

## **PHAST PACES Parts 1 and 2 Reading Program, for Secondary School Students**

### **Learning Disabilities Research Program, The Hospital for Sick Children**

PHAST PACES Reading, Parts 1 and 2, are literacy programs developed by the Learning Disabilities Research Program (LDRP) at The Hospital for Sick Children as part of a study that evaluates the effectiveness of these programs in improving the reading and writing skills of adolescents with significant reading and writing difficulties. These programs have been developed for high school students who have significant difficulty with word identification, decoding and/or reading comprehension skills as well as limited writing skills.

#### **A. Curriculum Features of the Programs:**

1. PHAST PACES Parts 1 and 2 are a logical fit into Ontario school boards' continuum of literacy programs.
2. PHAST PACES is incorporated into students' timetables. Students ideally should receive a course credit for each part (e.g., for PHAST PACES Part 1: a locally developed Essentials English credit or GLE/GLS credit; for PHAST PACES Part 2 an Applied English credit). PHAST PACES Part 2 was developed using Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines to ensure criteria for a Grade 9 Applied English credit are met.
3. PHAST PACES Parts 1 and 2 integrate cross-curricular content – integrate narrative, expository and graphical text. The programs teach 5 metacognitive decoding strategies, 5 metacognitive comprehension strategies, and 5 metacognitive writing strategies.

#### **B. Important Design Features of the Program:**

<b>PHAST PACES Parts 1 and 2 Research Programs</b>	<b>VERSUS</b>	<b>Curricular Control Condition</b>
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1. Random assignment of programming—either (a) PHAST PACES Parts 1 & 2 over 2 semesters (PHAST PACES Part 1 constitutes one section during 1st Semester in Fall 2010 and PHAST PACES Part 2 constitutes one section during 2nd Semester in Winter 2011) OR (b) a curricular control program (that is literacy based) over 2 semesters (e.g., one section per semester of a locally developed English course and Applied English course or a combination of English and GLE/GLS programming over the 2 semesters).
2. Participants should have significant reading difficulties and in Grades 9-12 (see section C. Guidelines for Identifying Students).

3. For PHAST PACES Part 1: 4 to 8 students per class; for PHAST PACES Part 2: up to 16 students per class.
4. For Curricular Control Classes: during each semester, class size should be comparable (i.e., within 4-8 students during Semester 1 and up to 16 students during Semester 2).
5. PHAST PACES classes and Curricular Control classes should be delivered for one – 76 minute period each day (assuming the period is 76 minutes) in a semestered school OR every other day in a de-semestered school.
6. All students participating in the research study (the PHAST PACES intervention programs and the Curricular Control Class) will undergo an evaluation of reading, writing, and vocabulary skills before, during and after instruction, and at one-year follow-up. An additional assessment of verbal and nonverbal skills will be conducted.
7. Students in the Curricular Control condition must meet the same criteria as students in the PHAST PACES intervention classes.
8. PHAST PACES Parts 1 and 2 should be delivered by certified secondary Special Education or English Teachers trained by SickKids Research Teachers.
9. Student participation is voluntary. Upon receiving written parental consent and verbal student consent, a screening assessment will be conducted by LDRP testing staff. The screening assessment consists of: the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised (WRMT-R) Word Identification, Word Attack and Passage Comprehension subtests and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) Version 3. All information collected is kept strictly confidential.
10. Parents of student participants will be asked to complete questionnaires about student behaviour and developmental history. This information will be sent directly to LDRP staff and will remain confidential. In addition, the research teachers will be asked to complete a behaviour questionnaire on each student participant. Each questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete.

### **C. Guidelines for Identifying Students for PHAST PACES Parts 1 & 2 Research Program:**

To recommend students currently in grade 8 (during Spring 2011) for the research initiative, please use the following guidelines to determine whether a student is a suitable candidate:

#### **Guidelines for Inclusion in Program:**

##### **Reading Skills**

- ‡ Student possesses a weak reading vocabulary, poor letter-sound knowledge and decoding skills, and/or poor reading comprehension skills.
- ‡ Student scored below the 16th percentile on reading and/or spelling categories of the Grade 7 CAT-3 Test.
- ‡ Student reads below a Grade 5 level on academic reading tests.
- ‡ If student has undergone a psychoeducational assessment, he/she obtained standard scores of below 85 on measures of word identification, decoding and/or reading comprehension.
- ‡ \*\*Student does NOT have to be identified with a Reading Disability/Learning Disability to participate in the program.

##### **Cognitive Skills**

- ‡ Students' cognitive skills should be minimum low average in the verbal or nonverbal domain (if testing results available).
- ‡ Students possessing minimum standard score = 70 in oral language skills (e.g., on a measure of receptive vocabulary such as the PPVT-3 or PPVT-4).

#### **Guidelines for Exclusion from Program:**

Students who meet any of the following criteria should NOT be recommended for PHAST PACES:

- ‡ Students with **significant** behaviour problems (e.g., classroom outburst, defiance).
- ‡ Students who are frequently absent from school (e.g., missed more than 20 days of school in Grade 8).
- ‡ Students who speak English as a Second Language and who have received *less* than 3 years of schooling in English are *not* appropriate candidates.
- ‡ Students with serious emotional/psychiatric disturbances (i.e., major depression,

psychotic or pervasive developmental disorder, Autism), or a chronic neurological condition (i.e., seizure disorder, developmental neurological conditions, acquired brain injuries) are not appropriate candidates.

#### **D. How Elementary Schools Can Refer Students for the research study:**

- ‡ If elementary schools have students who might qualify for the research initiative and will be attending one of the high schools implementing the study, they are asked to contact us at SickKids to discuss the possible candidates and/or to indicate the number of consent packages you require. Contact:

Maria De Palma, Systems Coordinator,  
[mdepalma@sickkids.ca](mailto:mdepalma@sickkids.ca) 416-707-0298

- ‡ A Screening and Program Consent package for each potential candidate will be forwarded to the elementary school. Upon receiving the consent package, elementary school personnel will be asked to confirm that the student is a potential candidate for the program based on recommended criteria above. If the elementary school believes the student is a good candidate, school personnel is asked to (1) make initial contact with parents regarding the research program; (2) send the consent package home with the student; and (3) follow-up with parents to sign and return the forms to the elementary school.
- ‡ Once consent forms are returned to you (they MUST be signed by a parent/guardian), elementary school personnel are asked to: (1) HOLD ONTO THE CONSENT PACKAGE: (2) contact Maria De Palma; at such time, she will make arrangements to test each child at his/her elementary school this Spring 2010 (i.e., while the student is in Grade 8). Testing is conducted one-on-one and takes about 45 minutes to complete.

#### **E. How High School Personnel May Provide Names of Grade 8 Candidates:**

- ‡ Based on Exchange of Information Meetings and/or Grade 7 CAT-3 scores, high schools may provide SickKids staff with names of Grade 8 candidates for the high school research initiative. SickKids staff will make contact with the elementary school to confirm student suitability and to make arrangements for obtaining consent and testing.
- ‡ Then, the same procedure as indicated above will be followed to obtain parental consent and test students in their elementary schools.