

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Beverly Beckles PhD

On December 5th 1964 National Centre For Persons With Disabilities (NCPD) embarked on a long, difficult, fulfilling and distinguished journey towards achieving a truly inclusive society.

We recognize that we have not fully realised this dream and that there is still much work to be done. However, through NCPD's continuous advocacy initiatives there have been much advancement in this sector.

Continuous education for, and information sharing with persons who regularly interact with Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as well as those persons who do not regularly interact with PWDs is an important factor in ensuring that inclusivity is achieved.

In this regard, I am very pleased to announce that NCPD is launching its quarterly

e-newsletter starting from the third quarter (July–September) of 2016. The newsletter will share information on different types of disabilities, stories of persons with disabilities, updates on NCPD activities as well as updates on NCPD's research activities.

I hope you find the information shared to be informative and I encourage you to share the newsletter widely.

Our Vision

To be a World Class Social Enterprise promoting social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Our Mission

To empower persons with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, training, advocacy, research and consultative services in partnership with diverse stakeholders.

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Teaching Methods for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Why teaching Individuals with Autism may seem Daunting

Teaching persons with ASD may be challenging at times. Even those adolescents and adults with Autism who may be considered “high functioning”, may possess marked limitations in communication such as the inability to read social cues, understand expressive language and social customs. Most persons with ASD may also have very rigid routines and a propensity to engage in impractical repetitive tasks which may make it difficult to engage their attention.

There are numerous instructional approaches, treatment protocols, and specialized programs which have been proven through research, review of outcome data, and observation to be effective in teaching persons with ASD.

Intervention strategies, techniques, and methodology incorporated are usually based on the individual's, developmental level, learning style and the skill or task to be learned.

Teaching methods

Incidental Teaching

Incidental teaching involves using naturally occurring instances as an opportunity to teach lessons.

It can be used to introduce new behaviours or expand on language the person has already acquired. Incidental teaching capitalizes on existing interests and as such can be very useful in teaching persons with ASD. It can turn the student's fixation with particular objects or settings into a teachable moment. A key element of this method however is to create an environment that provides opportunities for the person to initiate the lesson through interaction with their surroundings.

Discrete Trial Training

Discrete Trial Training (DTT), also referred to as “discrete trial procedure” or “discrete trial teaching”, incorporates a gradual system of learning and skill acquisition that comprises five steps. These five steps are antecedent, prompt, response, consequence for a correct response and consequence for an incorrect response.

DTT involves learning initiated by the teacher; it is a focused, structured approach that minimizes outside distractions from the learning process unlike Incidental Teaching. However this method can be used in conjunction with Incidental learning to ensure that the skill or behaviour can be transferred from the classroom to different settings.



WHAT IS AUTISM?

“Autism is one word attempting to describe millions of stories” - Stuart Duncan

Autism is a developmental disability

Children with autism, also known as autism spectrum disorder or ASD, have social, communication and language problems. They also have restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.

Autism may be mild or severe. This is why it is called Autism Spectrum Disorder. All children with autism don't have the exact same problems contrary to normal perceptions.

According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention 1 in every 68 children has been diagnosed with autism. ASD is 4.5 times more common in boys than girls. There is a great need for statistics in Trinidad and Tobago on the number of persons with ASD.

There is no cure for Autism There is currently no medical diagnosis that can detect Autism. From birth to at least 36 months of age, every child should be screened for developmental milestones during routine checkups with a medical professional.

SYMPTOMS OF AUTISM

“Autism is not a choice, acceptance is. Imagine if the opposite were true” - Stuart Duncan

Autism spectrum disorders are characterized by social-interaction difficulties, communication challenges and a tendency to engage in repetitive behaviors. However, symptoms and their severity vary widely across these three core areas.

Social Interaction

Persons with ASD may have problems using social skills to connect with other people. They may seem to be in their own world. It may be hard for them to:

- share a common focus with another person;
- play with others and share toys;
- understand feelings;
- make and keep friends.

