactivity, paranoia and psychosis in normal subjects.

Variations in brain dopamine signaling have long been suspected to participate in the development ADHD and other neuropsychiatric disorders. Dopamine has roles in brain circuits linked to attention, motor function, reward and cognition, and drugs that target dopamine transporters and receptors are used to treat ADHD, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

In initial studies of the variant transporter in cultured cells, the group found no differences in function compared to the normal transporter – the mutant transporter moved dopamine into the cell and was appropriately regulated by dopamine transporter blockers and cellular signaling pathways.

Turning to a sensitive technology called amperometry that uses a small carbon fibre to “listen in” on how single cells release or transport dopamine, Galli and Blakely discovered that the altered transporters were running backward at an exaggerated rate, literally pushing dopamine out of the cell.

“We think this activity would short circuit the normal synaptic transmission process,” Blakely said. “Instead of the precise ‘pop-pop-pop’ of dopamine being released from vesicles (tiny packets of neurotransmitter), there’s a cloud of dopamine bleeding out, and the dopamine signaling system is not as sharp as it should be.”

To their surprise, the investigators also found that amphetamine blocks the leak of dopamine through the variant transporter. Normally, amphetamine does just what the mutation does – it causes the dopamine transporter to run in the reverse direction.

The findings offer a new perspective on ADHD – the fact that two of the medications that successfully treat the disorder have opposing effects on their molecular target, the dopamine transporter, has puzzled researchers. With the normal dopamine transporter, methylphenidate (Ritalin) blocks the ability of amphetamine (Adderall) to make the transporter run backward, yet both drugs are equally beneficial to patients with ADHD. But when the transporter runs backwards of its own accord both agents act as blockers and stop the leak of dopamine.

“This observation unifies the action of these drugs and strongly suggests that backward-running transporters may be an important mechanism in ADHD, even for those who do not have this particular mutation,” Blakely said.

More information: [Vanderbilt University](#)

US children cannot depend on appropriate treatment

An estimated 15 million American children are diagnosed with a mental disorder, but only about a quarter of them are getting appropriate treatment based on scientific evidence.

A report released by the American Psychological Association (APA) Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice with Children and Adolescents recommends dissemination of treatments that are based on scientific evidence along with clinical expertise while taking into account individual characteristics, culture and preferences as a way to ensure that children and adolescents with mental health problems receive the best available care.

“The care should include prevention, early intervention, targeted treatments for particular disorders, an understanding of developmental processes and continuity of care,” said task force chair Anne E. Kazak.

The task force members cite several examples of evidence-based practice’s effectiveness in treating disorders such as anxiety-related problems, ADHD and depression.

The report recommends ways for psychologists to build relationships with health and educational institutions to generate more research in this area and transfer it into clinical practice.

More information: [American Psychological Association](#)

Genes involved in autism researched

Harvard University researchers have discovered several new genes involved in autism that suggest the disorder is created by a brain that cannot properly form new connections.

The findings, based on families in the Middle East, Pakistan and Turkey, may also help explain why intense education programmes do help some children with autism: certain genes that respond to experience were not missing but were merely stuck in the "off" position.

The study also reveals that autism is too individual to create an easy gene test for it. Instead, patients are turning out to have a wide variety, almost a custom set, of gene defects. However, the missing DNA did not always translate into completely absent genes. Instead what was usually missing were their on/off switches. Essentially, some genes were asleep, unable to operate the synapses.

The newly found genes join a growing body of research to suggest that autism is a synaptic disorder, according to the study, published in the 11 July issue of *Science*.

"I find that hopeful" because "there are ways that are being discovered to activate genes," Dr Walsh, lead researcher, said. "This might be an unanticipated way of developing therapies in the long term for autism: identifying these kids where all the right genes are present, just not turned on in the right way."

More information:

<http://www.childrenshospital.org/newsroom/Site1339/mainpageS1339P0.html>

Interactions of children with autism and robots

Papers delivered at three conferences in the US and Europe this summer report on new research at the University of Southern California (USC) Viterbi School of Engineering that studied the interactions of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) with bubble-blowing robots.

