

Conference: Children who have visual impairment and autism

Furthering understanding of research and practice

Thursday 18 and Friday 19 November 2010

Marble Arch Thistle Hotel, London

The combination of visual impairment and autism in children is rare, but has a very high impact. With presentations from key workers in the field, this conference will raise your awareness of the issues and provide you with information and ideas which will increase your knowledge and enhance your practice.



Learning objectives

Attending this conference will enable you to:

1. Learn about some of the most recent research into visual impairment and autism.
2. Extend your knowledge of the diagnosis and nature of autism in children and young people who are blind or partially sighted and the links between visual impairment and autism.
3. Learn about the different approaches used in educational settings with children and young people with visual impairment and autism.

Day One

Chair: Dr Linda Pring, Professor of Psychology, Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Key note presentations

- **Reversible autism among congenitally blind children? An eight-year follow-up study.** Dr Peter Hobson, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology, University College London Institute of Child Health/ Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust
- **Diagnosing autism in visually impaired children at the Developmental Vision Clinic.** Dr Alison Salt, Consultant Developmental Paediatrician, Neurodisability Services, University College London Institute of Child Health/ Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust

- **Diagnosing autism in visually impaired children in the community.** Dr Hazel Curtis, Consultant Community Paediatrician, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, and Heather Macleod, formerly Speech and Language Therapist, West of England School and College for Children and Young People with Little or No Sight, Exeter
- **Developmental setback in visually impaired infants and early screening for social communication difficulties in young children with visual impairment.** Dr Naomi Dale, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Head of Psychology, Neurodisability Services, University College London Institute of Child Health/ Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust
- **Social communication in visually impaired children.** Dr Valerie Tadić, Post-doctoral research fellow, Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology, Institute of Child Health at University College London
- **The efficacy of strategies/approaches employed with sighted autistic children.** Dr Patricia Howlin, Professor of Clinical Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, London

Day Two

Chair: Judy Bell, Co-ordinator, Visual Impairment and Autism Project

The Visual Impairment and Autism Project

- Members of the Project Team will describe the project, focusing on the findings and will introduce the **Project Resource Pack**.

Workshops

Delegates will have the opportunity to attend workshops on three of six topics:

Choice 1

Either **1a) Autism in sighted children and in those who have visual impairment.**

Project Team

Or **1b) Structured teaching for pupils who have visual impairment and autism.**

Kim Taylor, MSI teacher, Greenfields School, Northampton, and David Preece, Team Manager, Services for Children with Autism, Northamptonshire Children and Families Service

Choice 2

Either **2a) Relationship Development Intervention.** Dr Peter Hobson, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology and Dr Jessica Hobson, Senior Research Fellow, Behavioural and Brain Sciences, University College London Institute of Child Health

Or **2b) The structured use of trampolining with pupils who have VI and autism.** Russell Walker, Senmove, former Head of PE at Linden Lodge School, Wandsworth, London

Choice 3

Either **3a) Meeting the sensory needs of pupils who have visual impairment and autism.** Gail Deuce, Consultant Teacher, Family, Education and Advisory Service, Sense

Or **3b) Music for pupils who have visual impairment and autism.** Dr Adam Ockelford, Professor of Music, University of Roehampton

Posters

Poster topics will include:

- The diagnosis of autism in children with visual impairment
- Tactile symbols/objects of reference
- Autistic features in children with Septo-Optic Dysplasia, Optic-Nerve Hypoplasia and Isolated Hypopituitarism
- Gentle Teaching.

Exhibition

Exhibitors will include the partner organisations in the Project.

Project Team

- **Catherine Bernie**, Autism Lead, Autism and Behavioural Support Service, Brookfields School
- **Jane Headland**, Headteacher, Brookfields School
- **Jenny Ravenhill**, formerly Principal Psychologist, National Autistic Society
- **Judy Bell**, formerly National Development Officer; Multiple Disability, RNIB Children's Services, now an Independent Consultant
- **Sue Keil**, Research Officer, RNIB
- **Ian Bell**, Project Leader and Lead Speech and Language Therapist at RNIB Rushton School and Children's Home
- **Teresa Whitehurst**, Research and Development Officer, Sunfield.

Who should attend?

This major event will be of interest to those working with blind and partially sighted young people who have autism and the parents of these children. It will be of relevance to a wide range of practitioners, including teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, psychologists, mobility officers, care workers and doctors. It will also be of interest to those carrying out research in visual impairment and in autism and in the relationship between them.

Price

For professionals: £150 per day or £270 for the 2 days

For parents: £100 per day or £180 for the 2 days

These fees cover the cost of attendance, including lunch and other refreshments, but do **not** include accommodation. Delegates will need to arrange their own accommodation and pay for it separately.

Booking details

To book your place, please return your booking form to:

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RNIB
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B1 1BN

Telephone: 0121 665 4235

Fax: 0121 665 4201

Email: children@rnib.org.uk

Website: rnib.org.uk/autism

Book your place now to avoid disappointment. Invoices will be sent on receipt of application.

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