

# MedicAlert now covers ASD

The MedicAlert Foundation is an international not-for-profit organisation providing a 24-hour emergency medical information and identification service for people all over the world with many types of illnesses, allergies and conditions.

The service also provides a direct link to nominated next of kin in the event of an emergency so you can rest assured your loved ones won't be alone if they find themselves in an emergency situation.

Until recently, MedicAlert New Zealand didn't include ASD as one of the medical conditions they provided support for. However, after other MedicAlert agencies took it up overseas and saw how popular and successful it was, MedicAlert New Zealand also decided to include it as part of their service.

"This is great news," says Jon Boyer, National Funding and Communications Manager at Autism New Zealand. "If someone on the spectrum is involved in an accident or confronted by the authorities, the fact that they are wearing a MedicAlert bracelet will immediately alert them to their condition and allow them to provide the appropriate treatment or action. This will give peace of mind to the individual, their parents and carers."

MedicAlert will be offering Autism New Zealand members a special discount to sign up, which will be launched at the Autism New Zealand Conference – Celebrating ASD in New Zealand, in September.

If you would like to find out more about MedicAlert, visit [www.medicalert.co.nz](http://www.medicalert.co.nz).

# 4D | For Dyslexia

Readers of the last edition of *Thinking Differently* will recall that we recently signed up a major new sponsor, the Cookie Time Charitable Trust.

As part of their mission to 'Help NZ kids discover their gifts', Cookie Time Charitable Trust has developed the 4D | For Dyslexia and ASD programme – which also stands for '4 Difference and 4 Diversity'. It's designed to assist New Zealand educators to put dyslexic and ASD children on the path to success.

The 4D programme aims to cause a paradigm shift in the way schools approach education for dyslexic and ASD kids, encouraging them to adopt a 'notice and adjust' attitude, focusing on a more personal and individualised approach to learning.

This approach understands that equity in education is achieved by recognising and accommodating differences, not just by treating students equally. This involves approaching dyslexic and ASD learning needs as preferred ways of learning, rather than as an impairment.

The 4D programme explains how to create stress-free environments that allow students to learn according to their specific needs, so they can learn in the ways that work for them, rather than failing by following the standard curriculum that doesn't cater to their needs.

It recommends focusing ASD students on a curriculum that is detail and order-driven, with lots of scaffolds, frameworks and visual timetables to provide structure, allowing them to be more comfortable when learning.

An online registry has been created that lists schools that have signed on and are taking the initiative with the 4D programme. Schools are listed according to levels that correspond to how advanced they are in their implementation of the 4D programme. To qualify to appear on the list, schools must have a 4D policy. They then advance in levels by producing and implementing a classroom and school-wide 4D strategy, and finally by monitoring their programme to ensure it is adding value to the students' learning.

Unlocking the potential of dyslexic and ASD students is at the heart of 4D. Its name recognises this by playing on the '3Rs' (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) and adding the fourth dimension, Creativity, the talent that 4D aims to develop in dyslexic and ASD students.

If you are interested in 4D or would like to see if your school is participating in the programme, visit [www.4d.org.nz](http://www.4d.org.nz) to see what a great job the Cookie Time Charitable Trust has been doing.



## The Passionate Mind: How Individuals with Autism Learn

Dr Wendy Lawson is an adult with high functioning autism. As a child she was considered intellectually disabled, and "almost incapable of doing as she was told". Today, as a mother of four, a qualified counsellor, social worker and psychologist with a PhD, Wendy is well known and respected for her writing and seminars based on her research and her own personal experiences as a person with autism.

Wendy was awarded fourth place in the Australian of the Year Awards in 2008. She has written nine books, ranging from her autobiography to an everyday text on autism. Her strong personality and sense of humour make her seminars hugely popular throughout the world.

Wendy will be running seminars throughout New Zealand during October. See details below:

### **Masterton**

Thursday 14 October 2010

### **Napier**

Friday 15 October 2010

### **Whangarei**

Monday 18 October 2010

### **Christchurch**

Tuesday 19 October 2010

### **Dunedin**

Wednesday 20 October 2010

### **Registration Fee (including GST):**

Earlybird Registration \$140.00 Payment *before* Monday 20 September 2010

Registration \$160.00 Payment *after* Monday 20 September 2010

To register, visit [www.creatingsuccess.co.nz](http://www.creatingsuccess.co.nz).

