



PRESS RELEASE

2 April 2012

Father develops tool to 'grow conversations' with his autistic son

SPARK (Speech Practice for Autistic and other Remarkable Kids) is a new tool to improve communication between children with autism and their environment. SPARK was developed by Frank Verhagen, a father of an autistic child, who experienced the need to find an easier way of interacting with his son. Therefore he developed a PowerPoint with questions about illustrations and related answers. Over the years, the PowerPoint has evolved into a true tool for talking, currently containing over 6.000 slides. The tool is now available for everyone on the SPARK website.

Frank Verhagen from SPARK: "Children with autism often have difficulties with communication and language skills. SPARK enables them and their environment to communicate clearer with each other and to increase their quality of life."

The self-made PowerPoint slides enabled Frank to talk with his son about everyday topics. This way, he discovered how to "grow conversations" with his son, hence the baseline "growing conversations". Frank wanted to share this experience with all those who have to live with autism.

Frank Verhagen: "The 2nd of April, 'World Autism Awareness Day', is the perfect moment to introduce SPARK to others. With SPARK, we are especially keen on helping people with autism who are virtually non-verbal. Autism is a spectrum disorder. This makes that it comes in all sizes and shapes. Our own son does barely speak, but SPARK has enabled us to start conversations, which resulted in a stronger bond between the two of us. To get SPARK known worldwide and to develop the tool even further, we are still looking for companies and individuals who want to support SPARK to keep the organization growing."

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Note for the editors/ Not for publication:

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