



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **COULD FISH OIL IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND BONDING BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD?**

Sure Start Local Programme announces results of trial with eye q<sup>TM</sup> fish oil as part of the Government's Achieving Better Outcomes for Young Children Strategy

The first results from a trial using fish oil with pre-school children were announced at a press conference in London on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Children who took part in the research showed significant advances in concentration, behaviour and parental bonding in a study which could offer some simple solutions for improving the prospects of children from less advantaged backgrounds.

Since April 2005, three Sure Start Early Years settings have been working with Durham Local Education Authority (LEA) to offer eye q smooth<sup>TM</sup> to children as part of their award-winning Child Progress Model. The model seeks to identify children experiencing poor developmental progress, including poor concentration and behaviour, much earlier and offer specific service interventions to promote development. The data, from assessments of 65 children who have been taking the supplement for 5 months, has now been analysed and researchers are delighted with the findings.

The children were selected due to their challenging behaviour and problems with attention, and concentration. In addition to these areas, parents and Sure Start workers also completed assessments looking at the children's developmental profiles and language ability while the control group stayed well behind. The results are as follows:-

#### **Behaviour**

- 47% of children were rated as having 'poor' or 'very poor' behaviour at baseline
- After supplementation, only 4% of children had 'poor'/'very poor' behaviour ratings
- 91% of those children who had poor behaviour at baseline, improved to moderate or good after supplementation

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**Concentration**

- 66% of children at the beginning of the trial had 'poor'/'very poor' concentration
- After supplementation, 79% of children had 'good'/'very good' levels of concentration
- ALL children who were rated as poor concentrators at baseline, improved to moderate or good after 5 months

**Language development**

For language development, children were assessed against a control group who were not taking eye q smooth™.

After the 5 months, the eye q™ group made a 7.1 month improvement in receptive language ability (listening to and understanding instructions) and an 8.8 month improvement in expressive language ability (communication through spoken word) which is above expected developmental gains. The control group made an expected gain of 5.1 months improvement in expressive language and a 4.1 month improvement in receptive language. At the outset of the trial all of the children's language ability was below that expected for their age so researchers concluded that the eye q group almost caught up to normal ability where the control group stayed well behind.

'The feedback from parents and Sure Start workers indicated the trial was going well so we were delighted when the results confirmed its success. The changes we have observed in the children are incredibly important for their future development. We believe we may have discovered a tool that could lead to improved prospects for children who have had a disadvantaged start,' said Brian Brown, Manager of Sure Start Children's Centre, Peterlee. 'We will continue to offer the eye q supplement to children as they begin Sure Start so many more can benefit.' he said.

'Some two-year-olds went from having a vocabulary of 25 single words to being able to use whole sentences, while others were able to sit down and concentrate for the first time in their lives, said Dr Madeleine Portwood, Senior Educational Psychologist and lead researcher on the trial.

'But perhaps the most significant advantage of this project is that the improvements in behaviour and concentration in the children have facilitated a much stronger bond between the parent and the child, and we think this has been largely responsible for the development of language and communication skills in these children,' Dr Portwood said.

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eye q™ smooth is a combination of omega-3 fish oil and omega-6 evening primrose oil from specialist fatty acid supplement suppliers, Equazen. eye q smooth™ does not taste 'fishy,' and can be easily added to milk, ensuring a child will get an optimum daily input of the specific long chain fatty acids for eye and brain function.

The early-intervention trial is part of a Child Progress Model research project being run by Peterlee Sure Start/Children's Centre, which the organisers hope will be rolled out to other early years settings throughout the UK.

Government-funded Sure Start is a nationwide strategy aimed to help disadvantaged communities, and 85% of the children in Peterlee were screened as being below average in their language and communication skills.

eye q™ is available in Clicks, Dischem, Retail Pharmacies and independent health food stores The formulation comes in capsules, Strawberry-flavoured Chews, and citrus- flavoured liquid:

**ENDS**

The fish oil in eye q™ is pressed from the flesh of sardines and pilchards harvested for their high levels of EPA. Special care is taken to leave the oil in its most natural bio-available form, so the fatty acids are easily absorbed. The oil is of a pharmaceutical grade, made from fish harvested from southern oceans known to have very low pollution levels. Each batch is independently tested and always found to be in full compliance with the stringent European Community and World Health Organisation guidelines for levels of PCB's and dioxins.

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