The preliminary studies, by Professor Maja Mataric and David Feil-Seifer of the USC Interaction Laboratory, confirm what has been widely reported anecdotally: that children with ASD often interact more easily with mechanical devices than with humans.

Mataric and Feil-Seifer, both specialists in Socially Assisted Robotics (SAR), are now engaged in further research to confirm their findings. They also hope to develop a robot "control architecture" which will tailor robot interactions to the specific needs of children with ASD and help therapists treating their condition.

The initial study, reported at the June 2008 Conference on Interaction Design for Children with Special Needs in Chicago, tested whether interaction as opposed to simple passive observation was going on between the children and a colourful bubble-blowing wheeled robot.

The study found that the behaviour of the robot affected the social behaviour of a child (both human-human interaction and human-robot interaction).

While only four children were part of the initial study, Feil-Seifer and Mataric believe the work clearly demonstrates the ability of robots to actively engage with children with ASD. A much more extensive follow-up is already in progress, in collaboration with Los Angeles Children's Hospital and the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange.

Two other presentations by Feil-Seifer and Mataric, at the 11th International Symposium on Experimental Robotics 2008 in Athens, Greece, in July 2008, and at the IEEE Proceedings of the International Workshop on Robot and Human Interactive Communication, in Munich, Germany, in August 2008, discuss these results in more detail.

Copies of the conference presentations are available in PDF form here:

David J. Feil-Seifer and Maja J. Mataric, "Robot-assisted therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders," Refereed Workshop Conference on Interaction Design for Children: Children with Special Needs, pp. 49-52, Chicago, IL, Jun 2008.

http://cres.usc.edu/pubdb_html/files_upload/588.pdf

David J. Feil-Seifer and Maja J. Mataric, "Toward Socially Assistive Robotics For Augmenting Interventions For Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders," 11th International Symposium on Experimental Robotics 2008, Athens, Greece, Jul 2008.

http://cres.usc.edu/pubdb_html/files_upload/589.pdf

David J. Feil-Seifer and Maja J. Mataric, "B3IA: An architecture for autonomous robot-assisted behavior intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders," IEEE Proceedings of the International Workshop on Robot and Human Interactive Communication, Munich, Germany, Aug 2008.

http://cres.usc.edu/pubdb_html/files_upload/549.pdf

Autism and eye contact among toddlers research

Within three months of birth, babies show a strong preference for eye contact. They spend more time looking at eyes than any other part of a person's face or body. But in children with autism, this behaviour falters early and seems to contribute to the difficulties they have relating to others, say researchers at the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven, Conn.

The researchers used eye-tracking equipment to compare viewing preferences of 15 2-year-olds with autism spectrum disorders and 36 typically developing toddlers. Both groups watched videos with actresses engaging them in games like pat-a-cake.

Toddlers with autism gave scant attention to eyes and spent more time focusing on mouths. The researchers found a strong correlation between eye contact and autism severity: the lower the level of eye fixation, the greater the child's social impairment in everyday life.

In a study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* the researchers said that with less experience observing and reacting to the eyes of others, children lose the chance to develop expertise in social cues, and this could intensify the effects of autism.

More information: <http://childstudycenter.yale.edu/autism/research.html>

Autism research focuses on which foods may affect behaviour

Researchers at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston have embarked on one of the first double-blind, clinical studies to determine whether gluten and dairy products play a role in autistic behaviour, as parents have claimed.

The pilot study is one of seven current studies on autism in the Department of Pediatrics and the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at The University of Texas Medical School.

"There's a lot of misinformation, so that is why this study is so important," said Dr Fernando Navarro, assistant professor of pediatrics at the medical school and lead investigator of the study. "Hundreds of parents think this works but we need serious evidence."

"A lot of children with autism have gastrointestinal problems such as constipation and diarrhoea. Whether these problems are related to brain development is open to question," said Dr Katherine Loveland, co-investigator and professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences, pediatrics and biomedical sciences at the health science centre. "There are neurotransmitters and neuroreceptors in the gut that correspond with those in the brain. There are some scientific reasons to think that some kids may benefit from this diet."

