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**Promoting positive attitudes towards childhood disability**

**Group Meeting Notes: Tuesday 19th November 2013, 10am-1pm**

*Present: Marie Garland, Ruth Marchant, Bel McDonald, Julia Melluish, Kirstin Payne, Tricia Stone, Pat Teague, Megan MacMillan, Meghan McCrory*

1. **Update**

Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology have published the first stage of this research: ‘The association between children’s contact with people with disabilities and their attitudes towards disability: a systematic review’.

This review will shortly be on our website with a plain English summary alongside it; additionally, you can contact Megan for a copy or more details. The survey on children’s attitudes towards disability is currently being drafted before being submitted for publication.

Actions: Megan to organise for the plain English summary to be added to the PenCRU website alongside a link to the full review. Further information about the survey, once completed, will be made available on the website and in future meetings.

1. **Plain English summary of review**

Comments were made on a draft of the review including using extra bullet points, clarification of some terms/sentences and adding additional information of areas of interest.

Actions: Megan will redraft the summary regarding the points made in the meeting

1. **School-based interventions**

For the next stage of Megan’s research, she will focus on exploring school-based interventions (or educational materials) both from the academic research and from websites (i.e., charities). Some members from the group were aware of videos online and interventions in American and other parts of the UK, which may be of interest; however, the majority of the group felt these were not used in schools or at least in all schools.

We also discussed what might be important aspects of interventions and included:

* Simulation – videos or tasks that would make children aware of the difficulties of different disabilities (i.e., having noise played through headphones whilst trying to focus). This should increase empathy and awareness.
* Link the intervention to a face – this would make it ‘real’ for a child
* Focus on the transition phase of primary to secondary school
* Get the children to help create the intervention
* Interventions which include contact need to detail what kind of contact this is (e.g., real life or artificial)
* The contact should be real to life and should include some of the ‘frightening face’ of disability and help children to understand more about this to reduce anxiety. Children should then create skills to allow them to interact with different children including those with different disabilities. Additionally, the contact should include positive aspects.
* Make use of the different technology there is now including social networking (another way to communicate)
* Teachers should not be over zealous with disability. An example includes stopping all children playing football because one person cannot; this leads to resentment from other children.
* Teachers need training in how to manage children with behavioural difficulties.
* Have positive disabled role models in posters around the school.
* It should target a range of disabilities and not just one type or one child in the classroom
* Disabled children also need to improve their attitudes
* It could also target all differences, not just focused on disability.

Some suggestions of possible people or things to look into include Rob Long, Hemihelp, ambitious about autism and trendsetters from Scope. Additionally some books were mentioned that include disabled characters.

Actions: Megan will continue with this piece of work and welcomes any further information regarding what schools are currently doing (if anything) to promote positive attitudes towards disability.