Communication

Persons with ASD experience trouble with communication skills such as understanding, talking with others, reading or writing; understanding and using gestures, like pointing and waving; following directions; understanding and using words; having conversations; learning to read or write.

They may repeat words just heard or words heard days or weeks earlier; talk with little expression or use a sing-song voice.

Children may use tantrums to tell you what they do or do not want.

In DTT a desired skill or behaviour is broken down into smaller tasks or ‘trials’ to help with successive acquisition.

1. *Antecedent* - The instruction. The teacher should ensure that the instruction is clear and to the point.
2. *Prompt* - Hinting (gesturing) at the correct answer or appropriate response to the instruction.
3. *Response* - Allow the student the opportunity to answer or exhibit the correct response.
4. *Consequence for a correct response* - Immediately reward a correct response with appropriate incentive.
5. *Consequence for an incorrect response* - For an incorrect response, further prompting should be used until the correct one is elicited, then the individual should be rewarded straight away.

Teaching using positive reinforcement for correct responses makes the behaviour more likely to become constant. DTT can be used successfully in behaviour modification of persons with ASD.

Video Modelling

Video modelling is a technique that capitalizes on the fact that more persons with ASD tend to be more visual learners. This technique consists of the desired skill or behaviour projected via a video to elicit modelling or replication of the desired trait by the student. Video

modelling has been successful in teaching even vocational skills and other behaviours to persons with ASD (Allen et al, 2010).

The benefits of using video modelling techniques extend to the reduction of external stimuli that could distract the learner and the ability to show the desired trait being executed identical each time, as opposed to using a real life model, which would in turn make it easier for acquisition and mastery of the desired skill.

Some tips to remember

- Use rules to enforce concepts. Many students are rule orientated however be careful not to overuse rules
- Match student work time to their performance time. If they are able to attend a task for approximately 15 minutes have that much work for them to do (not a lot more or less)
- Use alternatives to writing in order to demonstrate competence. Magnetic words/ letters, word processing devices, dictating responses or symbols may be used.
- Teach Social Skills as part of curriculum, remember there is no such thing as “common sense”
- Understand cycle of tantrums/ meltdowns and try to prevent them. If you know something is going to set them off, don’t do it. Teach the student how to

handle situation before putting them in it

- Schedule in down time. This may be a 30 second “break” or a 15 minute break depending on student and could be sensory or just a walk.
- Have realistic expectations. Not everyone is social all of the time, not everyone is on task all of the time!
- Success builds Success. Start a new skill in an area of success first
- Share success between home and school

References

Allen, Keith D., Wallace, Dustin P., Renes, Diane., Bowen, Scott B., and Burke, Ray V. “Use of Video Modelling to Teach Vocational Skills to Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders.” *Education and Treatment of Children* Vol. 33 no. 3 (2010): 339-349.

Educate Autism “Discrete Trial Training”
<http://www.educateautism.com/applied-behaviour-analysis/discrete-trial-training.html>.

Planvic, Joshua B., Sam, Ann M., and Odom, Samuel, L. “Effects of Video- Based Group Instruction for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder.” *Exceptional Children* Vol. 80 no. 1 (2013): 67-83.

Strategies for Teachers Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder https://www.cesa7.org/sped/autism/05/Strategies_for_Teachers.pdf.



SYMPTOMS OF AUTISM

“I am different not less” - Dr. Temple Grandin

Common Behaviours

Children with autism may:

- have trouble changing from one activity to the next; flap hands. rock. spin or stare;
- get upset by certain sounds; like only a few foods; have limited and unusual interests-for example: talk about only one topic or keep staring at one toy.

Recent research confirms that appropriate screening can determine whether a child is at risk for autism as young as one year. While every child develops differently, we also know that early treatment improves outcomes, often dramatically.

