



CHOOSING A THERAPY FOR YOUR CHILD

Following your child's diagnosis, it is a common reaction to search for a therapy that will fully address or even solve your child's difficulties. During that search you will likely find many possible alternatives to choose from. Each one makes its own claims for success and requires varying levels of expenditure in both time and money.

Navigating through this minefield of choice can be both confusing and scary. It is impossible to try everything and the responsibility can feel overwhelming when there is so much at stake.

The therapeutic programmes on offer are usually linked to, and based on, just a few types of therapeutic technique. It may be best to firstly look at a few general therapies to decide which principles might suit your child's needs and personality best, alongside your lifestyle commitments and those of the rest of your immediate family. It is difficult to analyse the 'scientific' proof alone as so many factors may influence the potential effectiveness for your own child. The internet can be a wonderful tool for research, but be careful that the information is coming from a reliable source. Once you have found a preferred type of therapy you can begin to choose from the available therapeutic providers. Considerations at this point will involve geographical location, availability, convenience of timing and cost. You will also want to feel confident with the individuals delivering the therapy.

- Think about the risk of the therapy and if there's no obvious downside then there's probably little harm in trying it
- Be cautious with drug or diet interventions and check first with your paediatrician
- Give a technique enough time to succeed before you write it off as not working
- Make sure the therapy does not come at the expense of your family's emotional well-being
- Keep your paediatrician informed of therapies you are using
- No two children are the same so anecdotal evidence should not be a replacement for sound scientific research
- Decisions can be changed so don't put pressure on yourself to get it right first time. Sometimes it just may not suit your child, or possibly the timing is wrong and it may be worth revisiting in the future
- Be cautious about handing over a lot of money for an unproven remedy that doesn't offer a free trial. It would be better to see if your child responds to a particular technique before committing to a programme
- Check out the credentials of anyone offering a therapy. Are they trained by an approved body in their field?
- Whatever the hype for a technique or therapy, go with your gut instinct for what is right for your child and your family



CHOOSING A THERAPY FOR YOUR CHILD

Sources of information on medical information, therapies and approaches:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/before-choosing.aspx>

<https://www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/finding-and-appraising-information-and-evidence-on-the-internet/>

<http://researchautism.net/autism-interventions/making-the-decision/intervention-questions>

The SNAP library has some books and information sheets on different approaches and therapies.

The contacts and links given via this SNAP information sheet have been shared as a starting point for your own research. We believe the information to be genuine and correct at the time of publishing, however no responsibility for loss occasioned by any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of the material contained herein can be accepted by SNAP.