

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof. Chris Oliver, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham

Chris Oliver is Professor of Neurodevelopmental Disorders at the University of Birmingham and Director of the Cerebra Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders. He trained as a clinical psychologist at Edinburgh University before completing a PhD on self-injurious behaviour in people with intellectual disability at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. He is currently researching early intervention, behaviour disorders in people with severe intellectual disability, behavioural phenotypes in genetic syndromes, neuropsychological and behavioural assessment for people with severe intellectual disability and Alzheimer's disease in adults with Down syndrome. Sadly, he supports Luton Town Football Club.



Dr. Jennifer Zarcone

Jennifer Zarcone is the Director of the Community Consultation Program in the Department of Pediatrics, University of Rochester Medical Center. She is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Licensed Psychologist. She has served for three years on the Executive Committee for the Association for Positive Behavior Support, most recently as President. She is a Member-at-Large on the Board of Directors for New York State Association for Behavior Analysis and has recently been appointed to the ABAI Council Practice Board. Finally, she is serving a three-year term as Associate Editor for the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis. Her areas of expertise are in autism, severe behavior disorders, positive behavior support, clinical trials, and Prader-Willi syndrome.



Associate Professor Deb Keen MAPS

Deb Keen is Deputy Dean of Research and Associate Professor in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University and a member of the Griffith Institute for Educational Research. She has worked with individuals who have developmental disorders including autism and their families for over 25 years as a psychologist, educator, administrator and researcher. Among her many contributions to the field of autism is her research association with the development and implementation of family-focused interventions for families who have a young child with autism. A specific intervention program, delivered within 6 months of a diagnosis, showed that the intervention significantly reduced parenting stress and increased parenting competence. As part of this program of research, an innovative DVD (Being Responsive: You and Your Child with Autism) has been produced. Associate Professor Keen has published widely in peer reviewed journals, has authored numerous book chapters, and held a number of large research grants. A current Australian Research Council grant is examining engagement in young children with autism. She is on the editorial board of numerous journals, including Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice. She has regularly presented her research at national and international conferences.



Dr Helen Leonard

Helen Leonard is a clinician and a current NHMRC Senior Research Fellow who has been involved in epidemiological research in the area of childhood disability over the past ten years. She has published over 70 research papers focussing mainly on intellectual disability. She has taken the major role in establishing a population-based intellectual disability database (known as IDEA) in Western Australia. With its linkage to other population databases, this is providing a major contribution to the health and well-being of an often neglected section of our society. A further focus of her research has been in Down Syndrome where she has been following a unique population-based cohort since 1997. She has a keen interest and has published on the impact of socio-demographic and technological trends in Down Syndrome. Finally her work in Rett syndrome is recognised internationally primarily because of her ability, using data from her Australian and international databases, to be able to demonstrate how the clinical presentation has been influenced by genetic characteristics. She organised the scientific program for the Rett Syndrome World Congress in Paris in 2008 and is on the Executive of RettSearch, an international consortium of clinical researchers.



Dianne Pendergast

Dianne Pendergast is Adult Guardian for Queensland. She was appointed in April 2006. Dianne is also National Chair of the Australian Guardianship and Administration Council. She was admitted as a lawyer in 1986 and practiced for 20 years in family law. The adult guardian is an independent statutory officer responsible for protecting adults who have impaired capacity from neglect, abuse or exploitation. The adult guardian is currently appointed to make various personal decisions for 1200 adults. Predominantly these appointments are for young adults with intellectual disability and some co-existing mental illness. Included are appointments for 140 adults who are subject to restrictive practices. The adult guardian is also statutory health attorney of last resort for all Queenslanders and during the last year conducted over 300 investigations into allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults who are unable to make their own decisions



Senator Sue Boyce

Senator Sue Boyce was elected by the Queensland Parliament in April 2007 to fill a casual vacancy in the Commonwealth Senate and was elected in her own right at the Federal election in November 2007. She holds an Honours degree from Monash University and a Masters of Business from the Queensland University of Technology. Senator Boyce is the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission (JCACC) which oversees all federal agencies investigating and preventing serious and organised crime in Australia. She is a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs which has conducted inquiries into:

- Residential aged care funding
- Progress made under the Lost Innocent report on child migration and the Forgotten Australians report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children
- A national registration and accreditation scheme for doctors and other health workers

Senator Boyce is also a member of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services (PJCCFS). Senator Boyce is a journalist by background. She has particular interests in disability issues and Family & Small and Medium Enterprises business needs.