

Characteristics of good ASD early intervention: checklist

What to look for in an early intervention

Here is a list of characteristics to look for when choosing an early intervention. The more of these signs you can spot the better (not all interventions programs will tick all the boxes). Evidence tells us that these are the elements that best support children with an ASD.

- The intervention is flexible – able to be done at home as well as in other settings such as early intervention centres.
- The intervention is designed for children with ASD.
- The staff are specially trained in the intervention and services they provide.
- The intervention develops an individual plan for each child and the plan is reviewed regularly.
- The intervention monitors each child's progress with regular assessments.
- The intervention is highly structured, well organised, regular and predictable.
- The intervention focuses on helping with attention, compliance, imitation, language and social skills.
- The intervention provides a supportive teaching environment – your child feels comfortable and supported.
- The intervention includes strategies to help your child learn new skills and use them in different settings.
- The intervention's approach to difficult behaviour involves identifying what the 'purpose' of a behaviour is, and then teaching more appropriate alternative behaviours to replace difficult ones.
- The intervention prepares and supports children for the move to school.
- The intervention includes family members so they can work alongside the professionals and learn how to help their child.
- The intervention provides families with support and guidance.
- The intervention enables contact between the child with ASD and typically developing children (ideally of the same age).

Research shows that intensive early intervention for children with ASD is most effective. Twenty hours a week of therapy is recommended. It's not just about the hours, though – it's also about the quality of those hours and how the therapy engages your child.