

CHOOSING INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLER WITH AUTISM

1 GET A CLEAR PICTURE

Monitoring and evaluation by your child's doctor, psychologist or therapist can help you understand your child's changing needs across time.



SOME CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS:

Developmental needs (e.g. language delay, **intellectual disability**)

Emotional and behaviour needs (e.g. anxiety, **ADHD**)

Specific learning difficulties (e.g. **dyslexia**)

Medical or genetic conditions (e.g. epilepsy, Fragile X)

Autism can be reliably diagnosed at 2-3 years old, but conditions indicated in **blue** are more reliably diagnosed at 5-7 years old.

2 IDENTIFY THE RIGHT FIT

Interventions that teach your child **new behaviours** and **skills** enable the best outcomes. These interventions can be...



COMPREHENSIVE

OR

FOCUSED



- Address multiple developmental areas
- Few times weekly & longer term
- e.g. early intervention programmes

Many attend short-term therapy at hospitals, while waiting to enroll in an early intervention programme.

- Address single skill or goal
- Shorter term or until goal is met
- Occur within a therapy package of a few sessions or as part of comprehensive intervention
- e.g. positive behaviour support, visual aids

INTERVENTIONS SHOULD:

- ✓ Follow a developmental sequence to teach skills
- ✓ Maximise strengths & work on difficulties
- ✓ Help child better engage in daily activities
- ✓ Work on goals your family finds important

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3 FOLLOW THE SCIENCE

Interventions should be **supported by science**. Avoid overly expensive or invasive treatment, that can be **harmful** to your child's physical or mental health.



SAFE & EFFECTIVE

- Supported by scientific evidence (e.g. peer-reviewed research)
- Has clear procedures & measurable outcomes



UNRELIABLE

- Based on testimonies by a select few
- Claims to 'cure' or 'fix' autism

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR!

4 DOING RIGHT BY YOUR CHILD

Children learn best in **positive** and **nurturing** environments.

HELPFUL TREATMENTS

vs.

UNHELPFUL TREATMENTS

Develop your child's unique strengths

vs.

Treat autism as a problem

Teach skills to help your child adapt

vs.

Force your child to be 'normal'

Affirm your child for 'wins', big or small

vs.

Use shame/ fear to control your child's behaviour

Children may be **anxious** when joining a new intervention programme. A helpful therapist will support your child's emotions & **help them adjust gradually**.

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5 PLAN FOR THE LONG RUN

Caring for a child with autism is a **marathon**, not a sprint. Consider the costs of interventions & subsidies.



SUSTAINED CARE



QUICK FIXES

COMMUNITY PROVIDERS...

- such as the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) are government-subsidised
- adhere to a standard framework to ensure quality of care.

PRIVATE PROVIDERS...

- may provide more options such as full day programmes or integrated preschool
- are usually more costly

6 FIND A TEAM YOU TRUST

Teachers, doctors, psychologists, therapists and nurses are your **partners** during this journey to support your child.

SIGNS OF A GOOD TEAM



Licensed and knowledgeable about autism



Clear roles across professions



Involves & communicates with parents & other therapists



Reviews your child's progress **regularly**

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7 PUT TIME ON YOUR SIDE

Make time to be involved in your child's intervention by **attending** caregiver trainings.

Change takes time, and interventions work best when **caregivers practise skills in the home and community** with their children.



Ensure your child gets sufficient sleep, leisure, and family time in addition to practising skills!

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

SGEnable.sg: Services for children with special needs (0-6 yrs)



Raisingchildren.net.au: Main types of therapies and supports for children with autism

Caregivers Training Grant information

