



## SCHOOL INFORMATION BROCHURE

Welcome to the school information brochure of “The Dolphins” school for children with autism in Sri Lanka.

This brochure contains all necessary information about our school which we started in March 2008 in Colombo.

*Who should read this brochure*

**Parents** If your child has been diagnosed with autism, or if you think your child might have autism.

**Teachers** If you are a (montessori) trained teacher, really devoted to work with children with special needs, have knowledge about autism, or interested in learning through workshops and individual trainings, than please read our school brochure as we are always looking for teachers to help our children.

**Sponsors** Our school is a non profit organization. Depending on the ability of the parent, a contribution for the education of the child is required. However we also want to help the less-fortunate and parents who find it difficult to afford to sent their child to a special school. We need sponsors who can sponsor the education and training of a child with autism. Sri Lanka has about 39.000 children with autism and unfortunately there are hardly any specialized schools. With the help of sponsors we will be able to help at least some of them.

..... And ofcourse everyone else who has any interest in helping children with autism. By reading this brochure you can give this information to other people and in whatever way help a child with autism to live an independent life as much as possible and help him/her to understand our world....

Colombo, October 2008



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## Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

When my son Timothy was almost 4 years old, we realized that his behaviour had changed. From 2 years old his speech did not improve as well. As he was taught in 2 languages (Dutch and English) we however did not worry about that too much. After going to a normal pre-school, it appeared that Timothy had a problem and we did several tests and assessments with him, resulting in the diagnoses of autism and mental retardation.

After the assessment from 4 years onwards, instead of going to a normal school, Timothy has been educated and trained in special schools in Holland, which has really improved f.i. his behavior, his mental development and his speech.

During this period I read and studied about autism in general, and especially in the way how to educate a child with autism. I have been studying his school programme and got lots of help from the teachers and hour home therapist in Holland. And with the help of my therapist I trained myself to work with Timothy at home as well. Also I learned to give him structure in his daily routines which is very important and I learned to look through his eyes (anti-glasses) to be able to better understand how he looks into our world. Also I learned about the Teacch method (originated from America), which is a good method to help children with autism to develop their skills.

Timothy's father is a Srilankan and our wish was to settle down in Sri Lanka, but because of the very rare possibilities to educate children with autism in Sri Lanka, this unfortunately was not possible.

About 2 years ago I decided that it would be great to set up a special school in Sri Lanka for children with autism myself. First of all it would enable us to live in Sri Lanka and have a school for our own son who has autism, and at the same time we would be able to help other children with autism for whom, at that moment, hardly any special education was available.

Although at the moment autism cannot be cured unfortunately, there are so many things that we can do to help these children. There are several ways of educating them. Autistic children learn in a different way because of their way of thinking. Unlike normal children, autistic children do not develop certain skills on their own. They need help of specialists who will guide them and help them to develop. A very good method to help them to develop their skills is the **TEACCH Method**.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 we arrived in Sri Lanka, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March Timothy went to his new school, which I have set up together with his new teacher from Sri Lanka. Timothy is doing great in his school. In the meantime we have 2 specialists working here on a voluntary basis (one speecheacher and one child development specialist). They have been a great help to me helping me to improve our programme and school environment to the maximum.

It's with great pleasure to introduce this school brochure to you and we hope we can help many other children with autism to grow in their development in many ways and help them as much as possible to have a happy and independent live.

If you have any questions you can always contact me.

Desiree Jayakody (Principal)



