



The Royal
Australian &
New Zealand
College of
Psychiatrists



Certificate of Advanced Training in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Syllabus

Version 0.4

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Preface

Training in child and adolescent psychiatry follows an apprenticeship model with extensive, well-supervised clinical and research experience as its foundation. Because child and adolescent psychiatrists work in complex environments with multiple patients, they require a broad appreciation of biological, psychological, developmental and sociocultural issues affecting infants, children, adolescents and families. Thorough knowledge and careful use of the principles of evidence-based practice and outcome evaluation must be accompanied by a humane and ethical approach to the children, adolescents and families seeking care. Emphasis should be given to research-driven data and methods of practice, but trainees should nevertheless be encouraged to reflect on the culture of child psychiatry and to examine historical continuities and discontinuities with the present understanding of child psychiatry.

Unless otherwise stated, 'child/children' means infant, child and adolescent.

The syllabus intends to define, for trainees and educators, the knowledge base that underpins the acquisition of competencies in the specialist area child and adolescent psychiatry and that is required for the RANZCP Certificate of Advanced Training in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The content outlined below is intended to inform knowledge acquisition across clinical, informal and formal education settings as well as self-directed learning.

The syllabus is not intended to be prescriptive. Accordingly, in order to be consistent with the principles of adult learning and to reflect the richness and diversity of child and adolescent psychiatry, detailed descriptions of content are intentionally excluded. This also allows for advances in psychiatric knowledge and changing paradigms. It is recognised that local training schemes and formal education courses (FECs) will provide greater levels of specification.

The syllabus is indicative of the breadth of knowledge required. All areas in the syllabus are important and need to be covered; however, not all areas could be expected to be learnt to the same level. To help trainees, FEC coordinators, supervisors and other educators, the rating system utilised in the Stage 1 and 2 syllabuses has been used to indicate the depth of knowledge expected.

Depth of Knowledge

Depth of knowledge as appropriate for Certificate training (not importance of knowledge):

AC	Awareness of concepts
WK	Working knowledge
IDK	In-depth knowledge

It is expected the rating system also reflects the learning opportunities available to trainees in Certificate training programs.

Core knowledge in child psychiatry

Ethics and professionalism

Capacity and consent	IDK
Boundary issues	IDK
Privacy and confidentiality	IDK
Relationship with industry	IDK
Ethics of duality and conflicts of interest	IDK
Professional standards	IDK
Continuing professional development (CPD)	IDK
Advocacy and best interests of the child	IDK
Human rights and rights of the child	WK

Information technology

Use contemporary information technology	WK
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History

History of child psychiatry as it informs current psychiatric practice	WK
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Basic sciences

Epidemiology of child and adolescent mental health (including risk and protective factors, continuities and discontinuities)	IDK
Neurosciences (relevant to the clinical syndromes...)	IDK
Neuroanatomy	IDK
Neurophysiology	IDK
Neurochemistry	IDK
Underlying principles of genetics and inheritance	IDK
Genetics relevant to child and adolescent psychiatric disorder	WK
Genetics of paediatric disorders associated with mental health symptomatology	WK

Normal and abnormal development

Normal development throughout the life span (including observations of normal children at all ages)	IDK
Developmental biology and genetics	IDK
Developmental psychopathology	IDK
Normal and abnormal cognitive development	IDK
Effects of trauma, abuse and neglect on neurodevelopment	IDK

Psychology and development

Theories of infant development including attachment theory	IDK
Psychoanalytic developmental theory	IDK
Learning and related theories	IDK
Cognitive development psychology	IDK
Group theory and group dynamics	IDK
Response to trauma on the child and family (including early developmental trauma and illness)	IDK
Grief and loss and its impact on children and families	IDK
Resilience	IDK

The family and society

Dynamics of family functioning (including a broad range of concepts and models)	IDK
Cultural, social, religious and spiritual variations in family function	IDK
Family dysfunction and its effects on children (including parental mental illness, violence, parental discord, divorce and separation)	IDK
Sociology and ethology relating to child psychiatry	WK
Misfortune or disadvantage and its effects on children (including disaster, poverty, war and illness)	IDK

