



Research Bulletin

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Welcome to our first issue

This regular bulletin will provide insight into the important work we are doing at the St. Amant Research Program. We recognize the need to update the community at large about our activities and progress.

Future bulletins will

- highlight ongoing research
- profile staff
- discuss our publications
- examine general issues surrounding developmental disabilities and autism

We hope you find our bulletins informative. Please send us your questions and comments.

The **St. Amant Research Program** is dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities through research and education.

The program's current research is possible thanks to the support of

- University of Manitoba faculties of Nursing and Human Ecology
- The Winnipeg Foundation
- St. Amant Foundation

Towards a research centre

St. Amant and partners have been working steadily for several years to establish a research centre on developmental disabilities and autism. Realizing this simple concept requires a great deal of work, but it holds the promise of immense reward.

The concept

The notion of a research centre on developmental disabilities and autism in Manitoba emerged in 2001 at a Board Research Committee meeting at St. Amant. The plan was to bring together researchers with a shared mission and allow them to work effectively as a group.

The committee recognized that there is no other research centre in Manitoba with a mission that focuses solely on research in developmental disabilities and autism.

The work

There were papers, consultations, more papers, more consultations with community agencies, research institutes and university faculties, and more papers.

To date, with the financial support of The Winnipeg Foundation, St. Amant Foundation, and the Faculties of Nursing and Human Ecology, two jointly funded research/academic positions have been created. Bev Temple has recently assumed the Research Associate position in the Faculty of Nursing and the search for the Human Ecology position is ongoing. We are very excited about these new partnerships.

A formal announcement of the research centre is being planned and we will keep you posted.

The rewards

Compared to the current research program, we look towards a centre producing more research on developmental disabilities, more collaboration within and across disciplines, and more information exchange between researchers and service providers. Of course, this growth is not an end in itself – the real value of the research centre will be in the work carried out by the researchers and the benefits that result.

St. Amant's research mission

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for people living with developmental disabilities and autism through research. To achieve this mission, our research staff carries out three major and important functions:

1. We conduct applied research that leads to benefits for people living with a disability.
2. We expand knowledge and influence practices by disseminating research findings to practitioners, clinicians, service providers and caregivers.
3. We enhance future clinical and research capacity in this important field by training students.

Unique

A number of researchers across Canada work in the areas of developmental disabilities and autism. However, no other research program in Manitoba focuses solely on developmental disabilities and autism.

Our goal is to cooperate, not compete. We collaborate with other researchers in Manitoba and across Canada to conduct studies that could not otherwise be accomplished.

Research provides numerous benefits

Research offers both direct and indirect practical benefits.

Direct benefits result from participating in research. For example, persons with developmental disabilities and autism may learn new skills that enhance their independence, parents may learn better ways to support their children, and front-line staff may learn new practices that will help them with their jobs.

Indirect benefits take several forms. Research participation may lead to improvement in other aspects of a person's life. For example, after learning a new skill, a person with a developmental disability or autism may show improvement in other related skills, and well-supported persons may foster more positive interactions with their caregiver.

Indirect benefits are not limited to those who participate. Service providers can apply what is learned from research to other individuals who face similar challenges. Evidence-based research can be used to support best practices in service delivery.

A strong foundation in research is needed for future clinicians and researchers alike. Students will greatly benefit from the increased training capacity.

By improving the quality of life for persons living with developmental disabilities and autism, supporting policy influencers with evidence-based best practices, and enhancing future clinical and research capacity, it's easy to see that we all benefit as a society in human and economic terms.

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