



# Pre-school Autism Communication Trial Newsletter

My Lawnmower  
Matthew Sussex, aged 4



## Happy New Year ! Study Update

Welcome to the winter edition of the PACT newsletter. Many trials reach the end of their recruitment phase without reaching the target for recruitment. Thanks to the incredible hard work of the referrers, the research assistants and the families involved in the PACT study we reached the end of recruitment in March 2008 and not only did we achieve our target but surpassed it! 152 participants were recruited to the study. Two thirds of these families have now completed their contribution to the study. There have only been a couple of families

who have been unable to continue, with most remaining enthusiastic and committed. Our thanks goes to all those involved, as without your dedication, we would not be able to continue our research.

Our next newsletter will be towards the end of 2009 when we will be able to bring you the results of this study. Please remember if you change address or contact details to let the PACT office know. It is important that we can keep our records up to date and can keep you informed about the study.

## Bercow Review

In September 2007, John Bercow MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties was asked to lead an independent review into Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication needs. With the help of expert advisors, he saw and heard for himself what the present situation is and how the support available can be improved. He staged a series of consultation groups and listened to the voices of parents, children and young people in locations across the country. He visited children's centres, nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools right across the country. He commissioned research by leading academics in the field of speech, language and communication needs, and has now published the Review's final report, setting out their findings and recommendations to Government. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview/docs/7771-DCSF-BER-COW.PDF>



### THIS ISSUE...

Study update	page 1
Bercow Review	page 1
A Mothers Story	page 2

Therapists Farewell	page 2
Returning Questionnaires	page 2

## It's advantageous to participate in research

Olga Aslanova describes her experience of being involved in the PACT study.

'When Sophia was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder it really took me by surprise as I have never come across this condition before. I must confess I was at a total loss as to what to do next. Sophia's paediatrician told me about the PACT study being conducted by Manchester University. I agreed to enter without hesitation because in the past, I have been involved in many research projects and knew how advantageous it could be for Sophia and me to participate in front line research. There is no doubt that new ideas and research initiatives need case studies upon which the research is based, otherwise they would be unproven theories that couldn't be implemented to improve the lives of other autistic children and their frustrated families. We need to experiment and fight autism with the most support that we as parents can receive from medical and speech and language professionals. Well done PACT Team and THANK YOU!'

**Olga & Sophia Aslanova**



## Farewell and a big thank you to all our therapists!

Over the last couple of years we have had the privilege of working as part of the PACT team. During this time we have worked with a number of children and their families across the North East.



**Ruth Colmer and Sarah Randles**

We have both really enjoyed building relationships and working collaboratively with parents, and feel that this has given us the opportunity to gain an insight into the effects of autism on family life. We would like to thank all families for being committed to this study and for taking such an active role in developing their children's communication. It has been a pleasure to be part of this project, and the knowledge, skills and experience we have gained will be invaluable to us in our future careers.

Our role in the PACT team will come to an end in spring 2009, and we will move on to new Speech and Language Therapy positions. We will take with us many lasting memories of our time working for PACT.

We wish you all a happy New Year and best wishes for 2009.

**Ruth Colmer and Sarah Randles**  
**Research Speech and Language Therapists**

## Don't forget to post back your questionnaires !

Families who are involved in the treatment arm of the study will have received regular parent questionnaires through the post from the PACT office. If you receive one, we would be very grateful if you could complete it as soon as possible after you receive it and return it to us in the prepaid envelope enclosed. Your assistance with this is very much appreciated.

We would like to keep in contact with you through regular newsletters and greeting cards, and later this year we will be sending you the results of the study, so even if you have completed your final assessment, please don't forget to tell us if you move house or change contact details.

If at any stage you wish to contact the PACT team please email us at [pact@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:pact@manchester.ac.uk)

Further details of the study are available on the PACT website: <http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/pact/>

You can also contact your local PACT office at:

**University of Newcastle**  
**School of Clinical Medical Sciences**  
**Sir James Spence Institute**  
**Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4LP**  
**Telephone: 0191 202 3077**

**If you have any comments on this newsletter or would like to contribute an article please contact the PACT team**



**Please don't forget to let the PACT office or your research associate know if you move house**