



# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## IN AUTISM SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-6

**Neurodiversity Affirming Practice:** Focuses on strengths and celebrates and supports the diverse ways in which people's brains work.

**Cultural & Contextual Considerations/Intersectionality:** Considers culture and circumstances while focusing on each family's strengths.

**Timely & Early Access:** Ensures young children have timely access to services when autism is suspected to promote positive outcomes.

**Stepped Model of Care/Individualized Services:** Ensures services are needs-based and change as the child develops and family priorities change.

**Clinical Expertise/Interdisciplinary Practice:** Ensures services are delivered by professionals with appropriate experience and qualifications. Paraprofessionals (like educational assistants) are trained and supervised by the professionals who deliver services.

**Child & Family-Centred Approach:** Recognizes that caregivers know their child and family best and includes them in all decision-making regarding services.

**Evidence-Informed/Promising Practices:** Ensures services reflect the best available research along with the experience of the service provider and those with lived experience. While also taking into account the unique context of each child and family.

**Fidelity/Training:** Focuses training and monitoring to ensure that services are delivered as intended.

**Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC):** Provides non- or minimally-speaking children with tools and strategies that can be used for communication (e.g., pictures, communication devices).

**Functional Goals:** Ensures goals are appropriate, achievable and functional, and are developed collaboratively by the parents and the service provider.

**Transition Planning:** Plans for transitions well in advance and creates a personalized plan that includes community resources and supports.

**Physical & Mental Health Considerations:** Considers how physical and mental health impact the child and collaborates with other professionals involved in the child's life.

**Autism Through Indigenous Lens:** Understands Indigenous ways of knowing and focuses on the whole child including their family, community, culture and the systems they live in.