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### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- DOES NOT BABBLE, POINT, OR MAKE MEANINGFUL GESTURES BY 1 YRS. OLD
- DOES NOT SPEAK
- DOES NOT RESPOND TO NAME
- POOR EYE CONTACT
- NO SMILING
- EXCESSIVE LINE UP OF TOYS
- DOES NOT COMBINE 2 WORDS BY 2 YEARS OLD
- LOSES LANGUAGE OR SOCIAL SKILLS

## AUTISM TRAINING

By: Tafa Tupuola



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has recently gained national attention because of the increased number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. On July 28-29, the University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) supported the national initiative by providing training to LBJ Pediatricians, Department of Health Physician, pediatric nurses, medical social workers, mental health clinic, Part C Helping Hands and ASCC nursing students. The two-day training addressed the American Samoa (AS) Logic Model to enhance the territory's capacity in responding to the increasing demand for early identification, assessment, service coordination and provision for children with ASD.

Autism comes from the Greek word "autos" which means *self*. A Swiss psychiatrist used this word to describe a patient with the schizophrenic characteristic of withdrawing from the outside world into himself. Children diagnosed with autism have symptoms that affect their communication, resulting in social, and behavior challenges in which they process information in their brain differently. Years ago, if a child was categorized as having autism or schizophrenia, mothers were labeled as "refrigerator mothers". The term "refrigerator mothers" came from a Leo Kanner paper in 1943, where he viewed the mothers' lack of warmth and attachment (coldness) in child rearing as the cause of their children's withdrawn behavior.



disability may exist. This is also true for pervasive

Developmental Disorder (PDD) which is a milder form of autism but meets some of the criteria for Autism or Asperger syndrome. The similarities of all three symptoms fall under the umbrella of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which may affect a person in different ways and ranges from mild to severe.

There is definitely a rise in identifying children with ASD like behavior here in American Samoa. Could it be that ASD awareness has



done a great awareness campaign or does the increasing identification indicate more than that? Although Autism existed years ago, it did not gain national attention until the movie "Rain Man" starring Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman appeared. The movie changed the perspective of Autism through a high-functional viewpoint.

The local training was conducted by Dr. Dian Baker a postdoctoral scholar at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the University of California Davis. Dr. Baker is a faculty member of the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (CEDD), Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders (MIND) Institute and the School Nurse Program Coordinator for the Master's Program in Nursing at the California State University Sacramento. With over 30 years experience as a pediatric nurse with a concentration in developmental disabilities and school health practice, she shared her wealth of knowledge with the healthcare participants.

The two-day training was sponsored by the AS Developmental Disability Planning Council (DDPC), UH Center on Disability Studies (CDS), LBJ Medical Center, and the AS University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

## Special Education Academy Training

By: Lia Pelenato



Opening Ceremony for Special Education's Academy with Keynote Dr. Tilly



“Creating a Culture of Quality Education for All Children” was the theme for The Special Education (SpEd) Academy Training held at Tradewinds Hotel on July 26-28, 2010.

The SpEd program, under the Department of Education (DOE), invited Dr. W. David Tilly as the Keynote Speaker for the event. Dr. Tilly currently serves as Director of Innovation and Accountability for Heartland Area Education Agency, which serves 54 public school districts and 36 ac-

credited private schools in central Iowa.

The three-day training featured workshops/ presentations from various local agencies on island as well as presenters from American Samoa Community College (ASCC) – UCEDD program. The UCEDD team presented on topics such as, “ADA Law, ADD/ ADHD, Child Abuse of Children with Developmental Disabilities (DD) and Emergency Preparedness.” These presentations mainly focused on children and individuals with DD. There were also presenters from University of

Hawaii who have collaborated with SpEd in the past. Also attending and presenting at the SpEd Academy was Mrs. Dian Baker, an RN and a faculty of the UCEDD program at the University of California, Davis and the MINDS Institute in Sacramento, California. Each participant was given a hand bag of goodies with educational materials and the program to assist them while attending. The training was brought to a close with a ceremony of gift giving farewell to participants, with closing remarks by DOE Director Dr. Claire Tuia Pomele.