More information: <http://www.uthouston.edu/>

Fragile X gene linked to sleep disruption

The lack of two related genes connected with Fragile X may also disrupt the body's natural sleep cycle and cause further mental impairment, according to a recent report.

Mice lacking the fragile X mental retardation 1 gene (FMR1) and a similar gene called fragile X-related gene 2 (FXR2) have a very irregular, non-rhythmic sleep-wake pattern rather than the rodent's normal cycle of roughly 12 hours awake and 12 hours asleep, according to a consortium of researchers led by scientists at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"This has never been seen in a mouse before," lead researcher Dr David Nelson, a professor of molecular and human genetics, said in a prepared statement. "These genes [FMR1 and FXR2] are new players in the control of circadian [daily] rhythms."

The findings were published in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*.

More information: <http://www.bcm.edu/research/> and the Fragile X Research Foundation has more about [fragile X syndrome](#).

Answers about autism from the BBC

The BBC website has launched a series of topic pages on subjects as diverse as air travel, the NHS and Charles Dickens. There is also a page about autism with news stories, audio and video reports.

More information: www.bbc.co.uk/topics/autism

Rewiring the dyslexic brain

A new Carnegie Mellon University brain imaging study of dyslexic students and other poor readers shows that the brain can permanently rewire itself and overcome reading deficits when students are given 100 hours of intensive remedial instruction.

The study, published in the August issue of *Neuropsychologia*, shows that the remedial instruction resulted in an increase in brain activity in several cortical regions associated with reading, and that neural gains became further strengthened during the year following instruction.

"This study demonstrates how remedial instruction can use the plasticity of the human brain to gain an educational improvement," said neuroscientist Marcel Just, director of Carnegie Mellon's Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging (CCBI) and senior author of the study. "Focused instruction can help underperforming brain areas to increase their proficiency."

Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), scientists investigated the changes in a number of cortical regions located in the parietotemporal area, which is responsible for decoding the sounds of written language and assembling them into words and phrases that make up a sentence.

CCBI research fellows Ann Meyler and Tim Keller measured brain activity patterns by examining blood flow to all of the different parts of the brain while children were reading. Those measurements showed that before the remediation, the parietotemporal areas were significantly less activated among the poor readers than in the control group.

The new findings showed that many of the poor readers' brain areas activated at near-normal levels immediately after remediation, with only a few areas still underactive. However, at the one year follow-up scan, the activation differences between good and poor readers had nearly vanished, suggesting that the neural gains were strengthened over time, probably just due to engagement in reading activities.

The poor readers, 25 fifth-graders from Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities, worked in groups of three for an hour a day with a teacher specialized in administering a remedial reading programme. The training included both word decoding exercises in which students were asked to recognize the word in its written form and tasks in using reading comprehension strategies.

This brain imaging study was also the first in which children were tested on their understanding of sentences, not just on their recognition of single words. The sentences were relatively straightforward ones, which the children judged as being sensible or nonsense, such as "The girl closed the gate" and "The man fed the dress." The children's accurate sense judgments ensured that they were actually processing the meaning of the sentences, and not just recognizing the individual words.

"Any kind of education is a matter of training the brain. When poor readers are learning to read, a particular brain area is not performing as well as it might, and remedial instruction helps to shape that area up," said Marcel Just. "This finding shows that poor readers can be helped to develop buff brains. A similar approach should apply to other skills."

More information: <http://www.cmu.edu/index.shtml>

Early prediction and prevention of dyslexia in Finland

Atypical characteristics of children's linguistic development are early signs of the risk of dyslexia. New research points to preventive exercises as an effective means of tackling the challenges many children face when learning to read.

The results achieved at the Centre of Excellence in Learning and Motivation Research were presented at the Academy of Finland's science breakfast on 21 August.

Headed by Professor Heikki Lyytinen at the University of Jyväskylä, the study involved 107 children with parents with dyslexia and a control group of children without a hereditary

predisposition. The researchers followed the development of the children from birth through to school age.