The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers-Revised (M-CHAT-R™) is a scientifically validated tool for screening children between 16 and 30 months of age that assesses risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD).



TREATMENT AND ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM

Each child or adult with autism is unique and so, each autism intervention plan should be tailored to address the specific needs of the person.

Intervention can involve behavioral treatments, medicines or both.

Early intervention often can reduce challenges associated with autism, lessen disruptive behavior and provide some degree of independence

With appropriate treatment and education, many children with autism spectrum disorders can learn and develop.

For further assistance for persons with Autism please seek support from local institutions such as:

- Autistic Society of Trinidad & Tobago: 646-5506 / 225-6808
- Autism Parents Association of Trinidad & Tobago: 489-1673
- Autism Services South Support: 288-0769

New Faces at NCPD

NCPD is pleased to introduce three new members of staff into the NCPD Family.



Ms. Candice Barbara John joined NCPD as an Information Technology Instructor in September, 2016. She holds a Bachelor of Education with a specialisation in Primary Education from the University of Trinidad and Tobago and is currently a Postgraduate student in the Literacy Instruction at the University of the West Indies. Ms. John has four years experience in Education.



Mr. Christopher Yearwood started as a Development Assistant at the Unit of NCPD in July 2016. He has a Development Services Diploma from Fanshawe College, Canada. Mr. Yearwood has six (6) years experience as a Developmental Service Worker.



Ms. Myrtle Aguilera joined NCPD as a Custodian (Part-time) in September 2016.

NCPD's Activities April – September



The Digicel Foundation hosted a “Kick Start Pre-Clinic Selection” on April 16th. Two trainees, Israel Sherwood and Tyrese Pierre, participated in the pre-qualifying round of the event. (Israel Sherwood is pictured above)



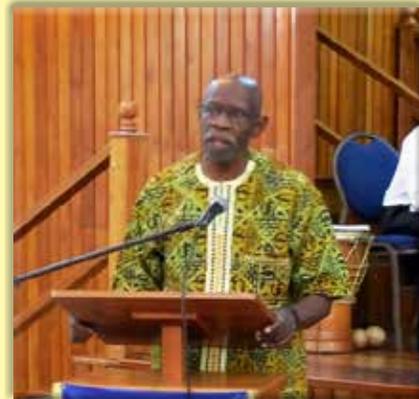
107 trainees participated in the annual Powergen Sport and Fun Day April 20th held at the Powergen Sports Grounds in Penal. NCPD took home 3rd place prize for Best Dressed in the March Pass.



On April 25th, NCPD decided to “Light It Up Blue” in observance of Autism Awareness Month. Staff, trainees and apprentices wore blue clothing to create awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder and to acknowledge April as Autism Awareness month.



NCPD Ensemble performed at the CODO Music Festival on June 3rd



NCPD held its Annual General Meeting on June 30th at the San Fernando City Auditorium. Dr Ralph Henry, the feature speaker shared his insights on the topic ‘Creating opportunities for the NGO Sector in challenging times’.



On May 24th, the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust awarded NCPD the **JB Fernandes Award for NGO Excellence** at the 2016 T&T NGO Professionals Seminar.



NCPD held a World Day for Safety and Health at Work Fair to commemorate World Health and Safety Day on April 29th.



Zumba!! NCPD hosted a fun fitness event for staff on April 28th to kick off activities commemorating World Health and Safety Day.



First Lady of Trinidad and Tobago, Her Excellency Mrs. Reema Harrysingh-Carmona hosted the 3rd Annual Autism Awareness Tree Lighting Ceremony at President's House on April 14th. Dr. Natalie Dick, NCPD Vice Chairman, was the featured speaker at the event. (L-R: Mr. Richard Blewitt, UNDP Resident Coordinator, His Excellency Anthony Carmona, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Her Excellency Mrs. Reema Harrysingh-Carmona, First Lady, Dr. Natalie Dick.)



