



Shuswap Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resource Guide



Dear Readers,

We are mothers of young boys with ASD. Our journeys with our children have been filled with many unexpected moments. Some have been frightening, others infuriating, and some absolutely joyous. You may have also experienced this range of emotions with regards to your loved one with ASD. Know that you are not alone.

This resource guide was created by a community of people who want to support you in your journey. We believe that people with ASD can live happy, productive, meaningful lives with the right supports. We hope this guide provides you with information and that you will be encouraged by the support available. Reach out to others in your community for help when you need it. Your courage to act will help you and your loved ones have a richer life.

With respect,

Gretta Bakewell and Bonnie Johnson

WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex condition that impacts normal brain development and affects a person's social relationships, communication, interests and behaviour. Because ASD is a spectrum disorder, there is wide variation in how it affects each person.

I can remember the frustration of not being able to talk. I knew what I wanted to say, but I could not get the words out, so I would just scream. – Temple Grandin

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Research now suggests that children as young as one year old can show some early warning signs of autism. Unfortunately, there is no medical test for ASD. Diagnosing autism is complicated because it is based on a child's behaviours, not on the results of blood or genetic testing. If you have any concerns about your child's development, don't wait. Speak to your doctor about screening your child for autism.

The following RED FLAGS for toddlers may indicate a child is at risk for atypical development and is in need of an immediate evaluation

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by nine months or thereafter
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months
- No words by 16 months
- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age

If you think your child may have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, please read through the following list of POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ASD. Your child does not need to demonstrate all of these behaviours in order to be referred for an assessment:

- Seems disinterested in sharing enjoyment with others
- Does not speak, or uses very few words
- Unusual or repetitive use of language
- May seem deaf or does not respond when name is called

- Has frequent tantrums when required to do anything new or when asked to change activities without advance warning
- Overly dependent on specific routines or rituals
- Lack of imaginative and social play
- Does not look where you are pointing
- May not make eye contact as other children do
- May walk on his or her toes
- When excited, may flap hands
- Has unusual sensitivity to light or sound

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FOR ASD

If your family doctor has concerns about ASD, s/he will make a referral to a pediatrician and can simultaneously make a referral to the Interior Health Children's Assessment Network (IHCAN) in Kelowna (250-763-4122) to save time on the wait list. There is no charge for their services. For more information on ASD diagnosis and testing, visit the BCAAN website at: www.phsa.ca/AgenciesAndServices/Services/Autism/default.htm

The assessment is made by a pediatrician and a child psychologist, who also consult with other professionals who have worked with the child such as a speech-language pathologist or occupational therapist.

Families who can afford to pay for services can pursue private assessment through the Okanagan Ability Centre in Kelowna 250-762-7790 or check their website at www.okanaganabilitycentre.com. Also, through ABLE Developmental Clinic in Surrey 604-584-3450 or check their website at www.ableclinic.ca.

"I see people with Asperger's syndrome as a bright thread in the rich tapestry of life." – Tony Attwood.

AFTER THE DIAGNOSIS

After you've received an ASD diagnosis, contact the Children & Youth with Special Needs worker, through the Ministry of Children and Family Development, who'll meet with you to complete paperwork for the Autism Funding Unit in Victoria and will also explain additional services available to your child through the Ministry. **Phone: 250-832-1719 and then press 1**

Check the Ministry of Children and Family Development's website, also called the Autism Funding Unit, at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm for the ***Parent's Handbook*** and for funding information, or phone the Ministry at 1-877-777-3530. Here you will also find the different funding guidelines for children under 6 years and children 6-19 years.

Check Autism Speaks, which has created ***The Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit*** for newly diagnosed families. This kit has been specifically designed to help families make the best possible use of the 100 days following a diagnosis of autism. Check their website at: www.autismspeaks.ca

Check the ACT-Autism Community Training website at: www.actcommunity.ca or call 1-866-939-5188. They have a wealth of information as well as online and in-person trainings.

THE SHUSWAP AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) SUPPORT GROUP

Meets the first Thursday of the month at the Salmon Arm Health Unit (851 16th St. NE) from 6:30-8:30 pm. The first hour is for parents and caregivers. Everyone welcome from 7:30-8:30 pm, when guest speakers and local service providers present information on a variety of topics including sensory processing and regulation, strategies for social thinking and communication, and positive behaviour support.

Contact Nadine Moore (Coordinator) at 250-833-0164 ext 7 or autism@shuswapchildrens.ca for more information on this group or other ASD inquiries.

PROVINCIAL RESOURCES:

It is important to consult the **Registry of Autism Service Providers** (RASP) if your child is under 6 years old, as this is a list of professionals whose services will be covered by MCFD autism funding. The RASP can be found at <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/rasp/search/>

The list includes Behaviour Consultants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists.

Note that 20% of your child's annual funding can be used towards educational materials including books, DVDs and conferences, as well as occupational therapy and sensory equipment.

Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC)

Information and support for families, service providers, and community professionals across BC.

<http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/> or 1-844-878-4700

Sunny Hill Education Resource Centre - Lending Library

This centre will mail items free of cost to families and also covers costs to return items.

<http://www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/SunnyHillHealthCtr/Learningeducation/EducationResourceCentre/default.htm> or 1-800-331-1533 local 8217 or sherc@cw.bc.ca

Autism Society of BC - Lending Library

autismbc.ca or 1-888-437-0880

Canucks Autism Network

Information on special programs available in the province.

canucksautism.ca

"It seems that for success in science or art, a dash of autism is essential." – Hans Asperger

REGIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS:

***NOTE:** NOT NECESSARILY CURRENT, FOR MORE COMPLETE AND UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN 0-6 YEARS SEE <http://autisminfo.gov.bc.ca/rasp/search/>

****NOTE:** THERE IS NO EQUIVALENT LIST FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE 6+ YEARS BECAUSE THE MCFD REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT AS STRINGENT

INTERIOR HEALTH – SALMON ARM HEALTH UNIT

Speech and Language Services – 250-833-4100

This centre offers services to children up to five years of age.

SHUSWAP CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

Occupational & Physiotherapy, Infant Development and Supported Child

Development services – 250-833-0164 www.shuswapchildrens.ca

Infant Development ages 0 to 3; OT/PT ages 0 to 5; SCD ages 0 to 5 19.

BETTY-ANN GARRECK (COORDINATOR/PARENT)

Provides regular email updates on conferences, resources and research on ASD. She welcomes inquiries autismkamloops@shaw.ca or 250-376-5495.

APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA)

BC Certified Behaviour Analysts, also known as Behaviour Consultants

ABC/Anderson Behavior Consulting

www.andersonbehaviorconsulting.com

Michele Anderson, MA

1-250-299-3530 or michele@andersonbehaviorconsulting.com

Alpha Behaviour Services

Henrietta Penney, MS Ed.

250-762-9073 or henpenney@yahoo.com

La Quiese Behaviour Support Services

Patricia Kennedy, MA Ed., Grad Cert ABA

250-836-2846 or la_quiese@live.com

Meridian Rehabilitation Consulting

www.meridianrehab.ca

Robert Schramm, M.A. Special Ed., BCBA

250-300-1832 or robert.schramm@meridianrehab.ca

Okanagan Centre for Autism Intervention

www.ocai.ca

Kim Nutley, M. Ed.

250-801-2172 or kim@ocai.ca

Okanagan Positive Behaviour Support

Tania Wirachowsky, BCaBA, BA

250-307-2002 or twirachowsky@gmail.com

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

Leanne Godwin, OT

Dream Big Therapy Services

250-833-4925 or dreambigtherapyservices@gmail.com

Cindy Ursulak, OT

Shuswap Therapy

250-463-4835 or cindy@shuswaptherapy.com

Jade Watts, OT

Meridian Rehabilitation Consulting

250-542-3089 or jade.watts@meridianrehab.ca

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS (SLP)

Bonnie W. Johnson, PhD, RSLP

250-517-8304 or bwjohnbc@gmail.com

Shari Shabits, M.Sc., RSLP

250-540-1721 or sharishabits@telus.net

Kirsten Barnard, M.Sc., RSLP

250-804-9856 or kirsten.barnard88@gmail.com

Christina May, M.SP, RSLP

250-542-3089 or christina.may@meridianrehab.ca

RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION (RDI)

www.RDIconnect.com

Lesley Gurney, RSLP

250-832-0162/250-804-6020 (cell) or Ingurney@shaw.ca

BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONISTS (BI)

Behaviour interventionists implement strategies based on the needs and strengths of the family by directly working with the child to meet the family's goals (e.g., life skills, social skills/thinking, language, self-regulation, independence). BIs are covered by funding for 0-19 years but are not searchable on the RASP (MCFD does not have specific requirements for this group). They may or may not work under supervision of a behaviour consultant. Parents are responsible for ensuring that BIs are at least 19 years old and have a valid criminal record check.

"Shuswap Behaviour Intervention Community" on Facebook is a group and resource which families can join to search for BIs and collaborate for social skills opportunities. It is managed by a local BI, Heather Lessard.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY

Eiko Uehara, MA, RCC, BCATR

Registered Art Therapist and Clinical Counselor

art4therapy@gmail.com or 250-804-5432

Nanika Albricht, Art Therapist

nanika5@yahoo.com or 250-833-7573

Expressive Art therapy includes drawing, painting, sculpture, creative play, movement, sound and rhythm practice. Some goals: to develop integration

of feeling, cognition and sensation; to develop self-expression and self-esteem.

MUSIC THERAPY

Larry Keats, MTA

250-832-7436 or mcthistle@telus.net

Music therapy can include ritual, educational or instructional songs; improvisation with voice or with instruments; use of drama, art movement or dance. Some goals of music therapy: to improve communication, self-expression, improve fine/gross motor skills, to address sensory sensitivities.

THERAPEUTIC HORSEBACK RIDING

North Okanagan Therapeutic Riding Association, Vernon

Dani Goldenthal 250-549-0105 or notra@telus.net or www.notra.info

Kamloops Therapeutic Riding Association

Janice Olson 250-374-7743 or janiceolson@shaw.ca

BC Therapeutic Riding Association

604-590-0897 or www.vcn.bc.ca/bctra/

The authors of this publication hereby acknowledge Autism Speaks Canada Family Community Grants as the funding agency for the project leading to this publication. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily express or reflect the view of Autism Speaks Canada or any other funding agency.

The content of this handbook is for general information purposes only and does not constitute advice or recommendation of service providers. We have tried to provide content that is true and accurate as of the date of writing; however, we give no assurance or warranty regarding the accuracy, timeliness, or applicability of any of the contents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Shuswap Children's Association and the community gratefully acknowledge Autism Speaks Canada for its generous grant that has enabled the production of this Resource Guide and the coordination of the Shuswap ASD Support Group meetings with guest speakers for Oct. 2010-Oct. 2011. Shuswap Children's Association received another generous grant for the 2015 year to provide an ASD Family Support Worker to assist families prior to, during, and after diagnosis to build their support team, provide education, and establish more rural support groups.

The Autism Speaks Canada grant has also made an enormous contribution of books and DVDs on autism spectrum disorder to the Shuswap Children's

Association's library. The information will be a valuable resource for families, childcare workers, therapists and educators for many years to come.



Painting by William Rowbottom, 15 years