
tips for autism

Supporting teams to develop evidence-based
plans for students with
autism spectrum disorder

What is tips for autism?



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- * *tips for autism* is a course where a team of people dedicates three days to developing interventions and plans to support their particular child with autism spectrum disorder
 - * By tapping into their own and others' experience and expertise and current evidence, they develop a concrete, achievable, actionable long and short-term plan around their specific child/student that is ready to be implemented the day after the course

Who can come?



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- * The course is free to participants and available for teams who support students aged between 5 and 12 years
 - * The child's parent and school must attend and there is no maximum number who can attend (the more people who know the child well, the better the outcome)
 - * Some funding is available for team members' expenses
 - * Students do not need a formal diagnosis, but the team must agree that an ASD-specific approach is appropriate
 - * *tips for autism* is funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health

Who facilitates?



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- * The course is co-facilitated by a special educator (Special Education professional, Resource Teacher – Learning and Behaviour or similar) and a parent who is also qualified as a teacher
 - * They are both experienced facilitators, tuned in to the latest evidence, and have real life examples to make theory practical
 - * There are currently 17 facilitators, located throughout the country

Course content



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- * The course is based on up-to-date international evidence, adapted to meet the needs of New Zealand children, the New Zealand curriculum, teachers and classrooms. It is fully consistent with the *New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline*
 - * Each session follows a set pattern:
 - a 'chalk and talk' presented by a facilitator, which gives key information for the topic
 - a team activity to focus on assessing each individual child's strengths and needs in this area
 - demonstration of evidence-based strategies and supports
 - a team activity to plan a goal for the child using the strategies

Course principles



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- * *tips for autism* is not prescriptive and is based on facilitated learning rather than lecturing. There is plenty of opportunity for discussion and practical application of what you learn
 - * Resource material is available at different levels and individualised to meet the needs of different children's strengths and interests. Facilitators have the skills and experience to be flexible to the needs of individual groups
 - * You only share information about your particular child/student within your team, not with the full group

How could it help a student?



- * After the plans are implemented students could be:
 - showing less anxiety and being more available to learn
 - happy to be present and learning that people and school can be fun
 - becoming more motivated because their interests are acknowledged and used in their learning
 - having more choices and participating more
 - making progress with communication and social goals
 - being acknowledged and feeling valued for their unique view of the world

What participants learn



- * You will learn how to:
 - understand your child/student better and recognise and intervene before they become stressed
 - have an emotional regulation plan for your child/student to ensure they are available for engagement and learning and prevent them getting over or under aroused

What participants learn



- * You will learn how to:
 - know about your child/student's strengths and how to use them for learning
 - have strategies to communicate better and gain insights into your child/student's needs and wants
 - communicate and make better decisions because you share the same knowledge and principles.
 - learn some new evidence-based strategies tailored to suit you and your child

Parents will gain from:



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- * an acknowledgement that parenting a child with ASD is challenging
 - * feeling like you're not in it on your own
 - * sharing your knowledge and experience with other team members
 - * working together with others to make school a happier place for your child
 - * knowledge and strategies to help your child to be engaged and participate
 - * sharing and celebrating your child's skills and strengths
 - * support to make family life easier

Teachers will gain from:



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- * information about the student which will help them become more engaged and better participate
 - * confidence about what and how to help this student to learn
 - * skills which you will use every day both with this student and with other children
 - * knowledge about ASD and how it affects your student
 - * a good working relationship with parents and others in the team
 - * a workable long-term plan for learning

Key workers will gain from:



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- * a knowledgeable, functioning team who all know the words to the waiata (sing off the same songsheet)
 - * less firefighting and responding to difficult situations
 - * a team who have the foundations for you to build new skills
 - * a neutral environment and child-focused tasks which help team members to leave some of their differences and challenges behind
 - * real progress for the child
 - * the luxury of everyone being able to spend enough time together without distractions
 - * the course impartially reinforcing and supporting the advice and support that you are giving, reassuring team members about current evidence-based practice
 - * sharing current curriculum knowledge and thinking

Some other facts



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- * Each course consists of between 6 and 8 teams (20—40 participants)
 - * 17 courses were held in 2009 for 106 teams (335 teams and 1587 participants since inception)
 - * The course is supported by a workbook with readings, resources and references and is fully consistent with the *New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline*
 - * Well received by participants (evaluations average over 4.5 out of 5 over all courses)
 - * Currently being evaluated by Massey University (3-year evaluation)
 - * *tips for autism* has been developed in New Zealand for our educational environment

In conclusion



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- * Nationally, there will be about 23 courses in 2010:
 - 6 courses in Term 1
 - 8-9 courses in Term 2
 - 8-9 courses in Term 3
 - * About half the tips courses are decided in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's four regions. Other courses are arranged on demand in conjunction with District Offices, RTLB, schools or clusters of schools
 - * Website: www.tipsforautism.org.nz has information packs, course locations and application forms
 - * Email for enquiries: tipsfor.autism@minedu.govt.nz