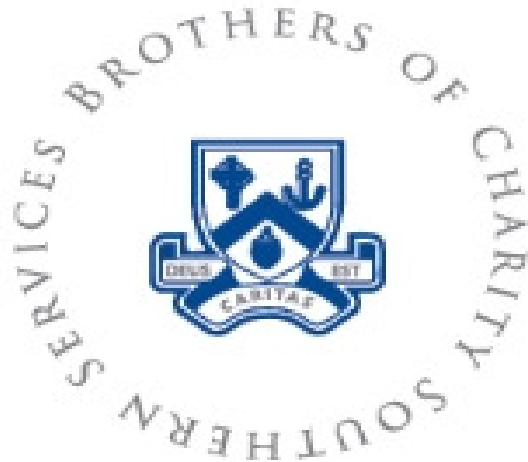


What role can Grandparents play?

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Mary's family



- Story of Mary
- A family's experience of autism diagnosis
- Grandparents played a **BIG ROLE**
- **NO** support for Grandparents

Family research on raising a child with ASD

- **Stressful**

(Myers et al. 2009)

- **Stigma**

(Farrugia, 2009)

- **Burden depending on
severity of ASD**

(Stuart & McCraw, 2009)

On a positive note...

- **Stronger bonds in families**

- **Greater acceptance of things
in life**

(Kayfitz et al. 2012)



Research on Grandparents of children with ASD



- Experience role confusion (Hillman, 2007)
- Great source of emotional and practical support
(Hastings, 1997)
- Would benefit from practical and social supports (Hillman, 2007)

Policy direction- Ireland



Grandparents should
be recognised more as
a resource in families

(Lundström. 2001)

Policy direction- United States



Kennedy Kruger Institute

- Web survey of over 2,600 grandparents
- Grandparents play major role in families
- Over 90% felt having a child with ASD brought families closer

A Family Systems Approach (Minuchin, 1988)

- Family as a whole
- Explores patterns of interactions around a central person
- Looks at how relationships change and adapt



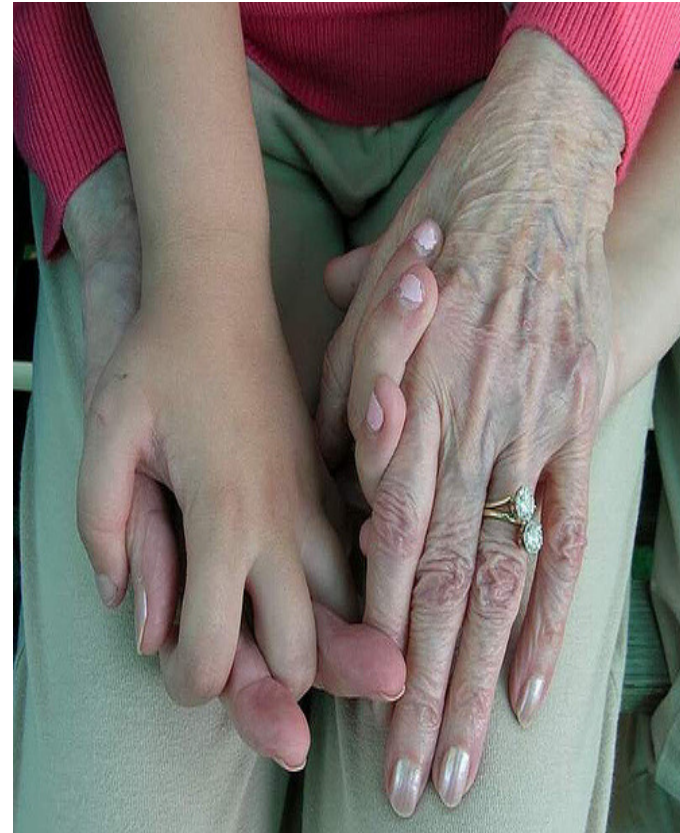
Why family systems research?

- Little research on families within family systems framework

(Head & Abbeduto, 2007)

Research should look at other family members' perspectives

(Canary, 2008)



Grandparents research in Cork

Interviews with 9 families

6 mothers

3 sets of parents

2 grandfathers

4 grandmothers

3 sets of grandparents

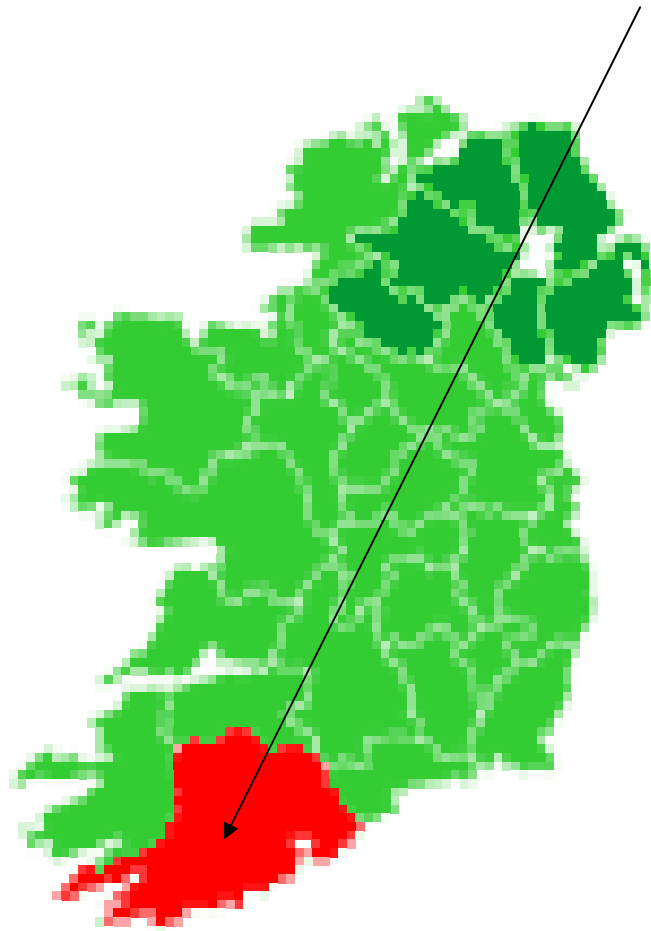
Age range of parents:

30-49

Age range of grandparents:

50-84

Research supervised by Dr. William Kinsella, UCD



Findings from interviews

1. Family recalibrating/changing

- Limiting life
- Impact on the family

2. Strengthening the family

- Active roles of grandparents
- Calming role of grandfather

Research supervised by Dr. William Kinsella,
UCD

Findings from interviews



Getty

- **3. Current needs and future concerns**
- Needs of grandparents
- Concerns for future

Research supervised by Dr. William Kinsella, UCD

What this research shows

- Grandparents play a supporting role
- Children with ASD gravitate to calmness of grandparents, especially grandfathers
- Where marital breakup and/or mental health difficulties occurred, parents relied heavily on grandparent support



What could services do to support grandparents?



- Need to develop supports for grandparents
- Grandparents would benefit from more information on ASD
- Empower grandparents (with parental consent) by informing them of their grandchild's needs

What could services do to support grandparents?

- Awareness of impact of disability (managing grief)
- Planning for how families adapt to a future without grandparents
- Explore role of grandparents in a Circle of Support



Thank you for listening

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