

BUILDING BLOCKS® Early Intervention Service **Parent Information Sheet**

Choosing Interventions and Therapy Approaches

The period following a diagnosis is an extremely challenging one for families. Not only are you experiencing many emotions, you are also faced with decisions regarding intervention options for your child. This period of decision-making can be overwhelming for parents, given the nature of waiting lists, the number of different service providers, and the desire to help your children as quickly as possible.

Choosing interventions that will best suit your child and family's needs requires thought, discussion and information. Interventions can differ with regard to intensity, cost, effectiveness and theoretical basis. It is important to be informed and to think through where your time, effort and financial resources will be best spent. Families may feel pressured to access any available service without having had explained the nature of that service its theoretical approach, and how different services may complement one another. At this time it may be beneficial to take some time with professionals to observe your child, see how he or she seems to learn best, what resources are available to your family and determine the quantity and type of intervention you can incorporate into your child and family's lives.

Some questions to consider:

- Does this program or practitioner respect and incorporate my role and knowledge of my child as a parent?
- Can parents/carers learn how to implement this approach in everyday family situations?
- Is it clear to me what type of intervention is offered and why it would help my child?
- What does the intervention involve, who will be involved in delivering it and how is the approach introduced to the child?

- Was the approach specifically developed for use with children with autism?
- Does this approach benefit all children with autism, or is it designed for specific use with one sub-group?
- Is this approach flexible? Does it take into account the differences of individual children with autism and their needs?
- Has this approach been evaluated? Is there any research published which supports the safety and effectiveness of this type of intervention?
- If some practitioners feel this approach does not work, why?
- How long has this approach been used with children with autism?
- Can this approach be used in conjunction with other approaches?
- To what extent will it affect our whole family's lifestyle?
- Is it home-based, centre-based, and can the approach be used and generalised across all situations?
- How does this approach address my child's communication, social, behavioural and sensory processing needs?
- How much will it cost?
- How will I know if the approach is working?

Reference:

Cumine, Leach, and Stevenson, (2002) Autism in the early years: A practical guide; London: David Fulton Publishers.