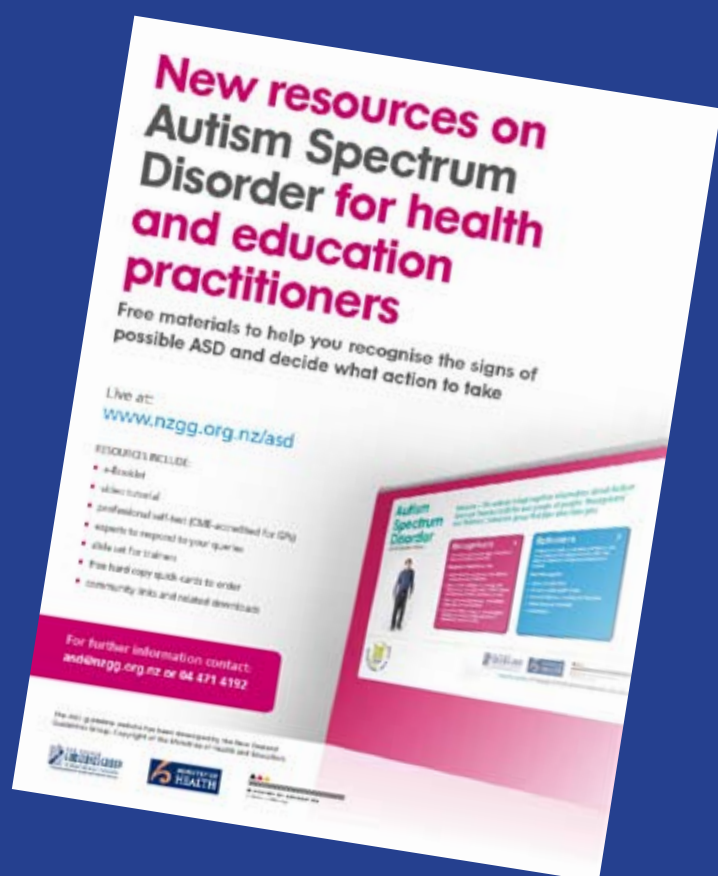


New resources on Autism Spectrum Disorder for health and education practitioners

New evidence resources are available on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to help health and education practitioners recognise the signs of possible ASD and decide what action to take. The free resources are derived from the 'New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline' (NZ ASD Guideline). Special features of the website:

- Booklets that use an interactive viewing tool with:
 - multiple page views
 - page turning
 - full page zoom
 - search
 - bookmarking
 - a printable pdf.
- Dynamic slide sets presented by professional leaders of ASD who will 'walk' you through the content of the booklets
- Presenter slide sets for trainers and educators to use (as individual slides or a complete set) in their own presentations



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- A question and answer 'self-test' to check your understanding of the booklet (CME/CNE-accredited for GPs and nurses)
- Online ordering of free hard copy resources (as stock lasts)
 - Quick Cards on recognition (in English, Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Cook Is. Māori) and on referral (English only)
 - NZ ASD Guideline
- Links to ASD information updates and organisations that can provide further reliable information and support
- Feed back form to send comments on your experience of the site
- Expert answers to your questions about recognition and whether to refer in 'Frequently asked questions'.

www.asdguideline.com



You may be aware that the Ministry is currently undergoing a restructure. The purpose of the re-structure is to ensure that we are working as efficiently as possible, there is limited duplication and we are providing value for money. A number of groups within the Ministry will be affected by these changes, however there are currently no changes proposed for the way the Disability Support Services Group is structured or funded. While this is happening it is business as usual.

We are starting to plan for the 2010/11 financial year, which is looking to be similar to this one in terms of the fiscal constraints we will need to operate within. We are awaiting the release of Budget 2010 at the end of May to consolidate our planning. Our priorities are:

- expanding the Individualised Funding scheme
- looking at a new model for disability support
- managing Equipment and Modification Services
- scoping a review of residential services.