“Half of the children whose parents had difficulties in reading and writing found learning to read more challenging than children in the control group. The atypical characteristics of these children’s linguistic development indicated the risk at a very early stage, and we were also able to draw a clearer picture of the typical progression of a development that indicates reading and writing difficulties,” says Lyytinen.

According to Lyytinen, the predictors of difficulties with literacy are a delayed ability to perceive and mentally process the subtleties of a person’s voice and slowness in naming familiar, visually presented objects. This develops into difficulties in memorising the names and corresponding sounds of letters.

The difficulties children experience when learning to read can be significantly reduced through training – “and in a way that children find amusing, even if they do have difficulties in learning to read,” Lyytinen points out.

The training developed by the Centre of Excellence in Learning and Motivation Research uses computer game-like learning environments and is available on the internet free of charge.

“The best time to start these exercises is the latter part of the pre-school age, but it is not too late even after the children have started school. The learning result, of course, improves with repeated training: more than once a day and in short sessions. The optimal time for a single playing session is however long the children find it enjoyable.”

More information: <http://www.lukimat.fi>.

Reading help in a magic pen

The Tag Reading System, from Leapfrog, is an electronic reader in a penlike device that children hold over special books. Tag books look like normal books, and many children's classics are available. By tapping on a page of the book, the Tag can read the whole page, a word, a phrase, or respond to images.

The Tag reader is six inches long and uses two AAA batteries to run. It houses a computer processor, a stereo audio system and a small infrared camera on the end of the device.

More information: http://microsite.leapfrog.com/tag_qe/index.html

Dyspraxia Foundation issues dyspraxia-friendly classroom guidelines

These guidelines were developed in response to a need identified by members of the UK Dyspraxia Foundation and professionals working with children with dyspraxia.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has included them on the TeacherNet website – the education site for teachers and school managers – at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/>

You can view or download the Dyspraxia-Friendly Classroom Guidelines at www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/services/ed_classroom_guidelines.php

Gifted children need reading challenges

Advanced readers may lose proficiency if they are not constantly challenged, according to Tamara Fisher, a specialist in teaching gifted children, in *Teacher Magazine*. She urges class teachers not to let students just breeze through age-appropriate material but ensure that they have access to books appropriate to their ability level.

More information from her blog:

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/unwrapping_the_gifted/2008/08/advanced_readers.html

IBM launches help for visually impaired

IBM has launched an application that seeks to make the Web more accessible to the visually impaired.

Many blind or partially sighted users run screen reading software that describes the content of a Web page but they can encounter problems. The screen readers rely on text or descriptive tags to explain the items on a page but these can be incomplete.

Using the new IBM software users can report these problems to a central database and request additional descriptive text to be added to a site. Other Internet users who want to contribute can then check the database, select one of the submitted problems and start fixing it by added text labels. The additional information is not incorporated into the original site's HTML code but into a metadata file that is loaded each time a visually impaired user visits the site.

EU states introduce new policies for special and inclusive education

A number of EU states are in the process of introducing new laws or policy initiatives for special and inclusive education. A summary of these developments is now available from:

<http://www.european-agency.org/site/newsdesk/index.html>

UK report on access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities can face unnecessary suffering because laws and guidance designed to give them full access to healthcare are not being followed. This is the conclusion of an UK independent inquiry by Sir Jonathan Michael into health services for people with learning disabilities.

Sir Jonathan emphasises that there is no need for a new legal framework and that the necessary legislation is already in place. The challenge is to make it work as effectively for adults and children with learning disabilities as anyone else.

More information: lahpld@luther.co.uk

National Library for Health - Learning Disability Specialist Library

[The NLH Learning Disability Specialist Library](#) team in the UK want to know what you think of their web site. It takes a couple of minutes to complete the online survey. Everyone who does so will be entered into a prize draw for a brand new iPod shuffle!

