

The Autism Classification System of Functioning: Social Communication Project

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Study update II – August 2012

STUDY TEAM:

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INTERESTED, HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact the ACSF:SC project coordinator and knowledge broker, Martha Cousins at 905-525-9140 ext. 27849 or mcousin@mcmaster.ca and you can check out the CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research website at <http://www.canchild.ca>, at McMaster University.

What's the ACSF:SC project about?

This project will develop a new classification system to categorize autism 'severity' by describing levels of preschool children's social communication function (what children can do) in a standard way. Parents, educators and health care practitioners are being asked to provide their perspectives at different stages in the system's development; by doing so they are improving our team's ability to describe and differentiate between levels of function in children with autism. Multiple methods of testing are being used to determine if the tool is able to do what it has been designed for and is consistent in doing so (i.e., is it valid and reliable). This classification system will provide the first standardized, evidence-based way to classify preschool children with autism by a key aspect of function. This will make it possible to categorize, functionally similar groups of children with autism, and thus identify and explore disability trends, treatment needs and outcomes.



2011-2012 Phase I

This phase is coming to an end – 50 parents, educators and clinicians helped us with the development of a first draft of this tool by participating in focus groups (October 2011 - April 2012) and feedback sessions in May 2012 at the Sheraton Hotel in Toronto, that's a lot of fingerprints! Currently we are working on a new draft that we hope to make available online for further review. **Watch for an email from Martha on behalf of the ACSF:SC team in mid to late October with an invitation to participate and comment, and a link to the draft ACSF:SC.**

2013 Phase II

We are in the process of preparing for **Phase II** where the tool will be field tested with parents, educators and clinicians to find out if it does what it's supposed to do consistently; help categorize preschool aged children with ASD by their social communication abilities. In September, Martha will be getting in touch with many of the organizations with which our participants work to seek their participation in this phase – which means that you could see the **ACSF:SC tool** in action by January 2013.