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## Australia and China to Collaborate on Autism Research

Australia and China will be working together for the first time to support children with autism.

Children on the autism spectrum have difficulties in social and communication skills as well as restricted and repetitive behaviour.

The Department of Psychological Medicine at The Children's Hospital at Westmead has developed Emotion Based Social Skills Training (EBSST) to enhance the mental health and well-being of these children.

Guangzhou Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Children with Autism/ Guangzhou Cana School for Children with Autism (Cana School), is the first Chinese government research centre and one of only two schools for children with autism in China.

Cana School aims to translate the EBSST materials and evaluate its effectiveness in a large scale study, with the goal of implementing the program in schools throughout China.

"This is the first opportunity for China and Australia to work together to support children with autism," said Dr Michelle Wong, who led the development of EBSST. "We are delighted to have two representatives from Cana School to visit the Hospital and to celebrate our Research Collaboration Project.

Dr Fan and Dan Huang will visit The Children's Hospital at Westmead on 9 May and, after a tour and meetings, the partnership will be celebrated with an afternoon tea.

Research has demonstrated EBSST improves emotional competence and mental health for children with autism and that improvements are sustained 6 months after completing the program. There are different versions of EBSST for children of different ages and abilities.

Training and certification is provided for practitioners to deliver EBSST in private therapy clinics, schools, and outpatient hospital settings.

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