More information: <http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/>

Mencap launches online support for parents and carers

Mencap, the learning disability charity, has launched a new website with a section dedicated to providing essential information and support to the families and carers of children with a learning disability.

As well as guides on key topics such as assessments, leisure and choosing a school, the 'ages and stages' section of the site gives parents an insight into what to expect at each stage of their child's life.

The site also has a new discussion forum, where families and carers can share their experiences, ask questions and find advice and support.

More information: www.mencap.org.uk/families

LD OnLine has Lots of Links

The web site has a newly updated resource section. Whether you are a [parent](#), [teacher](#), [person with a disability](#), or [other ally](#), you will find websites that will help.

Tai chi may help those with mobility problems

A research study at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is under way to determine the therapeutic effects of "wheelchair tai chi." Participants are taking two 45-minute wheelchair tai chi classes weekly. It is hoped the study will discover whether such an exercise programme contributes to the physical well-being of people with a disability, and whether it can improve sitting balance, respiratory function and mental health.

Tai chi, often called "moving meditation," is an ancient Chinese exercise system using one of several different routines of specific, rhythmical body movements that promote relaxation. Done correctly, the different movements - or postures - which are performed in an ordered routine seem to flow easily from one to the next. Tai chi emphasizes proper body positions, balance and deep breathing.

More information: <http://www.utc.edu/> or <http://www2.tbo.com/content/2008/aug/07/tai-chi-may-help-people-with-mobility-problems/>

TV reduces attention span of young children

Pediatricians have long said children younger than two should not watch any television. But in new findings from a small-scale study, researchers say that even having a TV on in the background could be "an environmental hazard" for children.

Researchers observed 50 children, aged 1 to 3, for an hour at a time as they played alone in a small room with a variety of toys. Parents sat nearby, and for half of each session a small TV broadcast a taped episode of *Jeopardy*, a programme judged to be "nearly incomprehensible" to toddlers.

The results show that the children watched the TV only in snippets but that it modestly shortened their playtime. TV decreased play's intensity and cut by half the amount of time children focused on a given toy.

Researchers say the disruptive effects were "real but small," amounting to a few seconds in many cases. But researcher Daniel Anderson, a psychologist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, says he is concerned the effects could be cumulative.

"It's that situation that I'm most concerned about, when you look at TV as being a disruptive influence hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year," he says.

Solitary play, especially with toys, offers many benefits. It allows children to practise planning ahead and develop cognitive skills.

"A lot of it gets practised in the form of toy play," Anderson says. "And that requires sustained attention." He adds that parents should take a look at how much the TV is on — and make sure children have "substantial" quiet time.

The study appears in the journal *Child Development*.

Resources

Books

The nasen Awards shortlist

Now in their sixteenth year, the nasen Awards represent excellence and best practice in books and resources for special educational needs. They operate in association with the Times Educational Supplement (TES). The shortlist is:

Children's Books - sponsored by Inclusive Technology

Five Little Ducks Illustrated by Anthony Lewis

Child's Play (International) Ltd

Best Friends Illustrated by Mark Chambers

Tango Books

It's Raining! It's Pouring! We're Exploring! by Polly Peters and illustrated by Jess Stockham

Child's Play (International) Ltd

Academic Books - sponsored by tbc

Deconstructing Special Education and Constructing Inclusion by Gary Thomas and Andrew Loxley

Open University Press

Achievement and Inclusion in Schools by Kristine Black-Hawkins, Lani Florian and Martyn Rouse

Routledge

Dilemmas of Difference, Inclusion and Disability by Brahm Norwich

Routledge

Books to support Teaching and Learning – for Teachers - sponsored by tbc

Helping Children Hang On to Your Every Word by Maggie Johnson

QEd Publications

Start Write, Stay Right! by Alison Harris and Janet Taylor

TTS Group/Special Direct

Every Child Can Learn by Katrin Stroh, Thelma Robinson and Alan Proctor

Sage Publications

Books to support Teaching and Learning – for Pupils - sponsored by EdSol

Take Part Book Series by Jo Browning-Wroe

Published by TTS Group Ltd

This Life Readers and Resource Pack by Jayne Garner

Published by AXIS Education

Basic Skills for Work by Phil Freeman

Published by AXIS Education

Planning to Learn by Keely Harper-Hill and Stephanie Lord

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Books that support SEN and Disability Issues - sponsored by Rising Stars