Diversity and Indigenous mental health

Scope of diversity including but not limited to culture, sexual orientation, intellectual abilities and developmental stage	IDK
Normative gender/sexual development and diversity	IDK
Cultural differences in the child/adolescent and family's understanding of mental illness	IDK
Impact of cultural factors including migration on child mental health presentations	IDK
Australian and New Zealand history of colonisation/invasion and the ongoing impact for Indigenous young people and their families	IDK
Local and national Indigenous paradigms including conceptualisation of child mental health problems, specific cultural practices, customs, family/social structures and their impact on presentation and intervention	IDK

History taking and examination of child and family

Developmentally sensitive interviewing infants, children and adolescents	IDK
Interviewing parent(s), family members and other informants	IDK
Family interviewing	IDK
Assessment of parenting capacity	IDK
Understanding the concept and challenges of interviewing and assessing the mental state of people with complex communication needs including intellectual, developmental and other disabilities (cognitive, sensory and motor)	IDK
Knowledge of structured interviewing and assessment methods, e.g. ADOS, DISC	WK
Clinical instruments in assessment including commonly used validated instruments	IDK
Developmental assessment including motor, speech/language and educational	WK
Mental status examination relevant to assessment of infants, children and adolescents	IDK
Risk assessment in infants and perinatal psychiatry, children and adolescents	IDK
Physical assessment including neurological assessment relevant to child mental health	IDK
Psychometric assessment	WK
Motivational interviewing	IDK

Assessment and management of psychiatric emergencies

Crisis intervention	IDK
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Diagnosis, differential diagnosis and formulation

Diagnosis

History of development of diagnosis and classificatory systems in psychiatry	WK
Taxonomic theory and methods, and current systems of classification (ICD, DSM, DCR 0-3)	IDK
Principles and problems of classification systems	IDK

Differential diagnosis and formulation

Understanding the importance of synthesising collateral information with direct assessment	IDK
Develop a comprehensive differential diagnostic formulation for infants, children, adolescents and adults seen	IDK
Develop a comprehensive management plan taking into account all relevant biological, psychological and sociocultural factors	IDK

Taxonomic theory and methods, and current systems of classification

(International Classification of Diseases, Diagnostic and statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood)

Principles of taxonomy relevant to infants IDK

Clinical syndromes

Trainees are expected to acquire knowledge of the following aspects of the disorders listed below (including those listed in the neurodevelopmental disorders and consultation–liaison psychiatry sections):

Definition, assessment, diagnostic criteria, clinical symptomatology and associated features, family, age, gender and culture-related features, epidemiology, aetiology (biopsychosocial, cultural), course, complications, outcome, differential diagnosis, prevention, assessment, management (biopsychosocial, cultural), psychiatric and medical comorbidities.

Organic psychiatric disorders (including psychiatric manifestations of common childhood genetic and developmental disorders) IDK

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome IDK

Substance dependence and abuse (alcohol, nicotine, cannabis [including its relationship with psychosis], amphetamine-type stimulants, hallucinogens, opioids, inhalants, new and emerging drugs of abuse/dependence) IDK

Substance-induced disorders (mood/psychosis, acute intoxication/withdrawal) IDK

Pharmaceutical drug misuse/abuse/dependence (prescribed and over the counter) IDK

Psychotic disorders in children and adolescents IDK

Mood disorders IDK

Depressive disorders IDK

Anxiety disorders IDK

PTSD IDK

Emerging personality disorders IDK

Adjustment disorders IDK

Somatoform Disorders (see disorders of relevance to CL Child Psychiatry) IDK

Dissociative disorders IDK

Sleep disorders IDK

Perinatal disorders IDK

Eating disorders IDK

Impulse control disorders IDK

Gender identity disorder IDK

Sexually inappropriate behaviour and sexual disorders IDK

Child and adolescent disorders

Attention deficit disorder (see neuropsychiatric disorders)	IDK
Conduct and oppositional defiant disorders	IDK
Separation anxiety disorder	IDK
Selective mutism	IDK
Attachment disorder	IDK
Tic disorders	IDK
Elimination disorders	IDK