## **Chapter 2                    PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

<b>Name and Address</b>	<p>“The Dolphins” School for children with autism</p> <p>32/5 Flowerroad – Colombo 7</p> <p>email: <a href="mailto:info@autischoolsrilanka.com">info@autischoolsrilanka.com</a></p> <p>website: <a href="http://www.autischoolsrilanka.com">www.autischoolsrilanka.com</a></p>
<b>Contactnumbers</b>	<p>Phonenumber school: 011 2564033</p> <p>Mobile number Desiree Jayakody (Principal) 071 400 4153</p>
<b>Schoolhours</b>	<p>School starts at 08.30 and ends at 13.15. Parents are expected to bring their child on time so that the classes can start punctually, however you can bring your child into the school not earlier than 08.35. In order to avoid unnecessary waiting for the child (which can be difficult for a child with autism) please pick up your child on time as well. You are kindly requested not to enter the school before and after schoolhours, other than when you have an appointment with the teacher. If you have any questions for the principal you can call her during the schoolhours on 0714004153 to discuss and/or make an appointment with the teacher of your child.</p>
<b>Schoolholidays</b>	<p>School is closed on Pooja days and official public <b>and</b> Mercantile holidays (PBM). Furthermore we have kept the other holidays as short as possible, as for children with autism it’s the best to continue their routine; long holidays can be a problem for our children and their parents. There will be extra school holidays as follows: (Exact days will be given beginning of January 2009) and are subject to changes if necessary.</p> <p><b>February</b>                    1 week</p> <p><b>May</b>                            1 week</p> <p><b>July</b>                            2 weeks</p> <p><b>October</b> 1 week</p> <p><b>December</b>                    2 weeks</p>
<b>Schoolcamps</b>	<p>For those who are interested, in the near future special schoolcamps during schoolholiday time will be organised. All the relevant information will be given on a later stage.</p>
<b>Extra therapy and/or clases</b>	<p>In our school we have the possibility to offer the children therapy or extra classes, like music classes, play therapy, and speech therapy. These sessions will be held in the afternoon. Also we offer separate swimminglessons.</p>



Furthermore, for those who need this, we are planning to have some yoga classes and physiotherapy in the near future.

For the afternoon therapies extra charges will apply. For more information you can contact the principal.

**Teachers**

Our teachers are professionally trained by Srilankan and Dutch experts to work with children with ASD.

**Enrollment**

For an application form please contact our principal or download from our website. Once you have sent in the application, an assessment procedure will follow.

**Admission procedure**

Every child should have an assessment done by Dr. Anna Eliatamby, our clinical psychologist. After the assessment you will be informed about the results and further action for enrollment can be taken. The school reserves the right to refuse enrollment if it is felt that the needs of the particular child can not be met in the present school setting or if enrollment of this child is suspected to have a negative influence on the education of the other children in the school. More information on the assessment you will find in this brochure. The charges for the assessment have to be paid by the parents/caretakers of the child.

**Uniforms**

We don't make use of any special school uniforms. Children are expected to wear clean and comfortable cloths (like short/skirt and t-shirt).

**Personal belongings**

We kindly request you to make sure that your child does not bring any valuable belongings or money into the school. The school can not be held responsible for loss or damage of personal belongings.

At the first school day of your child, please bring:

- \* 5 photographs of your child showing the child's face. Size 3 by 5 inches
- \* One of your child's favorite toys (like a cuddle teddybear or something similar)
- \* one extra set of cloths and a towel to be kept in the school (please label!!)
- \* Diapers enough for 2 weeks (if necessary) (please label!!)
- \* For art and handwork activities we kindly request you to collect some waste materials as well like empty plastic bottles, toilet roll insides, old magazines, egg boxes etc.

**Drinks & fruit**

The school is providing water/fruit drinks and fresh fruits. Please send a drinking bottle for your child on the first school day which we can fill with



fresh water during the school hours. Pls mark bottle clearly with the name of the child. You are requested not to send cookies/cakes and other sweets with your child other than on special occasions like a birthday.

### **Swimminglessons**

During school hours we do not include swimminglessons in our programme, other than sometimes on a Friday as the “surprise” activity, where we will take the children for a “get together in the pool”.

Children with autism may find it difficult to follow swimminglessons especially in groups. We can offer special individual swimming lessons for your child which have been proven to be very successful. The swimminglessons will be held in the Hilton Residence – Colombo, by our coach Kingsley who is a profesional swimmingcoach.

If you are interested in sending your child for individual swimminglessons please indicate this on the form as well. The lessons will be organised once a week in the afternoon (day to be agreed upon) for half an hour per lesson. Charges will be Rs. 3000 per month.