Supporting Multilingual Learners in the Early Years by Sandra Smidt

Routledge

Developing an Inclusion Policy in your Early Years Setting by Hannah Mortimer and Alan Johnson

QEd Publications

ADHD-Living without Brakes by Martin L Kutscher MD

Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Inclusion in the Primary Classroom by Margaret Collins

Optimus Education

Inclusive Primary Classroom Resources - sponsored by tbc

All Around Learning Circle Time Activity Mat

Learning Resources Ltd

Playscope SEN Sac and Fidget Floor Mats by Sue Gascoyne

Play to Z Ltd

Storyshapes by Julia Damassa

Storyshapes Ltd

Clicker Phonics

Crick Software

ICT Accessibility - sponsored by UK T&I

LED Interactive Touchwall

SpaceKraft

SUMS Maths

Sums Online

Switch It! Dinosaurs Extra and Transport Extra

Inclusive Technology

Talking Pen

Mantra Lingua

The winners will be announced on 16 October at the nasen Inclusion Awards ceremony. In addition to the usual prize of £500 to the author, and a quarter page advertisement in the TES to the publisher, this year winning publishers will also receive the nasen Inclusion Awards logo to use with their winning product.

Concepts of Normality

The Autistic and Typical Spectrum by Wendy Lawson

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-604-3, 160 pages, 2008, £14.99, \$24.95

For those with autism, understanding 'normal' can be a difficult task. For those without autism, the perception of 'normal' can lead to unrealistic expectations of self and others. This book explores how individuals and society understand 'normal', in order to help demystify and make accessible a full range of human experience.

Wendy Lawson outlines the theory behind the current thinking and beliefs of Western society that have led to the building of a culture that fails to be inclusive. She describes what a wider concept of 'normal' means and how to access it, whether it is in social interaction, friendships, feelings, thoughts and desires or various other aspects of 'normality'. Practical advice is offered on a range of situations, including how to find your role within the family, how to integrate 'difference' into everyday society, and how to converse and connect with others.

Accessible and relevant to people both on and off the autism spectrum, this book offers a fresh look at what it means to be 'normal'.

Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum
A Practical Resource of Play Ideas for Parents and Carers
2nd edition by Julia Moor

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-608-1, 304 pages, 2008, £13.99, \$21.95

Praise for the first edition:

'An approachable and practical edition that will be welcomed by parents and carers alike. I know how hard it can be to find "How to" resources for parents. Well here is a gem.'
- *Children, Young People and Families*

Parents of young children newly diagnosed as on the autism spectrum are often at a loss for ideas about how best to help their child. *Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum* is not just a collection of play ideas; it shows how to break down activities into manageable stages, and looks at ways to gain a child's attention and motivation and to build on small achievements.

Each chapter covers a collection of ideas around a theme, including music, art, physical activities, playing outdoors, puzzles, turn-taking and using existing toys to create play sequences. There are also chapters on introducing reading and making the most of television. This updated second edition contains an extensive chapter on how to use the computer, the internet and the digital camera to find and make resources and activities, and suggests many suitable websites to help parents through the internet maze. The ideas are useful both for toddlers and primary age children who are still struggling with play.

Small Steps Forward by Sarah Newman

Paperback, ISBN: 9781843106937, 272 pages, August 2008, £13.99/US\$19.95

When young children are diagnosed with conditions such as Down Syndrome, autism or other forms of developmental delay, there is much that parents can do to help. This new edition of the award-winning *Small Steps Forward* includes up-to-date research and practice, providing parents and carers with the information they need and a host of ideas to encourage their child's development. The games and activities use toys and materials which most children will already have, and involve no special preparation. They are also fun to play.

