
***The Victorian Chapters of
Early Childhood Australia (ECA)
and
Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA)
are pleased to co-present the following workshop***

“Speaking up for the quiet ones”

Shyness and the development of anxiety in early childhood

Workshop overview:

For many young children, it is a common experience to feel somewhat wary or nervous when meeting unfamiliar people or encountering new situations. However, about 15% of young children are considered extremely shy, routinely experiencing fear and anxiety in social contexts to a degree that hinders their abilities to interact with other children. Moreover, young shy children are at greater risk for a variety of social and emotional difficulties, including internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem), peer-relationships difficulties (e.g., exclusion, victimization), and poorer academic performance. Indeed, for many shy children, the transition to early school environments represents a major developmental challenge. Historically, shy children have been largely ignored, particularly as compared to their peers who display more “externalizing” problems (such as aggression, bullying, and deficits of attention). Despite some increased attention in recent years, many parents, teachers, and even mental health professionals remain under-informed about the development of shyness, its long-term consequences, and the importance of early intervention for extremely shy young children.

Workshop content:

Background Information

- *definitions, constructs and relevant theories in the study of shyness and anxiety*
- *etiology of shyness and social anxiety in childhood (e.g., role of biology, parenting)*
- *importance of peer interaction for young children’s socio-emotional adjustment*
- *shyness and the stresses of the early school environment*
- *socio-demographic considerations (e.g., gender differences, cross-cultural differences)*

Skill Development

- *assessment techniques for identifying young shy children (e.g., naturalist observations, parent-ratings, teacher-ratings, self-reports)*
- *early intervention strategies (e.g., social skills training, facilitated play, relaxation exercises, cognitive-based techniques, parent-education/training, teacher education/training)*
- *advice for working with parents, teachers, school personnel, and healthcare professionals*

Workshop details:

Date:	Friday, 19 June 2009
Time:	9.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.
Presenter:	Dr. Robert Coplan
Venue:	Rydges Melbourne, 186 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, Victoria – (<i>Melways ref: 1B – T4</i>)
Cost:	Subsidised fee: \$70 (GST incl) for Victorian Early Childhood Professionals Full fee : \$120 (GST incl)
Registration:	Please return ECIA Registration Form by 12 June 2009

For further information, please contact ECIA (VIC) on 9489 2477 or email exec@eciavic.org.au

About the presenter:

Robert J. Coplan, BSc., MA, PhD, is a Developmental Psychologist and Full Professor in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He has been spending his current sabbatical year in Australia, serving as a visiting scholar at the University of Melbourne and Macquarie University (Sydney).

Dr. Coplan is a recognized international expert in the study of shyness and social anxiety in early childhood. For the last 20 years, his research has focused on developing new assessments for identifying young shy children, the etiology and outcomes of childhood shyness, how shyness and social anxiety are perceived, understood, and responded to by parents, peers and teachers, and the specific challenges that shy children face in early childhood education settings.

Dr. Coplan's research is funded by ongoing grants from Canadian (*Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Canadian Institutes of Health Research*) and international (*Spencer Foundation; Jacobs Foundation*) funding agencies. His current research projects include a longitudinal study of risk and protective factors in the development of shyness in early childhood; a national survey of elementary school teachers' beliefs and responses towards shy, quiet, and anxious children in the classroom; and an investigation of the "on-line" social behaviors of anxious children. As well, Dr. Coplan has recently developed and provided a preliminary evaluation of a social-skills-based early intervention and prevention program for young shy-anxious preschoolers.

Over the last several years, Dr. Coplan has delivered dozens of colloquia and workshops on shyness and social anxiety in childhood for academic researchers, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, teachers, school board officials and parents in Canada, the US and Europe. During his recent time in Australia, Dr. Coplan was invited to give the Conference Keynote Address at the *Reconnexion National Conference on Anxiety and Depression* in Melbourne. He has also conducted recent workshops for the *Australian Council for Educational Research* (Melbourne) and *Centre for Child Emotional Health* (Sydney). In July, Dr. Coplan will deliver the Invited Keynote Address at the 2009 *Conference of the Australasian Human Development Association* in Adelaide, Australia.

Since 2006, Dr. Coplan has served as Editor of the international academic journal *Social Development* and is Guest Editor of an upcoming "special issue" of the journal *Infant and Child Development* on the links between childhood shyness and academic functioning. He has published over 150 journal articles, book chapter, and other academic papers in the areas of young children's social development and peer relationships; socio-emotional adjustment in daycare/preschool/kindergarten; child temperament and emotion regulation; children's play behaviors; parental disciplinary styles and belief systems; as well as teacher-child relationships, teacher beliefs, and teaching behaviors. He is also the author of the forthcoming books *The Development of Shyness and Social Withdrawal in Childhood and Adolescence* (Guilford) and *Social development in childhood and adolescence: A contemporary reader* (Wiley-Blackwell).

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