### **Illness and medication**

In the interest of the other children and teachers in the school, please keep your child at home when it's not well. In case of an emergency, f.i. if your child get's ill or hurt during schoolhours, we have applied our school for “Medicall services” whom we can call in case of emergencies. The registration fee will be paid by the school. Any additional fees for extra services of f.i. doctors/nurses/ambulances etc. will have to be paid by the parents. In all cases of emergency the parents will be notefied and informed. If necessary parents may be requested to come and collect their child from school.

If your child needs any form of medication during schoolhours, please hand over the medication to the teacher in a plastic container, **clearly marked with name and instructions.**

### **Absense**

Children are expected to come to school every day. In case your child can't come to school, please call the school by 8.30 a.m. Please note that its not allowed to keep the child at home for other reasons than being ill. In very urgent matters you can discuss this with the principal.

### **Communication**

Each child will have his own communication book provided by the school on the first schoolday. This book will be used by parents and teachers to communicate about the child in case there is something special. If you have a question yourselve or you want to make an appointment you can make a note of this as well in the book.

Furthermore the teachers will make notes of the progress of your child on a daily basis in his/her personal schoolbook. Every month you will get a



detailed report about the progress of your child. If you wish to see the book within the particular month than you can make an appointment and see the book after schoolhours.

On a regular basis the parents will be invited for a parents meeting. Here you can talk with other parents and the teachers and we will be discussing a specific subject, like speech, autism, yoga, sensory integration, augmentative communication systems (like the picto matching system) etc.



### **Chapter 3            GENERAL PHILOSOPHY AT “THE DOLPHINS”**

The philosophy at this establishment is that each child deserves equal opportunity, regardless of background, race, religion or disability. We strive to teach children with autism the life skills, social skills and language skills they require to face the world around them, while helping them to better cope with and understand their surroundings.

One of the main methods used in this school is the TEACCH method which was developed by Professor Eric Schopler and many of his colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Autistic individuals often have difficulty with receptive and expressive language, sequential memory, and handling changes in their environment. The TEACCH method provides the individual with structure and organization. In addition to this we incorporate a few of the Montessori methods as well. However, having said that we work within the framework of these methods, it is important to mention that it is the student’s needs that we cater to.

The classrooms and activities are structured in such a manner that it helps the students to better understand their requirements. The entire approach to teaching in this school is an individualistic one, where in each student’s needs, capabilities and requirements are catered to. Thus the teaching method is tailored to each child. There are a range of activities and lessons throughout the day that cater to the student’s fine and gross motor development, cognitive development and speech development among other things.

The environment that we create at the school is one of safety, structure and enjoyment. While we believe in the students having concentrated work time we also believe in the students enjoying activities. The day schedule has been created with these in mind, interspacing the concentrated work times with energy filled exercise times, sensory integration sessions and play sessions.

Through all the above mentioned methods and activities we strive to assist the autistic individual in better understanding his/her environment.





## **Chapter 4      APPROACHES TO SUPPORT THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH AN AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER**

### **Introduction**

At the Dolphins, school for children with Autism, the main goal is to offer children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders an environment in which they receive the stimulation, support and augmentative methods they need to develop themselves optimally.

We emphasize that no child with autism is the same, and translate this knowledge into creating individual programmes for each individual child, suiting their abilities and talents, difficulties and impairments, and their interests.

