

PACT-DS Summer Newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of the **PACT-DS Newsletter**.

We have lots to tell you about all we have achieved so far and our plans for the rest of the project.

Project overview

The Parents and Children Together (PACT) programme is a **parent-delivered language teaching programme** which has been shown to support typically developing pre-school children's language and literacy skills. There are many features of PACT that may support language learning for young children with **Down syndrome**.

This project aims to **adapt** and **evaluate** PACT for **children with Down syndrome aged 3-6 years**. To do this, we are running the project in two stages:

In Stage 1 (Aug 2022 – Aug 2023) we worked with **6** families and their children with Down syndrome to identify and evaluate adaptations to the programme, creating an adapted version specifically tailored to children with Down syndrome which we call **PACT-DS**.

In Stage 2 (commencing Sept 2023 – Dec 2024) we aim to work with **30** families with 3-6 year-old children with Down syndrome to explore the feasibility of the programme and the potential of PACT-DS to support children's language and literacy development.

What have we been doing?

- Between September 2022 and January 2023 we **worked with our families to identify adaptations the programme needed** to make it more usable and effective. We then **adapted part of the programme** based on parent feedback and experiences.
- In February 2023, parents **attended training for the adapted programme ('Family and Friends' theme)** and **delivered it at home for 5 weeks**.
- We completed **home visits** – it was lovely to speak to our families about how delivery of the adapted programme was going.
- We also collected **home video recordings** of sessions, and gave some individual feedback.
- We hosted a **Summer Workshop**, where parents gave us brilliant feedback on our plans for the rest of the project.
- A huge **THANK YOU** to our families for all of your time, feedback, and dedication to the programme – we could not have done it without you!
- In March 2023, we met with our **Steering Group**, who gave us some useful input on our plans for the next stage of the project.
- In April 2023, we presented about our work so far at the **Down Syndrome Research Forum** (online) alongside one of our parents, Lauren, who kindly talked about her experiences delivering PACT-DS.
- In May and June 2023, Kirstie gave **3 talks** for colleagues in Education; the Child Study Centre; and the Division of Hearing, Communication and Development at the University of Manchester about the project.



Team updates

- Kelly and Kirstie completed Makaton training up to Level 2 so we can communicate more effectively with the children in the project.
- Placement students Orlaith and Niamh are leaving the project this summer to complete their studies. We will miss you - thank you for all of your hard work on the project! We will be joined by Amelia in September 2023.
- Dr Rebecca (Becky) Baxter will join the PACT team as a Research Assistant in August 2023. We are very excited to welcome her to the team!

What is next?

- Over summer we will be developing the full 30-week PACT-DS programme based on our parent feedback and experiences.
- We will also be writing up the findings from the project so far. We hope to publish these findings later this year.
- We will start **Stage 2** of the project in September 2023, where we will work with around 30 families to explore the use of the full 30-weeks of **PACT-DS** (more details below).



Stage 2: Call for Participants!



We are looking for **28-30 families with children with Down syndrome aged 3-6 years** to take part in **Stage 2: a feasibility Randomised Controlled Trial of PACT-DS, commencing September 2023.**

Families must live **within 40 miles** of the University of Manchester or the University of Reading to take part.

Over the summer we will host some online Parent Information events about the project - do email us (below) if you would like to attend to find out more!

To find out more or express interest in taking part in PACT-DS:

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