



## ***Highlights: Autism News of Orange County & the Rest of the World 14***

***In this issue we highlight some of the new research findings on diagnosing children below the age of three years as well as contributions for young children and older individuals with different skill levels.***

## **Screening for autism in children at 18 months**

**Carrie Allison and Simon Baron-Cohen,**

Professor, both of Cambridge University, describe the challenges and benefits of screening for autism in children as young as 18 months.

The encouraging results of their Q-Chat testing raises the question of whether this instrument can provide valid findings for wide-scale population studies and whether the specific score at a young age can predict outcome at a later age.

### **Box 1: Example Q-CHAT items and illustrations**

#### **SECTION 1**

Please answer the following questions about your child by marking the appropriate circle. Try to answer EVERY question if you can.

1. Does your child look at you when you call his/her name?

- always
- usually
- sometimes
- rarely
- never



2. How easy is it for you to get eye contact with your child?

- very easy
- quite easy
- quite difficult
- very difficult
- impossible



3. When you child is playing alone, does s/he line objects up?

- always
- usually
- sometimes
- rarely
- never



## **Assessing the social mind**

**Michelle Garcia Winner and Pamela J.**

**Crooke** attempt to assess the social mind in individuals with autism, looking at dynamic



*Pamela J. Crooke (Left) & Michelle Garcia Winner*

assessment options. They stress the importance of social perspective taking skills, not only on school-, but life-success, thereby going beyond autism and raising an important aspect for education in general.

## Comprehensive speech-language assessments

**Rachael Gray** summarizes some relevant norm-referenced speech-language assessments and combines these with structured interview scales with parents, and observations in natural settings. Her article reminds us that a comprehensive assessment is only possible when different members of the child's team collaborate.



*Assessments commonly used in a speech-language evaluation for a child with ASD*



## Core visual supports and predictors for success

**Barbara Bloomfield** has been a frequent highlight of workshops organized by the S.U.C.S.E.S.S. program. She outlines core visual supports and predictors for the success of various support systems.

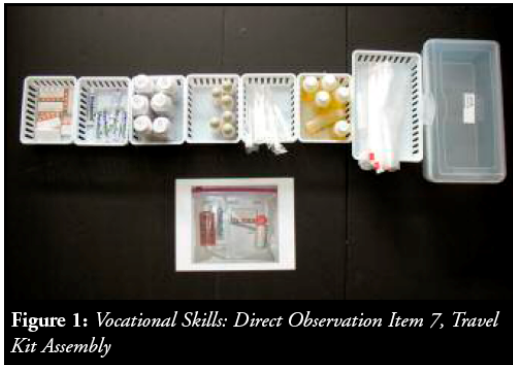


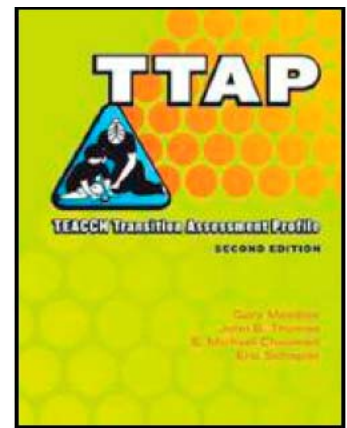
Figure 1: Vocational Skills: Direct Observation Item 7, Travel Kit Assembly

## TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile

**S. Michael Chapman**, Director of Supported Employment at the Division TEACCH, shares the TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile

## Assessment Focus Academy

**Andrea Walker**, S.U.C.S.E.S.S. Project Coordinator, from the Orange County Department of Education, introduces the Assessment Focus Academy, a five-year-effort within Orange County which has successfully provided training and support for preschool to secondary school staff involved in educational assessment for students with ASD.



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**Our parent section** has many highlights, such as the moving account by **Zane’s mother** on the different stages **of accepting his diagnosis and finding support from caring and loving teachers.**

Also from Singapore is a photo we will remember for a long time: a child with autism helping another child face a

challenging new situation.

**“Let’s do it together”** – thanks to **Salwanizah,**

Head of the Early Intervention program, of the Autistic Association Singapore for this contribution and all the support for children like “Jack” and “Jill”! Again the message “Let’s do it together” is one we can apply beyond this context!

Last but not least: Our cordial congratulations go to **Luis Hueteand his teacher Lauren Myers.** Our cover artist won the prize in a competition kindly organized by **Christina McReynolds,** to help the Autism News survive the current financial crisis by illustrating the theme **“Step up to the Plate.”**

**Please spread the news that ANOC needs help and pass on our brochure. We hope that with the**

### Let’s do this together

By Sawanizah Mohd. Said



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support of the community we can continue an “invaluable publication that successfully bridges the all too formidable gap between academic research and everyday practice” (a comment from one of our readers).

**Vera Bernard-Opitz,  
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Clin. Psych, BCBA-D™**

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