

# Getting Your Child Services

## How Do I Get the Help My Child Needs?

The road ahead will be bumpy. There will be times when your progress stalls or takes an unexpected turn. When it does, try to remind yourself that these are speed bumps, not roadblocks. Take them one at a time. It is important that you start now. There are a variety of services available to treat and educate your child. The article below, from *Does My Child Have Autism?* by Wendy L. Stone, PhD, with Theresa Foy DiGeromino, MEd, explains why:



Early Intervention will improve the outcome for your child.

There is no debate or doubt: early intervention is your child's best hope for the future. Early attention to improving the core behavioral symptoms of autism will give your child – and the rest of the family – several important benefits that you will not gain if you take a wait-and-see approach until your child enters school at age four or five. A good early intervention program has at least four benefits:

- 1. It will provide your child with instruction that will build on his or her strengths to teach new skills, improve behaviors and remediate areas of weakness.*
- 2. It will provide you with information that will help you better understand your child's behavior and needs.*
- 3. It will offer resources, support and training that will enable you to work and play with your child more effectively.*
- 4. It will improve the outcome for your child.*

For these reasons, an intervention program for your child should be implemented as soon as possible after he or she receives a diagnosis. However, as you probably know by now, it can be very challenging to teach young children with autism. They have a unique profile of strengths and needs and require intervention services and teaching approaches that are sensitive to these needs. That's why strategies that worked for teaching your other children to remain seated at the dinner table, to play appropriately with a toy or to say words simply don't work as well for your child with autism. In the same way, intervention programs that are generic – rather than autism-specialized – are less likely to be effective for your child. That's why as you begin your exploration of early intervention, you must keep in mind that not all interventions are equal.