In order to do so, we use the TEACCH method (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) as the base of our working method. According to this method, the following six steps are essential to execute when educating children with autism:

**Step 1    Understanding autism**

**Step 2    Understanding the unique child, by sensitively assessing his/her competencies and disabilities**

**Step 3    Increase predictability and comprehension for the child by implementing vast routines and schedules**

**Step 4    Instruction and expectancies are clarified to improve the comprehension of the child**

**Step 5    Structuring and instructing of tasks**

**Step 6    Motivating pupils by means of using their special interests**

Even though not one child is the same, there are a few characteristics that children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) often have in common. When it comes to the conditions of learning, they for instance frequently show the following difficulties:

1. **Difficulties in the area of working attitude:** many pupils have a short attention span, a lack of motivation, poor focus on the tasks, too little or too much sensitivity to instructions, and a poor ability to work independently.
2. **Limited communicative skills:** most pupils have a very limited ability to communicate with third parties: they have difficulties in expressing themselves using words and gestures, and in understanding others.
3. **Limited social skills:** most pupils who have been diagnosed with a disorder inside the Autistic Spectrum and/or a mental disability, have a limited ability to socially interact and to relate to other people; this also affects their relationship with the teacher and other pupils.
4. **Limited self reliance skills:** many children with autism are dependent upon a third party when it comes to executing the general daily living activities, including independently dressing and undressing, going to the toilet and eating.
5. **Need for predictability and structure:** most pupils will show reluctance towards (sudden) changes, they find it hard to switch from activity to activity, and have a strong need for structure and sameness.



Besides these common difficulties, Peter Vermeulen (1999; in Steunpunt Autisme, no date) has formulated a list with general strong features and competencies, which are often seen within children with autism, like:

- literal comprehension
- strong analytic thinking/reasoning
- strong concrete reasoning
- strong deductive reasoning (from the general onwards)
- talent for detail and facts
- objective, honest & straightforward
- perfectionists
- realists

At the Dolphins we make it our priority that both impairments and talents are respected and taken care off by means of stimulating the talents and trying to decrease the impairments. By means of this we not only want to offer the pupils a safe and stimulative environment, but also an environment in which they feel at ease, where they have a good time and are respected for the person they are.

### **What do we offer our pupils**

Based on the information about autism as discussed above, we offer the pupils from the Dolphins, school for children with autism, a variety of augmentative and supportive strategies, to ensure their chance for optimal development.

- A clear, concrete and tranquil environment (the Auti-class)
- Balanced daily school programme (strenuous vs relaxing activities)
- Customised contents of tasks (based on individuals level of functioning)
- Augmentative and alternative communication (communicative support)
- Social story telling (explaining social rules and situations)
- Sensory Integration activities (stimulation of the different senses)
- Speech therapy (stimulation of speech, comprehension and communication)
- Music therapy (stimulation of brain development)

### ***Clear and concrete interior – the Auti-class***

Based on the fact that children with autism have a great need for structure and predictability, caused by their inability to phase out unneeded information (information processing impairment), and their inability to see the bigger picture and not only details (central coherence theory), the setting in which these children are taught should be low on extra stimuli and have concrete and vast places where activities take place.

At the Dolphins we ensure this by means of:

- Having little things on the walls for decoration (and distraction); no (unnecessary) posters and artworks are hung in the classrooms where the children need to focus; the materials the pupils make are hung in the entrance hall, out of their immediate sight. In other words, the classrooms are low on stimuli.



- Having different classrooms in which each activity has its own secluded space (for instance there is the doll corner and the working corner (screened by means of cupboards), the sensory room and the main classroom.
- Each pupil has its own seat and place for his/her things, indicated by means of a personalised sticker (depending on the pupil's level of functioning varying from a sticker with a designated colour, photo or written name)
- Making very clear what is expected from the pupil with each activity. What behaviour, what actions are wanted, and also what is not allowed. When needed we can use *social story telling* to explain to the pupil what is expected from him/her (see next paragraph for further explanation)
- Avoiding using abstract concepts like saying *in a while, go over there etc.* By means of using augmentative materials like special alarm clocks and pictograms indicating where the activity is held, we support the children's understanding.

Besides offering the pupils a concrete interior, the Dolphins also provides a lot of structure, to increase the sense of safety and make the school day more predictable.

We apply this structure in different ways:

- As mentioned before, the surroundings are all structured in such a way that each activity has its own vast place
- We work with set routines of activities. Although the contents of the activity itself varies and some activities alternate each other, each day starts and finishes in the same way (see the daily programme).
- Each activity has a very clear beginning and ending. Working on cognitive skills for instance, may begin with the unpacking of the task, and finish with clearing it all up again.
- By means of augmentative communication (see further explanation) we offer the pupils a visually represented day schedule, which indicates all the activities of that day, plus in which following order they will be executed.

