



Guiding Principles

National Guideline

For supporting the learning, participation, and wellbeing of autistic children and their families in Australia

DECEMBER 2022



This document is about **Guiding Principles.**



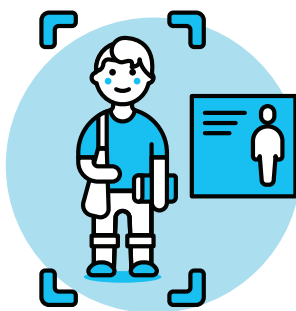
This tells us what is important to think about when we support autistic children and their families.

There are 17 things to think about.



Child and family-centred

Children and families get respect and get to say what they want to happen to them.



Individualised

Each person gets support that is just right for them.



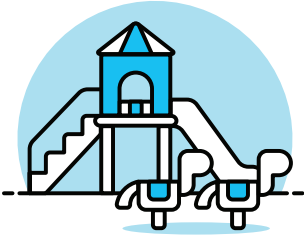
Strengths-focused

Supports should start with what the child and family are good at.



Holistic

We need to think about how things fit together for a child and family in all areas of their life.



Honour childhood

Children should have time to enjoy being a child.

They should have time to play, make friends and learn about themselves.



Foundation for the future

Children should learn things that help them when they grow up.



Ethical

The rights of children and families must be protected.



Culturally safe

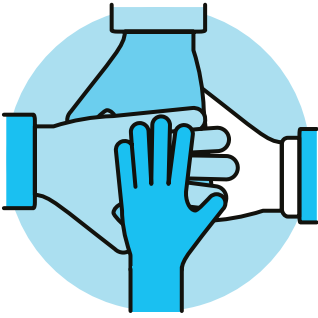
We need to do these things:

- talk to children and families about culture and values
- listen to what children and families know about their ways of doing things
- show respect by making things work safely for them.



Respecting Australia's First Nations Peoples

First Nations Peoples are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived in Australia for tens of thousands of years.



Supports must be culturally safe for First Nations people.

We need to understand the bad things that people have done to First Nations peoples.

We must show respect to First Nations culture, language and their ways of doing things like:

- looking after country
- how families work
- important stories and special places
- sorting out problems
- ceremony - a way of making something important very special.



Evidence-based

Supports should be based on 3 things:

- what the research tells us is good quality
- what professionals think is right for the child
- what children and families want.



Assent (children)

A child has the right to say no to supports or therapy.

They don't have to use words. They can show that they like or dislike something through:

- their behaviour
- signs or gestures
- whether they enjoy the activities.



Informed consent (parents)

Parents should have all the information they need to make the right choices for their children.

Parents need to give consent for supports.



Qualified practitioners

People who deliver the supports must:

- have the right education
- be registered
- only do things they are trained to do
- keep their skills up to date.



Neurodiversity-affirming

Neurodiversity is the idea that some brains work differently and this is ok.

Supports should:

- respect neurodiversity
- respect that each child is unique
- not try to 'cure' autism.



Parent and family-affirming

Supports should:

- respect the family's right to choose
- make sure people are supported to enjoy being parents, brothers and sisters, and other family members.



Timely and accessible

Supports should be available to children and families where and when they need them.

Access to supports should not be affected by who people are or where they live.

Supports should not cost too much.



Coordinated

Everyone involved in supporting the child and family should talk to each other often.

People from health, education and disability should all know what is happening for the child and the family.