Other clinical presentations

Problematic behaviours	
Self-injurious behaviour	IDK
Aggression and violence	IDK
Bullying	IDK
Fire-setting	IDK
Gambling	IDK
Pathological internet use	IDK
Psychological and psychiatric manifestations of trauma	IDK

Neurodevelopmental disorders and psychiatry of intellectual and developmental disabilities

Attention deficit disorder	IDK
Pervasive developmental disorder	IDK
Specific developmental disorders	IDK
Intellectual disability	IDK
Specific issues of assessment of people with intellectual disabilities, including mental health and behaviour, relevance of severity of intellectual disability	IDK
Consideration of the aetiology of the disabilities in the patient, whether congenital and/or acquired, and relevance to the clinical presentation	IDK
Specific issues of management, including adapted psychotropic drug regimens and importance of long-term developmental perspective	IDK

Consultation–liaison psychiatry

Models of care in paediatric CL and role of the CL child psychiatrist	IDK
Psychiatric and neuropsychiatric sequelae of paediatric disorders	WK
Normal and abnormal illness behaviour in children	IDK
Working in paediatric settings in interventions with the treating doctor/team	IDK

Disorders of particular relevance to CL child psychiatrist

Paediatric disorders relevant to child psychiatry	WK
Psychological factors affecting medical illness	IDK
Delirium	IDK
Epilepsy	WK
Acquired brain injury	IDK
Psychiatric illness due to general medical conditions (including side effects of treatments)	IDK
Pain disorders and analgesia	IDK
Somatoform disorders	IDK
Somatisation disorder	IDK
Functional Neurological disorder	IDK
Hypochondriasis	IDK
Factitious disorder, factitious disorder by proxy and malingering	IDK
Responses to trauma and medical illness (including chronic medical illness)	IDK

Children of parents with mental health disorders

Understanding the issues/problems facing children of parents with mental illness and/or addiction	IDK
Knowledge of strategies to assist children of parents with mental illness and/or addiction	IDK

Management

Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate a wide range of therapies in individual, family and group modalities

Principles of evidence-based practice in child and adolescent mental health

Inpatient and residential care

Principles of inpatient/residential treatment	IDK
Culture and milieu	IDK
Advantages and disadvantages of inpatient mental health care in different ages and presentations	IDK
Principles of partial hospitalisation and day patient treatment	WK

Social

Principles of the recovery philosophy in the child and adolescent mental health setting including promotion of resilience	IDK
Principles of stigma, mental health literacy, the role of public education initiatives	IDK
School-based primary mental health interventions	WK
Working with welfare agencies	IDK
Working with disability services	IDK
Role of consumer and advocacy groups	IDK
Role of social support services (housing, accommodation, non-governmental organisation [NGO] sector individual and group supports	IDK

Biological

Principles of paediatric psychopharmacology and prescribing including in specific settings such as CL or patient groups (e.g. IDD)	IDK
Legislative requirements as relevant to medication	IDK
Off label prescribing	IDK
Alternative medications and interventions commonly used in childhood mental health presentations including any potential benefits, interactions and toxicity	WK
Antipsychotics	IDK
Antidepressants	IDK
Mood stabilisers	IDK
Anxiolytics	IDK
Stimulants and other agents used in management of ADD	IDK
Role of alternative and complementary medicines in child and adolescent mental health conditions	IDK
Somatic treatments including electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)	IDK
Management of physical sequelae and complications of psychiatric illnesses and their treatment	IDK

