

# AUTISM AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

## THE NEED FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

**THERE ARE MANY AND VARIED TREATMENTS & INTERVENTIONS AVAILABLE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD). MAKING THE DECISION ABOUT THE MOST EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OR INTERVENTION FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN BE A DIFFICULT TASK.**

When making these decisions, it is important to:

- consider whether the treatment or intervention under consideration has scientific evidence of effectiveness with individuals on the autism spectrum, and
- ensure that the individual's characteristics and individual support needs are taken into consideration.

This process is referred to as evidence-based practice.

### WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE?

According to the National Autism Centre (2009), evidence-based practice has four critical components:

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS

The strength of evidence ratings for all treatments being considered must be known. Consideration must be given to the benefits of established treatments.

#### PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

The judgment of professionals with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorders must be taken into consideration. Professionals also have a responsibility to determine the effectiveness of treatment for an individual on an ongoing basis.

#### VALUES AND PREFERENCES

The values and preferences of parents, care providers and the individual with ASD should be considered.

#### CAPACITY

Treatment providers should be well positioned to correctly implement the intervention. This includes having proper training, adequate resources, mechanisms for feedback and inbuilt sustainability.

### WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND ASD

There are a number of resources available to help people make decisions about appropriate evidence-based treatments or interventions for an individual with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

These resources explore treatments with an established evidence base, treatments with an emerging or promising evidence base and treatments that are not established or even ineffective or harmful.

There are also guidelines that provide professionals with decision making support and information about how to implement treatments or interventions in a range of settings and with a range of age groups.

In using evidence-based practice, professionals, parents and individuals working together as a team can ensure the best possible outcomes for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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## THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE:

### GUIDELINES FOR PRACTITIONERS:

Children's Mental Health Ontario (2003) Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders.  
[www.kidsmentalhealth.ca](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca)

Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, (2006). Quality educational practices for students with Asperger syndrome. Government of South Australia, Adelaide.  
[www.macswd.sa.gov.au](http://www.macswd.sa.gov.au)

National Autism Center (2009). Evidence-based practice and Autism in the Schools. National Autism Centre, Massachusetts.  
[www.nationalautismcenter.org](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org)

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), (2011). Service Guidelines for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder through the lifespan, Ohio.  
[www.ocali.org](http://www.ocali.org)

Statewide Verification and Professional Support, (2008). A teacher resource for Autistic Disorder /Asperger Disorder. Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services, Adelaide.  
[www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)

### REVIEWS OF EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS AND INTERVENTIONS:

National Autism Center (2009). National Standards Project: Findings and conclusions, National Autism Centre, Massachusetts.  
[www.nationalautismcenter.org](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org)

Prior M, Roberts J.M.A, Rodger S and Williams K. (July 2011). A Review of the Research to Identify the Most Effective Models of Practice in Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australia  
[www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

The Campbell Collaboration Library of Systematic Reviews  
[www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org)

The Cochrane Collaboration (Cochrane Reviews).  
[www.cochrane.org](http://www.cochrane.org)

### RESOURCES DESIGNED FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS:

National Autism Center (2011). A Parent's Guide to Evidence-Based Practice and Autism. National Autism Centre, Massachusetts.  
[www.nationalautismcenter.org](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org)

Positive Partnerships  
[www.autismtraining.com.au](http://www.autismtraining.com.au)

Raising Children Network: Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

The ACT-NOW Project – Monash University  
[www.med.monash.edu.au](http://www.med.monash.edu.au)