

# EIS In Touch With Families

## Manager's Update

### Pivotal Response Training

The Early Intervention Services (EIS) program has been busy exploring evidence-based therapy for children with autism, called Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT).

### What is Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT)?

PRT is based on the science of Applied Behaviour Analysis, and uses this science to teach the specific skills that are a problem for children with autism. Decisions about programming and progress are made based on a lot of data, including video.

One of the most effective goals that PRT can address is early communication. Verbal requests (any intentional sound) are reinforced with the child's favourite items in a natural, play-based routine. Often children who were previously not using any language quickly begin to understand the power of interacting with people.

This treatment is being used by the Sick Kids/ Bloorview Autism team, in Nova Scotia as the provincially funded Autism intervention, and in other locations in the U.S. (see below).

More than 20 years of research supports this approach and we have seen some pretty compelling evidence.

### York Region Staff Working Towards Certification

Staff training in PRT started in June 2010. We invited speakers from the Koegel Autism Institute in California to provide an overview and training. Attendees included all of our Early Interventionists, 14 Speech Pathologists from the York Region Preschool Speech and Language program and three staff from the Developmental Assessment and Consultation Service.



Right now, a team of 11 Early Interventionists are working hard towards their certification in PRT, which requires submitting videos of their work to the Koegel Institute for scoring. We are making progress with four staff having completed this process! Our thanks to the families who have agreed to participate in this work.

One of our supervisors received some intensive training from the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Centre in Arizona. Their training team came to Toronto and spent four days in April and three days in June coaching a small group of 15 families and 15 professionals through daily videotape review.

### Next Steps

EIS is working with the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program and the Developmental Assessment and Consultation Service to develop a clinical pathway for children showing social communication concerns.

The process will include:

- A joint initial meeting
- Early referral for diagnosis
- Parent education
- Parent coaching.

We will share more information with you as plans develop.

*Dan Beale*  
Manager, Early Intervention Services

## Preterm Pathways (PP)

### What is it?

Preterm Pathways is a specifically designed screening to monitor the development of children born prematurely. It was developed by Dr. Virginia Frisk at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Many Infant Development Programs in Ontario follow the Pathways approach which is available for children born at 37 weeks or earlier.

The PP involves using a variety of developmental screens to monitor development; these tools are administered at specific ages. The screens are designed to identify any possible concerns with development of the preterm infant/child.

### How do the screenings work?

All Early Interventionists are provided with clear guidelines for monitoring an individual child's development using the screens.

All developmental information is based on the corrected age of the child up to 36 months. Screenings occur at 4, 8, 12, 18, 24, 30, and at 36 months (actual age of child).

The visits take from 1 to 1.5 hours and are a combination of play and interview time with the caregiver. Parents are provided with a summary of the results.

Screening appointments are available in the local EIS offices in Keswick, Markham, Newmarket, Oak Ridges, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan.

### What happens after the screening?

When a skill is found to be lagging behind age expectations, advice is provided or a referral is made to the appropriate agency so that the child receives the support and therapy he/she needs.

Assessments occur at 2, 5, 9, 13, 19, 23, 31 months corrected age. Then the child will be assessed at 36, 48, and 56 months actual age.

A written report — including the assessment results and referrals made by the clinic — is provided to the paediatrician or family doctor and other professionals who are involved in the child's care after every visit. Information and support is also provided to the family and child.

### EIS has teamed up with Southlake

EIS has collaborated with Southlake Regional Health Centre's Neonatal Developmental Follow-Up Clinic. The clinic is a specialized clinic for children who had medical complications related to, or immediately after, their birth. The clinic is intended only as a screening clinic for developmental issues for children at risk.

The goals of the clinic are to:

- ✓ Promote the emotional and physical development of child and family
- ✓ Ensure all children receive the appropriate care as soon as possible
- ✓ Provide parents with information about early childhood development
- ✓ Participate in the education of health officials
- ✓ Share information with community partners

For more information about Preterm Pathways or to set-up a screening appointment, please contact your local EIS office.