We are half way through our Provider Forums and I will have more news about what came out of these in a later issue. The Consumer Consortium had its first meeting of the year last month and an update on this is on our website.

I am travelling to Ireland next month to represent New Zealand at the International Initiative for Disability Leadership. This is a

four-day forum between disability leaders from countries of similar economic and cultural development. The purpose is to demonstrate and share knowledge of innovative and effective practice(s), encourage and support use of these practice(s), develop sustainable influential leadership and circulate the latest evidence and information on new ideas and what is seen to be working. For the first two days, I will join the government leaders group in Dublin followed by two days in Killarney at a networking meeting. There will be three specific disability forums hosted at the networking meeting focusing on:

- changing the demand dynamic
- outcome based quality
- how to maximise the disability leadership initiative.

I will report back on this meeting in a later newsletter.

As we head into winter, it is timely to think about getting a flu vaccination and preparing yourself for the coming flu season. The flu vaccination this year includes protection against H1N1 swine flu. Some information about this is enclosed in the newsletter and can be found online at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/influenza-a-h1n1>.

I hope you manage to keep healthy over the next few months.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Health. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this newsletter, the Ministry of Health is not responsible for any omissions, inaccuracies or changes that may have taken place after publication.

Emerging Pacific Leaders Forum

In March the Development Manager - Pacific, Feala Afoa, was one of 15 people selected to attend the Emerging Pacific Leaders' Dialogue (EPLD) Conference.

The EPLD is a regional Pacific leadership conference, which aims to strengthen the capacity of future leaders in the Pacific region to manage challenges collaboratively, positively and creatively. The two-week long conference examined the key themes of governance, economic development, climate change, health and education, and security and stability in the Pacific region.

'EPLD was about bringing together leaders from various backgrounds to address Pacific issues as a collective group,' says Feala. The EPLD conference started in Samoa. Participants were then assigned to 10 study groups, each visiting one Pacific nation.

'I was part of the Australia study group. Our tour programme involved dialogue with people at all levels, across all sectors - from the federal government in Canberra to the local indigenous community in Alice Springs.' Feala says the whole experience was invaluable. 'The conference planted a seed. It made us more aware of, and more prepared to deal with, issues in the Pacific region. Personally, it showed me how my work contributes to addressing the region's challenges in terms of disabilities.'



Lu'i Ola Church Engagement Toolkit

Lu'i Ola is an interagency Auckland Pacific Regional Project co-sponsored by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. To help improve the understanding and inclusion of disabled Pacific people, the community engagement group, has developed a church engagement toolkit to help Pacific churches include disabled people in the church community. A promotional campaign around this toolkit will start late April. For more information about this programme go to <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/disability-keyprojects-pacific>.



Workforce Development

Te Pou, has been contracted to provide the National Training Coordination Service and Training Grant Scheme. This new service will coordinate training options for all DSS workers who wish to study towards approved national certificates. Specific focus for workforce development is:

- Consumer Training and Leadership Fund -training for people with disabilities to better manage their own support services and their own resources
- Leadership Development Scheme - reproducing sector led leadership initiatives that have been successfully used to build leadership capability
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Disability Support) - a new qualification for needs assessors, service coordinators and case managers
- National Certificate Disability Support Assessment Planning and Coordination (Level 5) - a new entry level qualification for needs assessors, service coordinators and case managers.

The Graduate Diploma in Education (Disability Support) has generated interest from outside the DSS NASC workforce. Enquiries from prospective students can be made to Kathy Martindale at Auckland University on k.martindale@auckland.ac.nz.

For information about these work programmes go to <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/disability-keyprojects-workforce>.

Equipment & Modification Services (EMS)

The government has recently allocated an extra \$27m for this and the following two years for EMS to address the growing costs and waiting times for these services. We have also made some changes to eligibility criteria for some services and have introduced changes to funding limits. The main changes are:

- we have raised the threshold for funding low cost equipment from \$37 to \$50
- housing modifications to allow people to get into and out of their home including moving between floors has a top threshold of \$15,000 (incl GST)
- we are introducing simpler eligibility criteria for hearing aids.