### **Balanced daily schoolprogrammes**

In order to ensure optimal learning possibilities, offering pupils a balanced daily programme is a necessity. As many children with autism have difficulties regulating their sensory input (staying alert and focused on the task) and additional concentration problems, they need a lot of alternation between mentally demanding and/or strenuous tasks versus relaxing and physical activities.

Based on this knowledge, the daily school programme at the Dolphins has been created in such a way that after two or three mentally challenging activities, there is time for relaxing and/or physical exercise (see table in the separate brochure "Explanation of the lessons and activities"). This sequence offers the pupils the chance to unwind and refocus.

### **Customised contents of tasks**

As mentioned earlier, we at the Dolphins emphasize the individuality of each child, and stress the fact that, especially children with autism, may show a variability in level of functioning on the different domains of development. For example a pupil might show cognitive skills suiting his chronological age (like doing math, or



reading), but have a severe delay in communication, social-emotional and/or motor skills. Based on these facts, offering pupils with special needs a customized educational programme is the only way to ensure the chance to learn and develop optimally. In order to create this customized programme, we take the results from the pupil's assessment (all children are assessed prior to coming to the school, and look at the overall developmental age, plus all the ages from the separate domains. During the first weeks of school, we then observe the pupil, offering him/her materials from different levels of functioning (around his/her developmental age per domain), to find out about where he/she is. From thereon we draw up a plan of action, with goals that are hoped to be achieved. These goals will be evaluated regularly to keep track of the pupil's progress and to see whether the offered education is set at the right level (challenging enough, but not overasking).

### ***Augmentative and alternative communication***

One of the main characteristics of people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is their impaired communication. Children and adults find it difficult to understand others (receptive communication) and express themselves (expressive communication). Especially in the school-setting it is important to 'overcome' this problem, as much of a child's cognitive, social and academic progress depend on communication, by means of learning through listening and understanding, asking and answering.

Broadly speaking, communication occurs with at least one other person and in the context of the environment, and serves the following functions:

- To indirectly control the environment, for example to obtain or reject something.
- To regulate social interactions, for example to express an emotion or to interact with a friend.
- To receive and convey information and ideas.

*Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)* is created to support children to achieve these functions of communication. Any concrete 'device' can be used, such as pictograms, photos, writing, sign language and gestures.

There are many different AAC methods, each working in a different way. Which programme to choose should be based on the individual child: his/her impairments, needs and competencies.

Children who benefit from AAC, are children who are unable to participate meaningfully in day-to-day activities and events just because of difficulties communicating. Even when it is expected that a child will eventually be able to speak, AAC may be recommended in addition to speech therapy. A child who cannot communicate effectively now due to inadequate speech is still at risk for cognitive and social delays, excessive frustration, and behaviour problems.

Besides, research has proven that using an AAC programme does not imply condemning a child to a lifetime of abnormal and limited communication, having to use augmentative devices, nor does it mean the end of any hope of speech development. Numerous studies have found that the introduction of AAC frequently has a positive affect on speech; children who are given AAC often develop speech faster than they would have otherwise.

At the Dolphins, we for example apply AAC to clarify the daily agenda: what activities are to be executed that day. Depending on the level of functioning of each pupil, they are offered a board with either objects, pictograms, photo's or cards with words, which refer to a certain activity. Using these concrete and permanent materials, when needed in the form of matching<sup>1</sup>, makes it easier for the child to understand what we expect from him/her during the day: which activities are taking place (and therefore where to go and what to do), plus he/she will get insight into the sequence of the schoolprogramme. While using this system, the speech is stimulated by means of asking the pupil what the, for instance pictogram refers to.