Atwell's Education Institute



Charles St. Gasparillo Improvement Group

NCPD continued its disability sensitivity awareness sessions during the quarter.



NCPD held its annual *Clean for a Purpose Day* on August 20th at its three locations: the Centre, the Unit of NCPD and the Plum Restaurant in preparation for the start of the new training year in September.

NCPD's Participation in Workshops and Consultations

Over the period April –September, NCPD made a number of contributions on behalf of PWDs at the following sessions

National Workshop Eco-Systems Mapping	On June 10 th the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a National Workshop Eco-Systems Mapping. The focus of the discussion was to identify gaps in data collection, analysis and dissemination in Trinidad and Tobago and make recommendations on how these gaps can be addressed. NCPD identified that significant gaps exist in data pertaining to PWDs.
Social Dialogue “Towards a Social Mitigation Plan – Building Resilience to Secure our Nation”	The Ministry of Social Development commenced these consultations in June 2016. The social dialogue attempts to garner input and feedback towards the development of a National Social Mitigation Plan. NCPD made a number of suggestions towards the plan with respect to PWDs.
Development Dialogue on Climate Resilience	The UNDP held this Dialogue on June 21 st . The NCPD representative, Ms. Lisa Bholai, sat on the roundtable discussing what needed to be done to encourage public awareness and education across relevant sectors on the issue of climate resilience. NCPD took the opportunity to make the point that any communication initiatives must also cater for deaf and blind persons.
The European Union Human Rights Strategy for the period 2016-2020	On May 13 th , Dr. Beverly Beckles had the opportunity to make a number of Contributions towards the EU Human Rights Strategy for the period 2016-2020. These included highlighting the need to identify disabilities as a standalone topic, as well as to focus on projects driving the collection of data.
Trinidad and Tobago Youth Conference	On August 27 th , Mrs. Danielle Ryan represented NCPD at the Trinidad and Tobago Youth Conference hosted by the Commonwealth Youth Council. Mrs. Ryan sat on a panel discussing Youth Underemployment, Unemployment and Entrepreneurship. The Conference sought to advance the youth agenda and the co-ordination of activities and policies of the Commonwealth in the field of youth.
National Forum on the Future of Work in Trinidad and Tobago	The Ministry of Labour hosted a National Forum on the Future of Work on August 29 th . Dr. Beverly Beckles represented NCPD and Co-chaired a panel discussion on <i>Respecting the rights of Persons with disabilities</i> . Conclusions from the discussion will be incorporated into a report to inform the work of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprises and will be submitted to the International Labour Organisation.

NCPD's Upcoming Activities

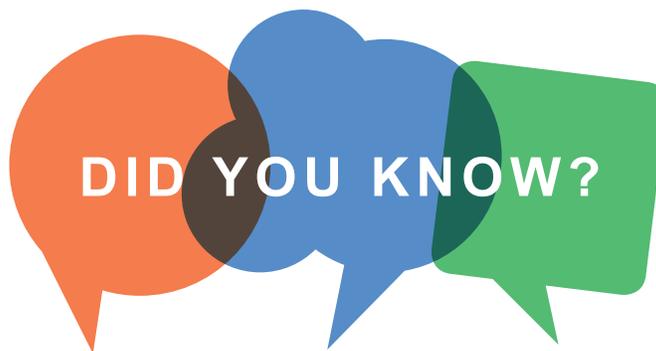
Activity

Start of the Training year
Fashion Show Fundraiser – Inclusion Dans La Mode
“Tea by the Sea” Fundraiser
End of the Training Term

Date

Monday 5th September 2016
Sunday 2nd October 2016
Saturday 22nd October 2016
Friday 16th December 2016

Wellness Tip



Certain foods and vitamins can actually help elevate your mood and alleviate some symptoms of mild depression. Among the most beneficial foods to lift your spirits are dark chocolate, salmon and dark-coloured vegetables (such as peppers and broccoli)

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