## Halloween Was A Blast This Year

On Friday, October 26th, professionals and volunteers worked together to turn the Multi-Service Hub for Children and Youth into a spooktacular Halloween Haven for children and youth with special needs. This was the second year running this event. Approximately 175 adults and children participated in games, face painting, colouring, trick or treating, and climbing into a real firetruck.

Fun was had by all and this event is expected to be held annually.



## Spring Fling hosted by the EIS Parent Participation Committee

On May 12, 2011, there was laughter and tears among the 21 people who shared stories and sweet treats at our Spring Fling. The EIS Parent Participation Committee (PPC) held its first of four events to be held during the year at the South Services Centre.

The agenda included a brief history of the EIS PPC, introductions, a review of the PPC accomplishments so far and a discussion of goals for the year. Goals included:

- Running a couples or father's breakfast group on a weekend morning;
- Working on various projects including giving input to the procedures for orientation and discharge;
- Creating opportunities to share resources and information and to support one another.

Everyone who attended had one thing in common — they were all working to find the best results for their children. We shared our stories, our successes, our good and bad moments, the joy of having these children in our lives and the fears we shared for their futures.

Comments that were heard regarding their individual Early Interventionists included:

- "Without her I don't know where to go"
- "God bless her I wouldn't know what to do without her"
- "She helped me through my hard time"
- (From a dad on seeing the EI for the first time) "I wondered who she was"

These are families building their resiliency, working through their grieving process, enjoying their children's successes, all at different stages; they offered encouragement and a promise of good things to come.

Thank you goes to the PPC planning committee and their help in making the evening successful, to all the parents who brought treats, to Patti for the beautiful flowers and to Joyce and Besy who helped with the set-up and clean-up. For 2012, we have planned a Winter Wonder, Summer Fun and Fall Ball — all parents are invited to attend.

The PPC meets monthly at the Oak Ridges office. For more information contact Linda Rosner: (905) 762-1282. ext. 2784 or [linda.rosner@york.ca](mailto:linda.rosner@york.ca)

## Geneva Centre for Autism (GCA)

We have had some parents asking about what services the Geneva Centre for Autism (GCA) offers to families in York Region.

**York families are welcome to attend GCA parent training workshops or participate in its fee-for-service programs. Unfortunately, the funded services provided by the GCA such as consultations for speech and occupational therapy, behaviour therapy, parent consultations, social work support and respite are for Toronto families only\*.**

**York families who contact GCA from the Region of York for family support services are directed to contact Kerry's Place Autism Services at 905-713-6808 ext. 350.**

*\*York families were eligible up to about three years ago. Only those already registered at that time were grandfathered into the program for specific services at the GCA on-site.*

## Kerry's Place Autism Services

Kerry's Place Autism Services provides community outreach services, psychological and family support services to people with ASD and accommodation supports.

Services offered through Kerry's Place include:

- ✓ Consultation support to individuals, families and the community
- ✓ Family consultation
- ✓ Family support groups
- ✓ Sibling workshops
- ✓ Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI)
- ✓ Adult residential services
- ✓ Children's residential services
- ✓ Treatment centre intervention
- ✓ Individual program supports
- ✓ Social groups for children and adults
- ✓ Respite relief
- ✓ Parent education and training
- ✓ Professional training and mentoring
- ✓ Book, toy and therapeutic tool lending libraries
- ✓ Family resource centres

Note that the availability of these services vary by location and depend on staffing.

Kerry's Place Central East Region serving York and Simcoe can be reached at:  
Central Administrative Office, 34 Berczy Street, Suite 190,  
Aurora, ON L4G1W9 or [www.kerrysplace.org](http://www.kerrysplace.org)

# Welcome To Holland

by Emily Perl Kingsley



I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability — to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip — to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills...and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

*Web source: <http://users.erols.com/jmatts/welcome%20to%20holland.html>*

*EIS In Touch With Families* is a newsletter for families who receive service from York Region's Early Intervention Services. For more information on any aspect of this newsletter, contact Linda Wheeler at 905 830-4444 ext. 2351 or toll free at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 2351.

For more information about York Region's Children's Services and the Community and Health Services Department, go to: [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)