### **Social story telling**

In order to teach and explain children with autism certain social situations, like an upcoming change in routine, the rules in class, or desired (social) behaviour, we at times use *social story telling* to make the communication more concrete and easier to understand (it can be seen as a form of AAC), and

Social story telling is generally used to teach social skills to children with autism. A social story is a simple description of an everyday social situation, written from a child's perspective. The idea is that the child rehearses the story ahead of time with the teacher (for instance during the introduction time at school). When the situation actually happens (for instance, the child shows undesired behaviour), the child will be supported with the story to help guide his/her behaviour.

We at the Dolphins spent extra care on writing and creating the story telling to match the pupils' vocabulary and comprehension level. For instance, for pupils who have little comprehension of words, we offer them a story made out of pictures or photo's (like a comic book). In that way, story telling does not only teach the pupils social skills, but also is enjoyable.

### **Sensory Integration activities**

Many people with autism are hypersensitive or hyposensitive (under-sensitive) to stimuli like light, noise, and touch. They may be unable to stand the sound of a dishwasher, or, on the other extreme, need to flap and even injure themselves to be fully aware of their bodies. These sensory integration difficulties may be treatable with sensory integration therapy.

Sensory integration therapy involves specific sensory activities (swinging, bouncing, brushing, and more) that are intended to help the client regulate his or her sensory response. The outcome of these activities may be better focus, improved behaviour, and even lowered anxiety.

As sensory integration therapy is generally offered by a specially trained occupational therapist, whom is not (yet) part of the team at the Dolphins, we can not offer the pupils SI therapy. We do however offer them activities that stimulate the use of their different sensory systems, hence *sensory integration activities*. Many of these activities have been copied from the Orthopedagogical Day Centre (ODC) in the Netherlands (implemented by an occupational therapist), and added by the orthopedagogue.

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<sup>1</sup> A matching system contains a set of, for instance pictograms. One pictogram hangs on the board, indicating a certain activity is coming up. To further support the child with the meaning of that pictogram, the partnering pictogram is present at the place where the activity is to be executed. By means of matching the two, the child will automatically come to the activity.



The activities are based on the sensory integration therapy, and focussed on stimulating the different sensory systems, like the visual- (for instance by means of playing hide and seek with materials), tactile- (for instance by means of handling/manipulating different textures, like water, foam, sand etc.), olfaction- (sense of smell; by means of introducing different fragrances/odeurs), and gustation system (sense of taste; by means of introducing different tastes in food, like sweet, salty, sour etc.). (The other sensory systems, knowing hearing-, vestibulair- (movement detection and balance), and proprioceptive system (position and movement of the body) are being stimulated during other classes, such as music and gym activities like jumping on the trampoline.)

**Marieke de Bree**

*Orthopedagogue/child development specialist at the Dolphins, June-December 2008*

MSC educational sciences, Leiden University, the Netherlands



## **Chapter 5**                      **SPEECH THERAPY AND AUTISM**

Speech therapy involves much more than simply teaching a child to correctly pronounce words. In fact, the speech therapist working with children with autism most probably works on a wide range of skills. The speech therapy programs we can offer at the Dolphins are as follows:

- thrice weekly sessions at school, executed by a trained teacher, or if available, the speech therapist, concerning the increase in vocabulary and simple mouth motor skills.
- if the speech therapist is available, the following other domains can be targeted, by means of professional techniques in the form of one-on-one therapy session (either during or after schoolhours):
  - o Non-verbal communication. This may include teaching gestural communication, or training with PICTO-Cards and other non-verbal communication tools.
  - o Language problems. How to make appropriate sentences and use them in a proper way.
  - o Speech pragmatics. It is good to know how to say "good morning" but it is just as important to know when, how and to whom you should say it.
  - o Conversation skills. Knowing how to make statements is not the same thing as carrying on conversations. The speech therapist may work on back-and-forth exchange, also known as "joint attention."
  - o Concept skills. A person's ability to state abstract concepts doesn't always reflect their ability to understand them. Children with autism often have a tough time with concepts like "few," "justice," and "liberty." The speech therapist may work on building these concept skills.
  - o Nutritional problems. Many children with autism struggle with limited interests in food, difficulties eating in the meaning of swallowing, chewing etc. We at the Dolphins try to target these by means of stimulating the pupils to daily drink milk or water and eat some fruit (or other small snack) during a vast time at school. These 'snacktimes' will be guided by the speech therapist if needed and desired.

