

# ASD PLUS: EDUCATION FOR FAMILIES

## Information Sheet

The *ASD Plus - Education for Families Programme* is an education programme for parents, family/whanau and caregivers of pre-schoolers (0-6 years) with a diagnosis Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is person-centred and individualised and participants learn about ASD in relation to a range of topics over 7 modules. Our team of facilitators are skilled and experienced specialist workers who have experience in supporting young children with ASD and their families.

*ASD Plus* is delivered throughout the country by IDEA Services and jointly funded by Ministries of Health and Education.

### The programme

**ASD Plus has seven modules, with learning objects as follows:**

#### Module One – Introduction to ASD

- Clearly describe the programme structure and expectations
- Describe the key characteristics of ASD
- Identify some of the ways that ASD affects my child
- Describe the spectrum of conditions related to ASD
- Describe the causes of ASD

#### Module Two – Understanding My Child's Communication

- Describe the key communication characteristics that are common in children who have ASD
- Identify some of the ways that my child's communication is affected by ASD
- Describe key communication support strategies that are useful in supporting children with ASD
- Identify changes I could make to improve communication with my child
- Describe some specific/specialised communication support strategies

#### Module Three – How My Child Senses the World

- Describe how the senses can be affected in children who have ASD
- Identify my child's sensory profile
- Identify how I can support my child with his/her sensory needs

#### Module Four – My Child's Learning Style

- Describe common elements in the learning styles of children with ASD
- Identify what helps and hinders my child's learning
- Identify some changes I can make to the way I help my child to learn

#### Module Five - Stress, Anxiety and Routines:

- Describe the factors that can contribute to stress/anxiety in children with ASD
- Identify possible causes and signs of stress and anxiety in my own child
- Describe strategies to develop predictability and decrease stress/anxiety for children with ASD
- Decrease stress and anxiety for my child and our family

#### Module Six – Understanding Behaviour – Why does my child do that?

- Recognise what can influence behaviour in children with ASD

- Describe a Positive Behaviour Support Approach and why it is useful
- Put together a simple plan to manage and change behaviour

### Module Seven – Managing Into the Future: A Roadmap

- Describes what makes a successful intervention, and different types of successful interventions
- Can access information about strategies and interventions
- Has information on available services to assist future planning
- Has information on the importance of self care and maintaining a strong family

### How it is delivered

Families in *ASD Plus* will first be visited at home to:

- Build a relationship between the facilitator and the family
- Learn more about the families learning needs and strengths
- Tailor the education programme to the family members needs
- Find out the best way to deliver the programme.

There are three ways to be part of *ASD Plus* depending on the family's needs:

1. **Group sessions:** Involves a small number of families - usually once a fortnight.
2. **Individualised sessions:** For a particular family or whanau group delivered to suit their needs.
3. **Distance learning:** Via internet, DVD, reading material, and phone/email/face to face contact, depending on the needs and location of each family.

This flexibility allows us to meet the needs of people in rural and isolated locations, and to better cater to cultural and language needs.

### Who delivers ASD Plus?

The programme is run by Community Specialist Services, part of IDEA Services. Our team of facilitators are all very skilled and experienced specialist workers who have experience in supporting young children with ASD and their families.

See our website for details about who our facilitators are.

### Accessing the programme

**Where is the programme available?** Anywhere in New Zealand

#### Who can participate?

Families of pre-school children under the age of six who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This could include parents, guardians, other main caregivers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, other family or whanau members. We encourage all key adult family members to participate.

#### How do I refer to this service?

Registrations for this programme can be made by families directly or through a health professional on behalf of a family, with their permission in the following ways:

- **Online:** To complete the **online registration** go to the 'Registration Tab' on our website:
- **Print form:** From our website print and complete the '**Registration Form**' and send back via email or post:
  - E-mail: [asdplus-education@idea.org.nz](mailto:asdplus-education@idea.org.nz)
  - Post: ASD Programme Coordinator, P.O Box 4155, Wellington 6140
  
- **Website:**  
[www.ihc.org.nz/our-services/specialist-services/autism-programmes/asd-plus-education-for-families/](http://www.ihc.org.nz/our-services/specialist-services/autism-programmes/asd-plus-education-for-families/)
  
- **Phone:** 0800 273 7587

**Contact Mary Romanos on 0800 273 7587 for more information**

***There is no cost to participants as this is fully funded by the Ministry of Health.***