

'A New Kind of Trainer': How to develop the training role of people with intellectual disabilities (ID)

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Aim: To produce an accessible guide to assist people with ID who are interested in becoming, or developing their role as, trainers of healthcare professionals, and to give good practice advice to organisations, particularly medical schools and universities, who want to employ people with ID. **Method:** Information was generated through interviews and advisory group meetings, with people with ID who work as trainers, with a supported employment agency, a personnel department, and with employment organisations. **Results:** The book uses photographs and text to tell the story of Gary Butler who works as a Training Adviser at St George's Hospital Medical School. It describes how he got the job, what is involved in doing the job and how he developed in his role as trainer. The book also details issues for employers to consider at every stage of the employment process, for example, issues of recruitment, induction, training and support. **Conclusions:** The book provides an important source of information, guidance and advice on issues that face both people with ID who work as trainers and the organisations that employ them.

Including Down syndrome (DS) children in regular schools: Main determinants of school achievement and social integration

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Aim: To study academic achievement and social integration of DS children included in mainstream schools and analyse the main factors related to their progress. **Method:** Four DS children born in 1994 have, since then, been evaluated with the Griffith's Scale and in interaction with their mothers. In-depth interviews were conducted with mothers. Since school age, school progress has been analysed using interviews with their regular and support teachers who filled in a questionnaire at the end of each school year. **Results:** Two of the children learned to read, achieved basic skills in numbering and counting, and were fully accepted by their peers. One made very little academic progress in an inclusive setting and her mother requested her to be transferred to a special class. The other shows severe language delay, learning disabilities and behaviour problems. His mother refused the transfer to a special school that was suggested by his teachers. **Conclusions:** The global development of these children has always been strongly related to maternal adaptation, mother-child interaction, family social network and forms of support to child and family. These factors continue to have a decisive influence on their school achievement and social integration enlarging their individual differences along time.

Practices of early intervention in Lisbon: Families and professionals' perceptions

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Aim: To study parents and professionals' perceptions on the practices of early intervention (EI) and the degree to which the support is family-focused. **Method:** 193 mothers and 128 professionals working with their families responded to semi-structured interviews and to the Family Focused Intervention Scale (Mahoney *et al.* 1990), adapted to this Portuguese sample. **Results:** Information is not shared between parents and professionals who do not work as partners. Child evaluation is focused on the diagnosis and not on the child's functional abilities. Intervention planning is frequently based only on informal assessment. The child is the main focus of the intervention. Many of the service providers work within mono-disciplinary teams and there is no effective service and resource coordination. **Conclusions:** The practice of early intervention in Lisbon County does not follow internationally recommended practice. A real improvement in EI depends on a better graduate and in-service training for the professionals. The adaptation of assessment instruments and intervention methodologies and the implementation of evaluation studies on early intervention programs and practices seem also to be important issues to be considered in the future.

An experimental evaluation of an early literacy curriculum with at-risk preschoolers

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Aim: To evaluate the efficacy of an early literacy curriculum, *Ladders to Literacy*, in boosting the emergent reading and writing skills of preschoolers living in poverty and considered at-risk for being labelled with an intellectual disability and/or low academic performance in elementary school. **Method:** The experimental curriculum, *Ladders to Literacy*, is being implemented in 8 randomly selected and assigned classrooms in a single early childhood program serving families living in poverty. Eight other classrooms in the same program, matched to experimental classrooms based on geography and length of school day, were randomly assigned to the control condition. Ten percent of participating children have already been labelled with a disability, typically speech-language impairment or developmental delay. Children will be assessed over a three year period, until the end of first grade. **Results:** Results from a pilot implementation of the experimental curriculum last year indicated wide variability in implementation across teachers. More intensive technical assistance and support will be provided to teachers in experimental classrooms this year. **Conclusions:** By May 2004, results from this project will provide early childhood educators with rigorous, systematic information about the effectiveness of *Ladders to Literacy* on preschoolers' early reading and writing skills.

Study of enterprise behaviour among people with disability

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Aim: To analyse the abilities of and support needed by people with disabilities to make business sector initiatives. To value enterprise spirit of people with disability. **Method:** Application of the Evaluation Questionnaire of Enterprise Behaviour (Verdugo & Jenaro 2002) to the population of Avila city. The total population of people with disability was 317. The questionnaire has five main factors: (a) belief about knowledge and support, (b) belief and supports, (c) leadership, (d) self-control, and (e) emotional stability. **Results:** High level of study is associated with high level of success as an enterprise-worker. To have a father as a businessman can model some characteristics of successful enterprise-workers. Some factors (knowledge and support, belief and supports) can be associated with quality of life dimensions. **Conclusions:** Society has positive attitudes, beliefs and a good position to support enterprise initiatives. Planning for habilitation can be most important. People with disability have less strong enterprise attitudes than people without disability.

Computer assisted instruction for infants (18-36 months) with intellectual disabilities (ID)

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Aim: The aim was to evaluate the efficacy of computer assisted instruction for promoting language acquisition in infants with ID. **Method:** A multiple baseline study across four infants tested the efficacy of using a computer with touch screen for milieu training of expressive language targets. **Results:** Each child demonstrated substantial increases in targeted expressive communication skills ranging from spontaneous picture labelling to prompted expression of appropriate phonemes. **Conclusions:** Milieu teaching is a preferred method for eliciting expressive communication in young children with ID and can be applied using computers with age appropriate software.

Unintended consequences: Improved opportunities for ALL students

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This session will describe the impact of a US Federal Consent Decree, intended to improve mental health services for students under IDEA and Section 504 in Hawai'i DOE schools (273 schools). As part of this process, a new position was established in the schools, that of a Student Services Coordinator (SSC). Those individuals became responsible for coordinating services for students in their schools with special needs. The Center on Disability Studies provided training for the SSCs to prepare them for this role. This was a 15-semester credit graduate level interdisciplinary certificate program in disability studies. Presenters will show how that action has resulted in massive statewide, systems change that has improved learning opportunities for ALL students.