Prior to starting the speech therapy sessions each pupil will be screened on possible difficulties. Based on the results, the speech therapist will discuss treatment possibilities with the parents (and the teacher), and from thereon create a treatment plan, in order to be able to work as effective as possible. The chosen approach will be evaluated regularly, to keep track on the progress of the pupil, plus to see whether the offered treatment is in place.



**Marlous Karhoff** *Speech therapist (in training) at the Dolphins, August-Mid December 2008*

Graduate speech therapy, faculty of healthcare, Academy of Utrecht, the Netherlands





## **Chapter 6            INFORMATION ON THE LISTENING PROGRAMME**

### **(MUSIC THERAPY)**

**Music Therapy** is the unique application of music to enhance personal lives by creating positive changes in human behavior. Music therapy is a controlled music experience that is used to facilitate positive change in human behavior. Each session of music therapy is carefully planned, carried out, and evaluated to suit the specific needs of each patient.

Music therapy utilizes music as a tool to encourage development in social/ emotional, cognitive/learning, and perceptual-motor areas. It has a wide variety of functions with the children, adolescent and adults with disabilities in medical, institutional and educational settings.

Music Therapy is particularly useful for children with autism because it is a nonverbal and non threatening medium of intervention. Parallel music activities are designed to support the objectives of the child as observed by the therapist or as indicated by a parent, teacher or other professional. Musical games like passing a ball back and forth to music or playing sticks and cymbals with another person might be used to foster interaction. Eye contact might be encouraged with imitative clapping games near the eyes or with activities which focus attention on an instrument played near the face. Music Therapy is also particularly effective in the development and remediation of speech. The severe deficit in communication observed in children with autism includes expressive speech which may be nonexistent or impersonal. One such approach that has proved to be beneficial is The Listening Programme.

**The Listening Programme** is a musically based and clinically proven approach marketed by Applied Behaviour Technologies, USA. The psycho-acoustically modified classical music has been carefully arranged in order to facilitate Attention and concentration, Listening, Speech and language, Memory, Communication, Social skills, Reading, Sensory integration, Self regulation, Physical balance and Coordination and Vocal performance and Musical Ability. Numerous studies worldwide, including research at the University of Sheffield, provide empirical evidence that substantiate The Listening Program's efficacy.

#### **How does it work?**

The psycho-acoustically modified Western classical music stimulates, or "exercises" the different functions of the auditory processing system within the brain. This enables the brain to receive, process, store and use the valuable information received via the auditory channels in a more efficient manner.

As a listener moves through The Listening Programme he/she is been systematically provided with auditory stimulation to different zones / areas in the brain. This stimulation is customised for listeners by especially trained TLP Providers, according to the needs of the clients.

The stimulation helps improve the ability to function in a number of ways:

- Sensory Integration — targets the first zone (lower frequencies) to stimulate functions such as balance, coordination, motor skills and more.
- Full Spectrum — provides a kind of overall "organising" experience.



- Speech & Language — emphasises the mid to higher frequencies to stimulate the brain's abilities for memory, attention, vocal control and more.
- High Spectrum — focuses on the higher frequencies that impact creativity, intuition, energy and more.

Together with Mrs. Shalini Wickemesooriya we have decided to introduce “the listening to classical music” in our schoolprogramme as a separate activity to enable the children to improve their concentration before they start on the next activity which is working on cognitive tasks. This with great success!

If you are interested in following the TLP programme with your child (this is separate from the school, and has to be after school hours) you can contact “The Sole Provider” for Sri Lanka Mrs. Shalini Wickremesooriya on 0712745571.