Sarah Newman divides skills into six areas - cognitive, linguistic, physical, sensory, social and emotional - for convenient reference. She deals with general issues, such as behaviour management, toilet-training and sleep management, which may be encountered by parents of children with any form of disability - physical, learning or sensory. She also provides an outline of child development so that parents can place their child's progress in context, and gives practical advice on coping with stress of having a child with special needs.

This book is an essential guide for parents of young children with developmental disabilities and will also be invaluable to anyone who works with children with special needs.

Why do I have to?

A Book for Children Who Find Themselves Frustrated by Everyday Rules by Laurie Leventhal-Belfer

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-891-7, 80 pages, 2008, £6.99, \$9.95

"If you want a child with Asperger's syndrome to comply with a social or family rule, it is very important to explain the logical reason to comply. Laurie's book provides the logic for compliance that will be invaluable for parents and teachers. I know this book will become regular bed-time reading and be used many times at home and at school."

-Professor Tony Attwood

Why do I have to? looks at a set of everyday situations that provide challenges for children at home, with their friends, and at school. Laurie Leventhal-Belfer empathizes with children's wish to do things their way, explains clearly why their way does not work, and provides a list of practical suggestions for how to cope with these challenges and avoid feelings of frustration. This is the ideal book for children who have difficulty coping with the expectations of daily living, as well as for their parents and the professionals who work with them.

Conferences and events

31 August-2 September 2008

VIII International Congress – Autism Europe

Oslo, Norway

8-19 September 2008

Children's Rights in a Globalized World: From Principles to Practice

Ghent and Antwerp

An international study session.

More information: www.iccr.be

19-20 September 2008

The portrayal of autism in the media plus current research

Novotel London West Hotel, Hammersmith, London, UK

Sessions feature worldwide leaders in autism research and practice sharing the very latest developments in their work. Speakers include Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, Director of the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge, Dr Stephen Shore, President emeritus of the Aspergers Association of New England, US, and Sir Michael Rutter, Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London.

More information: www.nas2008.org.uk

23 September 2008

2008 ADHD NICE Guidelines: Making it Happen

Royal Airforce Museum, Hendon, UK

In September the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) will publish the Guidance on the Diagnosis and Management of ADHD in Children, Adolescents and Adults. This

conference will look at the social impact of ADHD if left untreated, and how the new guidance can help to improve the lives of people affected by ADHD.

Professor Chris Hollis will give an insider's perspective on the development of the 2008 NICE ADHD Guidelines and review the key recommendations including assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Emphasis will be placed on new recommendations (not included in the 2006 NICE ADHD Technology Appraisal) and their practical clinical implications.

More information: <http://www.addiss.co.uk/annual.htm>

24-25 September 2008

Scottish Learning Festival

SECC and Clyde Auditorium, Glasgow, Scotland

Nasen will be attending the Scottish Learning Festival 2008. Free to all teachers and educationalists, the Scottish Learning Festival 2008 is the largest annual conference and exhibition on the Scottish education calendar.

More information about the Scottish Learning Festival is available [here](#).

27 September 2008

Dyspraxia

Sheraton Hotel, Heathrow, London, UK

Spanning the years: A joint approach to dealing with dyspraxia. A one-day conference for health, education professionals and anyone working with children and adults with dyspraxia.

More information: <http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>

4 October 2008

Managing Behaviour

Including the Troubled and Troublesome

Scotland

Rob Long, of Education Works, will discuss *the problem is the problem not the child* as part of the nasen behaviour management conferences.

More information: the [nasen 2008 CPD Calendar](#)

6-7 October 2008

Autism neuroscience

London, UK

The Autism Research Centre at the University of Cambridge will be hosting an autism neuroscience conference.

The conference will include lectures summarising the latest international research on the nature and causes of autism. Abstracts are invited on these topics for both oral presentations and poster displays at the conference.

More information: www.arc-conference.com

8 October 2008

ECOC/ADHD-Belgium conference: Recognizing and reaching children with learning difficulties, ADHD and related conditions across languages and cultures
MAI conference Centre, 40 rue Washington, Brussels, Belgium

International speakers include Steve Chinn, who has worked for many years with students with dyslexia and dyscalculia, and Cordula Neuhaus, a psychologist and pediatrician, who specialises in treating young people with ADHD. All proceedings will be translated simultaneously from English into French and Dutch.