### WHAT SYMPTOMS DO BABIES SHOW?

- HIGH-PITCHED CRY
- PROJECTILE VOMITING
- SLEEPING TOO MUCH
- BLOTCHY, RED TENDER SKIN
- BLANK STARE
- TENSE/BULGY SPOT ON TOP OF HEAD

## International GBS Awareness

By: Lia Pelenato

July is International Group B Strep (GBS) Awareness month word wide. Approximately one in four pregnant mothers carry GBS, the most common cause of life-threatening infections in newborns according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). GBS is detected through a test performed late in pregnancy for a bacterium called B Streptococcus which is transmitted from mother to child. Not all babies exposed to GBS become infected, but for those who

do, the results can be devastating. GBS can cause babies to be miscarried, stillborn, born prematurely, become very sick, have lifelong disabilities, and/or die in the first weeks of life. According to Group B International, GBS most commonly causes infection in the blood (sepsis), the fluid and lining of the brain (meningitis), and lungs (pneumonia). Some GBS survivors have permanent handicaps such as blindness, deafness, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy.

It is now a standard of care

in the U.S for pregnant women to be tested for GBS at 35-37 weeks of pregnancy. The CDC has issued a protocol of antibiotics to be administered during labor and delivery. The use of penicillin during labor reduces the risk of neonatal infection by removing the colonized group B Strep. These standard protocols have decreased the infection rate of newborns dramatically (Herriman, 2010). Unfortunately, American Samoa does not currently provide these services for our expectant mothers on island.

# The Silent Tour

By: Lia Pelenato



Deaf students and teachers from Matafao Elementary and Voc. Tech. High school under the SpEd program of the Department of

Education took a tour of the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) on a rainy Tuesday morning on July 14. The group consisted of four SpEd teachers and seven Deaf students. The tour began at the Admissions Office,

with Assistant Admissions Officer Peteru Lam Yuen introducing the students to the process of enrollment and as well as services the students are entitled to (such as an interpreter) once they are enrolled in ASCC. The Deaf students asked questions and also received a copy of the enrollment application.

Next stop was the Library, where the Deaf students observed ASCC students during their studies. The students were also introduced to the process of locating a book to assist with their research assignments. Continuing on the tour, the

students visited with Ms. Matesina Willis of the Student Services office. Finally, the tour ended with the students requesting to visit the Arts Building, where they thoroughly enjoyed their time with Arts instructor Ms. Regina Meredith. The students witnessed drawings, pottery and costume designs that were used in the play The Lion King.



Deaf students, SpEd teachers, ASCC staff during the tour at Student Services

## The Long Journey Part 2

By: Ernie Seiuli

The long journey of individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) started after President George H.W. Bush signed the American with Disabilities Act into law in 1990, which restored their rights to be treated fairly within their community. The Act was reinforced when President George W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disability Amendments Act on September 25, 2008. Unfair treatment and misunderstanding were the main concerns of the Act, and now most agencies and service providers are on track in protecting and serving individuals with DD.

The Developmental Disabilities Act (DDA) requires the agencies to ensure that people with DD and their families receive the services and support they need and participate in the planning and designing of those services. Within the services provided, there are eight areas of

emphasis whereas to promote: Employment, Education, Child Care, Health, Housing, Transportation, Recreation, and Quality Assurance. The Legislature recognized the need for strengthening State efforts to coordinate and integrate services for individuals with DD. As a result, three agencies were developed to strengthen and cultivate support services for people with disabilities. These three agencies are the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDPC), Protection and Advocacy (P&A), and University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). They work individually and collectively to ensure a strong foundation for DD services and support necessary for the inclusion of children and adults with DD in all facets of community life.

Congress established and authorized funding for State Developmental Disabilities Councils in each State and Territory, which work to

improve the quality of support and services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Their main mission is to advise Governors and State agencies on the use of available and potential resources to meet the needs of individuals with DD. The UCEDD at the American Samoa Community College is part of a national network that offers trainings, courses, technical assistance, and dissemination of information regarding DD. Protection and Advocacy are there to empower, protect, and advocate on behalf of individuals with DD.

These three agencies collaborate to provide assistance to people with disabilities so that they can live an inclusive, independent life and have more self-determination.



## University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

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## OUR MISSION

*The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) assures that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate fully in activities that will design and promote self determination, independence, integration and inclusion in all facets of life in American Samoa. The UCEDD will ensure the delivery and purpose of the Developmental Disabilities Act through culturally competent activities.*

## ACRONYMS/MEANINGS

- ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADD:** Attention Deficit Disorder
- ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
- ASCC:** American Samoa Community College
- ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ASL:** American Sign Language
- CEEDD:** Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities
- CDC:** Center for disease control
- CDS:** Center on Disability Studies
- DD:** Developmental Disabilities
- DOE:** Department of Education
- DDPC:** Developmental Disability Planning Council
- International GBS:** International Group B Strep
- MIND:** Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- PPD:** Pervasive Development Disorder
- P&A:** Office of Protection & Advocacy
- SpEd:** Special Education
- UCEDD:** University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities