Therapy and Support for Autism Spectrum Disorder

The 2023 Autism CRC Guidelines for ASD Therapy and Support

In 2023, Australia released significant updates to its national guidelines for supporting autistic children and their families, with a strong focus on treatment and intervention. The new guidelines, led by Autism CRC, represent the first national, evidence-based framework in Australia that specifically addresses therapy and intervention choices for autistic children.

Key features of the 2023 ASD treatment guidelines:

- **Evidence-Based, Individualised Care:** The guidelines stress the importance of treatments that are backed by solid research and tailored to each child's unique strengths and needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach(UWA).
- **Neurodiversity-Affirming Practice:** They encourage professionals and families to support autistic children in ways that respect and celebrate neurodiversity, moving away from efforts to "fix" or "normalise" autism.(Autism CRC).
- **Scope of Interventions:** The guidelines lay out a wide variety of intervention options, giving families and practitioners information about different therapies so they can make informed choices based on what's best for each child. (

Autism CRC).

- **Developmental Interventions:** Focus on building social, communication, and emotional skills through everyday interactions and relationships.
- **Behavioural Approaches:** Use structured techniques, like positive reinforcement, to encourage helpful behaviours and reduce challenging ones.
- **Therapies Targeting Communication:** Include speech and language therapy, alternative communication systems (like AAC devices), and social skills training.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Helps children develop daily living skills, motor coordination, and sensory processing abilities.
- **Family and Caregiver Support:** Provides training and resources to empower families to support their child's growth and participation.
- **Education-Based Supports:** Adapt learning environments and teaching methods to suit the needs of autistic students.
- **Medical and Allied Health Interventions:** Involve health professionals to address related issues, such as anxiety, sleep, or co-occurring conditions.
- **Community and Peer Programs:** Encourage social inclusion and participation in community activities and peer groups.

Attention deficits in ASD

Some children with Autism, also display a lack of focus, joint attention, concentration and sustained attention. Stimulant medication is **not** a standard first-line treatment for these attention difficulties in ASD (as distinct from comorbid ADHD). The 2023 Autism CRC guidelines do not endorse stimulants as standard ASD treatment; they recommend cognitive, behavioural strategies, early intensive behavioural intervention (EIBI), parental education, and if necessary dietary and lifestyle recommendations.

Looking for autism therapy and support?

Contact BNC to discuss therapy and support options for your child and family.

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