Psychological treatments and psychotherapy

Historical perspective and context of different schools of psychological interventions for families, children and adolescents	IDK
Principles of psychological interventions including non-specific factors including rapport building, therapeutic alliance, frame and contract setting	IDK
Principles of assessment for all psychotherapy approaches	IDK

Understanding the theories, role of, and evidence-based indications for, the major modalities of psychotherapy:

Supportive therapies	IDK
Parent counselling and education.	IDK
Behavioural interventions	IDK
Cognitive therapies	IDK
Interpersonal therapy (IPT)	IDK
Psychodynamic therapies (major schools)	IDK
Family and systems therapy (major schools)	IDK
Couples therapy	IDK
Group therapy (major schools)	IDK
Mother–infant therapies	IDK

Perinatal and infant psychiatry

In addition to areas in the syllabus relevant to infant development and the assessment, diagnosis and management of infant mental health disorders, Certificate trainees should have knowledge of the following areas, relevant to perinatal and infant psychiatry:

Reproductive psychiatry	WK
Pre-conception counselling for families with history or mental illness including history of post-natal depression	WK
Specific issues of assessment and management of mothers during pregnancy and in the perinatal period	WK
Risk assessment (including risk of infanticide)	IDK
Use of pharmacology in the perinatal period and while breast-feeding and impacts on infant/child	IDK
Impact of maternal/paternal mental health on infants and children	IDK
Assessment of infant development and mental health	IDK
Sleep and feeding disturbances of infancy	IDK
Principle of taxonomy relevant to infants	WK
Evidence-based psychotherapeutic and psychosocial interventions for mother, partners, infants and families	IDK

Child psychiatry and the law

Understanding relevant national and local legislation as it applies to children and adolescents including:	IDK
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mental health act• education• child welfare and child protection• children and family court• disabilities.	

Principles underpinning mental health regulations in children, adolescents and their families	IDK
Responsibilities under the mental health act	IDK
Relevant common law principles, e.g. capacity, necessity, duty-of-care, duty-to-warn	IDK
Knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements (including ethical considerations and health practitioner's context)	IDK
Understanding the role of an expert in legal proceedings (including report writing and giving expert evidence)	IDK
Assess the child as witness, victim and offender within the justice system	IDK
Children of separation and divorce	IDK

Forensic child psychiatry

Forensic risk assessment	IDK
Principles of psychiatric defences and fitness to plead/stand trial	IDK
Forensic mental health systems and services	WK
Juvenile detention and alternatives in correctional psychiatry	WK

Child protection

Role of protection legislation and the role of statutory agencies	WK
Child maltreatment and neglect	IDK
Parenting assessment	IDK
Adoption and fostering	IDK
Mental health needs of children in care	IDK

Education

School consultation and liaison	IDK
School refusal and truancy	IDK

Research and evaluation

Employ relevant research methodology in child psychiatry	IDK
Employ relevant outcome evaluation and quality assurance methodology	IDK
Evaluate scientific papers in child psychiatry and employ evidence-based methods in clinical practice	IDK
Carry out continuous quality improvement strategies including peer review and clinical review	IDK

Administration and supervision

Clinical and corporate governance	WK
Clinical leadership and characteristics of good leaders	IDK
Roles and responsibilities of multidisciplinary team and its members	IDK
Role of child psychiatrist in a multidisciplinary team	IDK
Supervision and performance management of multidisciplinary team members	IDK
RANZCP Fellowship and Certificate training supervision	IDK

Public health arena, policy and service

Population-based mental health interventions	WK
Principles of promotion, prevention and early intervention strategies	IDK
Government policy pertaining to the mental health and wellbeing of children	AC
Healthcare economics and ethical distribution of healthcare resources	AC

Contact		Project Officer, Education and Training	
Date	Version	Revision description	Approval process
2016	V0.3	SATCAP approved new syllabus document	SATCAP approved 17/11/2016
2023	V0.4	'Conversion Disorder' be changed to 'Functional Neurological Disorder', in line with DSM-5.	SATCAP approved 29/03/2023