For more information on these changes go to <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/disability-news-factsheets#changesmar2010>.

Local Area Coordination

The Ministry has recently released the report on The Review of Local Area Coordination-Type Processes, which the Ministerial Committee on Disability reviewed last year. The report can be found at [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5362/\\$File/local-area-coordination-paper-mar2010.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5362/$File/local-area-coordination-paper-mar2010.pdf).

Speech Language Therapy protocols

The Ministries of Health and Education have an Operational Protocol in place between them, covering therapy and equipment for school aged children. It includes the disciplines of occupational therapy and physiotherapy. In 2009 the Protocol was updated and changed to the Operational Guideline. Work is now underway to scope and include Speech Language Therapy in that Operational Guideline. For information on this work go to [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5243/\\$File/speech-language-therapy-guideline-update-mar10.doc](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5243/$File/speech-language-therapy-guideline-update-mar10.doc).

“In June 1994 my parents were told that I had cerebral palsy and I possibly would never walk or talk. However, just three years after my parents were told that, my family heard my voice. My thoughts were voiced through a device called an Alphatalker. The Alphatalker was the first of many communication devices that have allowed me to communicate independently. Before I got the Alphatalker, when I wanted to say something, people had to watch me as I pointed to words in a red folder. I am grateful for all the communication devices I have had as I know they have saved my family and I from a life of frustration. Yes, of course, we all wish that we could talk naturally, but these talking devices are the second best thing.”



These are the opening lines of an address presented by MacKenzie Kench, a student at Rangitoto College in Auckland, to the families attending the inaugural KiwiChat Camp. This was a residential camp for school aged children and their families, held at Totara Springs near Matamata in February. Students came from all over the North Island to attend. The primary aim of the camp was for children using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and strategies to improve their communication device use and become more competent communicators in a fun and relaxing atmosphere. TalkLink Trust clinicians, school-based therapists, teachers and teacher aides, as well as students from the speech-language therapy (SLT) training programmes and numerous volunteers participated in the camp.

The camp was a great success with positive feedback from both families and professionals

- ... Learned new skills and how others use (devices), gained confidence
- ... Practiced using the device in a group setting
- ... Saw how people used their talkers and made friends
- ... Really great, good networking/confidence building opportunity for both parents and kids
- ... I saw the benefits of having a supportive environment, which included everyone - families, siblings, support people and professionals. I have never been to a camp with such a positive vibe
- ... Better understanding of our client's day to day life (struggles, meal times, family life, and attitudes of community)
- ... It was the most amazing experience of my life to date. It is now my motivation and inspiration to finish my BSLT and kindled a passion to work in the AAC field
- ... Saw how capable these children and young adults are at using AAC and how supportive their families are.



The KiwiChat camp would not have been possible without support from a number of sponsors, and the many volunteer hours provided by the organisers. For more information on the KiwiChat Camp, including a list of sponsors visit www.talklink.org.nz. The TalkLink Trust would like to make this camp an annual event, with the aim to also run a camp in the South Island.



Eye-gaze technology

Learning and trying ideas

Making new friends



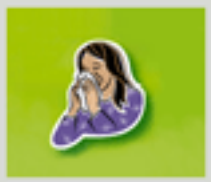
Get immunised

Influenza immunisations are now available, including protection against H1N1 swine flu.



Know if you are high risk

Some people, including pregnant women are at higher risk of developing complications if they were to get influenza.



Know the symptoms

Stay at home until essentially well, that is not sneezing and coughing as this is how the virus spreads.



Seek medical advice

Promptly if you are concerned or if your condition worsens. Consult your GP or call Healthline on 0800 611 116.



Wash and dry your hands

Reduce your chance of getting the flu, and stop its spread to others.



Know how to care for yourself and others

Including looking after children and babies. Rest, rehydration and reducing fever are especially important.



Be prepared

Have a plan, get food and medical supplies, be prepared to care for yourself at home.