## **Chapter 7            INFORMATION ON THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

Once you have filled out the application for your child we need your child to undergo an assessment. Our school is working in close contact with the Ability Foundation; **'Opening the door to your children's future.'**

They are a group of qualified professionals who have the relevant expertise and experience to work with children with autism and other disabilities. The Director Dr. Anna Eliatamby is a consultant clinical psychologist with over 25 years of experience. She is trained in England and has worked in a number of countries. She has now settled down in Sri Lanka and is one of the founders of the Ability Foundation.

The Ability Foundation offers specialised assessments for children using internationally recognised tests such as the WISC and the WIATT II, which focus on intellectual skills. They also assess the extent to which a child demonstrates behaviours that are autistic characteristics. This assessment gives us insight into the skills, talents and problems in development your child may have. Depending on the child and his/her circumstances, the assessments will be taken on different days and different places (i.e. homesituation and the office of The Ability foundation itself).

After the assessment you will receive a detailed report from The Ability Foundation containing the results of the assessment. Besides that they will advise us if your child is suitable for our school and fits into our school programme.

The costs for an assessment will be 5000 rupees. However personal circumstances will be taken into account.

For more information and/or appointments for the assessments please contact The Ability Foundation at 2686924 or visit the website: [www.theabilityfoundation.org](http://www.theabilityfoundation.org) (under construction)

The Ability Foundation

7a Arcadia Gardens

Colombo 7



## **Chapter 8      EXPLANATION OF THE LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES**

See for a detailed explanation of the lessons and activities our separate enclosure, which you will receive once your child has been enrolled in our school.



**Chapter 9**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**“THE DOLPHINS” SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM 2009**

*When you want to enrol your child to our school, please send an email or contact our principal for an application form.*



## Chapter 10 FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS

### “THE DOLPHINS” SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM 2009

As explained in this school brochure, the education for your child with autism is based on individual education. The group of your child will not extend to more than 1-3 children per class per teacher. Some of the lessons are completely on one-on-one basis, while other lessons can be with 2 or 3 children. To improve social skills the gymlessons and rest time with drink and fruit will be done, as far as possible, with all the children of the school together. The maximum number of children in the school at Flowerroad will be 9 children.

#### SCHOOLFEES 2009

##### Entrance fee

For every child who enrolls in the school there is an entrance fee applicable of 100.000 rupees. This money will be spent on the purchase of for example personal cd-players / headsets / wiggle-cushions / special chairs / tables /special gym-equipment and other needed augmentative materials and costs for maintenance of the school.

##### Monthly schoolfees

The monthly schoolfees for a new Dolphin will be 29.000 rupees.

##### The schoolfees include:

- A clear, concrete and tranquil environment (the Anti-class)
- 5 days a week individual and group training for children with autism from 08.45 – 13.00 hours
- Balanced daily school programme (strenuous vs relaxing activities)
- Customised contents of tasks (based on individuals level of functioning)
- Augmentative and alternative communication (communicative support)
- Social story telling (explaining social rules and situations)
- Sensory Integration activities (stimulation of the different senses)
- Speech therapy (stimulation of speech, comprehension and communication) 3 times a week
- Classical music activities (stimulation of brain development)
- Observation of a professional psychologist (maximum 5 times per year). In case extra observations are needed they have to be paid by the parents and/or sponsors.
- Gymlessons 5 times a week (stimulating different - especially gross - motor skills)
- All working materials. Most of the educational materials and art-work materials are imported from The Netherlands.
- Drinks and fruits

##### Payments

- Payment of the entrance fee is to be done at the time of enrolment
- Payment of the monthly school fees are to be done as follows: Payment one month in advance to be settled at the first day of the month. (so if your child enrolls in January the fee will be 2x 29.000 rupees. In February you pay the fee of 29.000 rupees being the school fee for the month of march.)



- Our organisation is a non-profit organisation. Also children with autism from less fortunate families need to be given a chance for this education. For that purpose we are looking for sponsors. In case of any problems regarding payment you can contact the principal.

**VAT (15%)**

For the year 2009 there is not VAT applicable (with all reserve).