

## **MEDIA ALERT**

23.05.14

Non-verbal children with Autism are speaking after an Australian-first trial in Hobart of a program that combines technology with traditional speech therapy.

A year ago the speech pathology and occupational therapy teams at StGiles Hobart became the only therapists in Australia to be accredited to implement Language Acquisition through Motor Planning - LAMP

St Giles will only ever implement evidence-based practice, so it was important for our team to rigorously trial LAMP before its implementation with clients early last year.

The goal of LAMP is to give children or adults who are non-verbal or have limited speech a method of expressing themselves.

LAMP uses electronic communication devices (i.e. Eye Gaze) with regular neurological motor patterns – pointing or eye direction - to achieve language connections.

When combined with a readiness to learn, the technology-assisted language connections extend to understanding meaning and common words and ideas.

Driving the implementation of LAMP at St Giles is senior speech pathologist Peter Hockley.

Peter Hockley is available today on: 62381802

Harrison:

- Turns 5 in December
- We have video footage of early sessions where he can't talk
- He is now speaking in sentences

## **BACKGROUND:**

Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP) is a therapeutic approach based on neurological and motor learning principles.

The goal is to give individuals who are nonverbal or have limited verbal abilities a method of independently and spontaneously expressing themselves in any setting. LAMP focuses on giving the individual independent access to vocabulary on voice output AAC devices that use consistent motor plans for accessing vocabulary.

Teaching of the vocabulary happens across environments, with multisensory input to enhance meaning. The child's interests and desires help determine the vocabulary to be taught.

The LAMP approach involves five basic components: (1) Readiness to Learn, (2) Shared Engagement, (3) Consistent Motor Patterns, (4) Auditory Signals, and (5) Natural Consequences. Together these components work to achieve language connections that include the growth of vocabulary, extension of language meaning, and generalization of words & concepts to other contexts.

Individuals with autism may have dysfunction in motor planning and sensory processing which are addressed with this approach. The LAMP approach continues to be enriched with the emergence of new information in neurology and motor learning and through the successes and struggles shared by parents, therapists, and emerging communicators. We are learning together!

As a result of intervention using the LAMP approach, it is hoped that the individual will gain the ability to independently and spontaneously communicate whatever they want to say.

Learning a language takes many years for the neurologically typical individual. LAMP is not a cure. LAMP is a method for providing an individual with a language system that can progress from first words to fluent communication.

Many individuals using the LAMP approach have demonstrated success with some becoming very communicative and some increasing the amount of their verbal speech.

## **ENDS**

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