

# Aus varsity launches Playpad App for autistic kids in India

The app is currently targeted at children aged two to six years old

**DNA Correspondent**

Australia's Deakin University has partnered with the National Trust in India to promote the usage of TOBY (Therapy Outcomes by You) Playpad App, an early intervention application for children with autism in India. This was announced at a launch function recently at the India International Centre in Delhi.

TOBY Playpad monitors a child's performance on tasks from a complex syllabus and adjusts lesson delivery to each and every child. The application aims to empower parents to intervene early to maximise their child's development.

TOBY's intensive curriculum covers social skills, language, sensory discrimination and cognitive skills. The therapist-designed early intervention curriculum includes 20 minutes of iPad time and similar amount of time off the

iPad. These tasks are weaved into the parent's daily routines and child's play interests.

Parents can track their child's progress as TOBY generates easy-to-read reports through curriculum tree and suggests how much support or prompting they need. This also helps parents, therapists and educators to identify the problems, which might be occurring and later design strategies to help them.

During the launch of TOBY app, Sreetha Venkatesh, professor of computer science and director, Pattern Recognition and Data Analytics (PRaDA) at Deakin University, Australia, said, "The TOBY Playpad is an opportunity for parents and educators to provide children therapy as soon as autism spectrum disorder has been diagnosed. This technology has been carefully designed for parents and educators in collaboration with Autism West Support Inc. (a Western Australian Autism support charity) which is cost effective and easy to use program with children at home."

She further informed that there are 1.36 million autism patients in India at present and many of the families are not even aware of this disability.

The launch of TOBY play pad is a part of Deakin's ongoing efforts to engage locally and provide solutions to community-based issues through cutting-edge research. The TOBY Playpad is available through the Apple iTunes Store and is currently targeted at children aged two to six years old.



## ABOUT DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Deakin is one of the first international education providers to set up a fully operational office in India, almost 15 years ago. Deakin works closely with the Indian government, industry and academia to share a vibrant culture in teaching, learning and research