

Title: A Parent Education and Skills Training Intervention for Young Adolescents with Autism	
Institution	Monash University, Centre for Developmental Psychiatry & Psychology
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Outline of Research	<p>1. To determine whether a specific parent education and behaviour management skills training intervention improves the behavioural, developmental, language, adaptive functioning, and symptomatic outcome for young adolescents with autism relative to an age, sex, and developmental level matched community sample of early adolescents with autism who do not receive these specific interventions.</p> <p>2. To determine if this parent education and skills training intervention improves the mental health and well being of the parents and family functioning.</p> <p>3. To assess the maintenance of therapeutic gains over time.</p> <p>The transition into adolescence for young people with autism is associated with an exacerbation of considerable personal suffering and extra burden and stress for parents, families and carers and cost to the community. Evidence from the literature and pilot work we have conducted indicates that a structured parent-based behaviour management skills training intervention might improve the behavioural and developmental outcome of young adolescents with autism and the burden experienced by their families.</p> <p>A wide variety of autism treatments have been proposed, which are applicable to young children but none are specifically focussed on adolescents. Parent education and skills training has well-established empirical support as an effective intervention for adolescents with antisocial behaviour and anxiety. The addition of parent training probably enhances the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural treatment of</p>

	adolescent depression. The effectiveness of parent training in the management of young adolescents with autism has not been established. Given the evidence that parent training is firstly an effective intervention for young children with autism and secondly is effective in the management of a range of emotional and behavioural problems in neurotypical adolescents, a controlled evaluation of a parent education and skills training intervention for young adolescents is justified.
Findings to date	
Expected start and finish dates	Starting date: February 2004 and expected completion date is December 2007.