More information from ecoc@ecoc.be or Chalks on 0478 482 023 or Joanne at adhdbelgium@gmail.com or 0494 177 403

10 October 2008

European colloquium on progress on "STOP DYSCRIMINATION"
European Parliament, Brussels

A year after the declaration, a follow-up on progress on supporting 'DYS' people (Dysphasia, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, etc.).

More information: <http://coface-eu.org/>

10 October 2008

Managing Behaviour, Supporting the Student
Northampton, UK

This workshop will explore both the principles and practices of rewards and how they can be used more constructively – not only to support good behaviour but also to increase learners' understanding of the choices they make and the benefits of intrinsic motivation.

More information: the [nasen 2008 CPD Calendar](#)

17-18 October 2008

Special Needs London 2008
Business Design Centre, London

The UK's largest annual event dedicated to Special Educational Needs gives you the opportunity to seek specific advice, information and support to successfully manage individual student needs or classroom situations.

More information:

<http://www.teachingexhibitions.co.uk/Exhibitions/NASEN+&+TES+Special+Needs+Exhibition/London/2008/>

20 October 2008

Creative movement
Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay, Wales

Touch Trust is a charity which offers daily creative movement programmes for people of all ages with complex needs. The conference offers the opportunity for discussion on the values and challenges to inclusive community arts.

The Question Time panel includes representatives from: National Disability Cultural Projects; British Institute of Learning Disabilities; PMLD network; Foundation for people with Learning Disabilities; Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities; Wales Millennium Centre; Touch Trust; Galeri, Caernarvon; Arts Council of Wales.

More information: www.touchtrust.co.uk

21 October 2008

Medical issues in autism

London South Bank University, UK

Research Autism is holding another collaborative autism research forum. It will include presentations on general medical needs, epilepsy, diet and gastrointestinal problems; paediatric and other issues related to the health needs of children and adults with ASD. Research Autism is keen to develop research proposals that take account of the concerns of individuals and families.

More information: sarah.chivers@nas.org.uk

22-24 October 2008

Autism 2008: Geneva Centre for Autism International Symposium

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

More information: [Conference info](#)

23-27 October 2008

Defeat Autism Now!

San Diego, California, US

More information: www.autismdaneurope.com

29 October–1 November 2008

2008 Annual IDA Conference

Seattle, Washington, US

The 59th Annual Conference!

More information: <http://interdys.org/>

5-7 November 2008

Eurochild Annual Conference: Including children : a child rights' approach to child well-being"

Budapest, Hungary

Eurochild's 5th Annual Conference will take up the theme of strategic planning for social inclusion of children and young people, examining the synergy between strategies at EU and national level to promote child well-being from a child rights' perspective.

More information: www.eurochild.org.

6 November 2008

Autism awareness - a basic understanding

Kidderminster, UK

An introductory event aimed at anyone wishing to develop awareness and understanding of people with autism.

Further events are planned for 17 March 2009 in London and 12 May 2009 in Kidderminster.

More information: http://www.bildservices.org.uk/acatalog/Autistic_spectrum_disorder.html

15 November 2008

11th General Assembly of the European Dyslexia Association

Ecole de Stockel, Rue Henri Vandermaele, 1150 Bruxelles - Woluwé Saint Pierre

More information: <http://www.dyspel.org/eda/>

25-28 November 2008

48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE): Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future

Geneva, Switzerland

More information: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice/48th-session-2008.html>

30 March-1 April 2009

Ninth International ADDISS Conference

The Spirit of ADHD:

Resilience, Hope, Opportunity , Success

ADDISS is now accepting submissions to present at this conference.

Please email info@addiss.co.uk

Tip of the month

Find out about what is happening in special needs education in the UK with the regular Special Needs and Disabilities Update at

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/12755/SENupdate24.pdf