

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of an opportunity to participate in a research study whose purpose is to help parents to promote language use of children with autism. The study is entitled, "Teaching Parents to Promote Language Use of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders within Family Routines using Enhanced Milieu Teaching." This study will be conducted at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and in natural family routines in the homes of family participants. The study will be conducted by Joseph M. Lucyshyn, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, who will serve as Principal Investigator; and by Vivian Huen, Graduate Student in Special Education at UBC, who will serve as Graduate Student Researcher. This research is for the fulfillment of degree requirements for a Masters degree.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a language intervention model designed to empower parents to use and generalize the use of EMT in family routines with young children with autism. The language intervention model is based on best practices in enhanced milieu teaching (EMT). The design of the intervention model emphasizes an efficient workshop-based language intervention that teaches parents to promote generalized and durable use of language in young children with ASD within natural family routines. The study will evaluate the extent to which workshop-based language promotion intervention:

- a) improves child communication skills in the home;
- b) improves parents use of language promoting strategies in the home; and
- c) helps parents successfully support the child's use of language in the home.

Participation in the project will involve parents and other family members collaborating with members of the research team in five family support activities and three research activities. The steps of the family support process are:

- 1) Two-day parent training workshop (3 hours per day, for a total of 6 hours);
- 2) Collaborative development of a customized language promotion intervention;
- 3) Implementation of language intervention in the home;
- 4) In-home coaching sessions on an as needed basis (up to five sessions); and
- 5) Follow-up support.

Research activities include:

- 1) Preliminary assessments to confirm child language use in the home;
- 2) Videotaped observations in target family routines; and
- 3) Assessment of the acceptability and importance of the language intervention to family members

Families who choose to participate may experience three benefits. First, the child's communication skills may improve in the home. Second, the quality of parent-child interaction may improve and parent's knowledge and skills in promoting the child's language use in the home may be enhanced. A potential third benefit is that through your participation, other families who have children with disabilities and language deficits may also benefit. This will occur by describing the study's results in journals and at conferences.

If you are interested in participating in the study, or learning more about the study, please contact Vivian Huen at (604)306-0187 by email at huenvivian@hotmail.com. You may also contact Joe Lucyshyn at (604) 822-1904 or by email at joe.lucyshyn@ubc.ca. Alternatively, you also may contact the agency representative who gave or sent to you this introductory letter. At that time, if you give the agency representative permission to release your name and phone number, Vivian Huen will contact you by telephone to answer any questions that you may have. In any event, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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