

Checklist: Finding & Working with a Regulated Professional

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Finding and reading information takes time. Therefore, finding time to do so is in itself a challenge. You are on this site in the hope that it will help guide you on your search for appropriate providers for your child. While you need to consider all the tips, it is not a “must-do-everything-on-the-checklist”. Take those that you find practical and suit your needs.

I. TOP TIPS to Finding a Regulated Health Professional

Start with a Binder

Purchase a good-quality 3” binder and three-hole punch. As time goes on, your binder will begin to expand into file cabinets, but for now a binder is transportable and will have sufficient room to get you started.

Keeping Records

On the first page, print out contact information:

- Address and phone #
- Contact name

In further sections, add:

- Date, time and notes about conversations
- Date, time and notes about appointments
- Copies of any correspondence

This system should be customized to include whatever is helpful to you. Other things that can be included are: calendar of appointments, price quotes from other providers, questions you want to ask at your next appointment, and so on.

Keep a close eye on all appointments with your child and write them down on a blank calendar. If they do not match up to the invoice, be sure to initiate a discussion with your service provider; ensure that discrepancies are handled as soon as you are aware of them.

Compile a List of Local Providers

To see a complete list of currently listed regulated professionals on Spirale, search either by provider type or region (see left menu).

At this time, you may not find many or any listings of your interest as this site is very new and will take time to build provider listings. If so, ask other parents (including Autism Ontario Chapter support meetings) to recommend a provider.

You should also ask your Case Manager, Early Intervention Worker, family doctor or local Autism Ontario Chapter if they have lists of private providers.

Make Some Initial Inquiries

Note: Some Regulated Health Professionals have very busy schedules and may not be able to provide you with a lot of information by telephone or email. You may be required to make an appointment to speak with them. This appointment could involve a fee.

- Use the Inquiry with Regulated Health Professionals Checklist as a guide when contacting potential providers. You may wish to do this by telephone or by email.
- Keep a record of everyone you speak to (including dates and what you spoke about). This will be an important tool during the process. Do not be intimidated by the person

you are speaking with. Have them spell their name and give you their title. If they are speaking too fast, do not be afraid to ask them to slow down.

- Be diligent about asking questions and include any other questions you might have.
- If you have contacted multiple providers, go through your list and sort out the ones that are inappropriate for whatever reason and then look at your 'maybe' list.
- Once you have met possible providers, go through your lists. You may enlist the help of someone else to provide a different point of view.

Look for a Regulated Health Professional whose philosophy is similar to yours

- Ensuring that answers compliment your philosophy and match your concerns will help you find a suitable provider.
- They should not be intimidating or condescending and they should patiently answer all your questions and consult you when determining the goals for your child.

Monitor the Service

- Once the service has begun, be sure to track all activities, meetings and discussions.
- Use the tips in the Evaluating and Monitoring section on page 3.

Organization – Keeping Track of Correspondence

It is essential you are organized from the start. Take notes when speaking with your service provider on the phone or in person, so you don't have to rely on memory. Before ending the conversation read back your notes to the person you are speaking with. You may also want to bring along another family member or friend to the meeting to take notes for you.

After you have ended the meeting, summarize your conversation and the important parts, such as fees, contracts, waitlist, etc. This can also help you make

decisions about who may be the best provider for your family and your child.

2. CHECKLIST: Inquiry with Regulated Health Professional

Consider the following questions when making an inquiry or setting up an initial meeting with a Regulated Health Professional. Regulated Health Professionals entail a large and diverse group of professionals including medical doctors, psychiatrists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, psychologists and a number of other professionals. Therefore, some of these questions will not be applicable to the Regulated Health Professional you are working with.

Here are some questions you may want to ask. Review the questions and make notes of the ones that are most applicable and important to you.

Getting to Know the Provider

- How will you assess my child's needs and strengths?
- I have an assessment from _____, can you use it or will you need to provide your own assessment?
 - If the existing assessment can't be used, why?
 - Who would conduct the new assessment?
 - How much will it cost?
 - What diagnostic tools (tests) do you use to conduct assessments?
 - If a new assessment is done, ask for a copy
- Please describe the training and experience you've had working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Do you work exclusively with individuals with ASD?
- Are you comfortable and equipped to work with children and youth with co-existing conditions such as mental health issues and seizure disorder?

Understanding the Service They Provide

- Do you work with a team of professionals? If you need consultation, who do you consult for support and feedback?
- Do you have a waitlist for services? If so, how long? Do you provide any interim services for waitlisted families?
- Can you provide service in my home or in the community? If so, are there additional fees?
- Are you agreeable to consulting or providing feedback to other professionals in my child's life?
- Will you attend meetings at my child's school or at other case conferences? If so, what would be the fee?
- Do you help teach life skills such as toileting, eating problems, dressing, bathing, etc.?
- Do you provide support or consultation to community programs or social skill programs?
- How do you involve the child or teen with ASD in planning or goal setting?
- What intervention strategies or theories do you work from? Are they evidence-based?

Communication and Parent Education

- Am I, as the parent, invited to take part in meetings and appointments or view sessions?
- Will I receive feedback as to the service you are providing?
- Are parents involved in planning or goal setting?
- Do you provide supports to parents in following up with treatments or recommendations?
- How do you evaluate a child's progress and how often? How are the parents informed?

Financial

- What is the cost per hour for your service including all fees?
- Is there an income dependent sliding scale for those who are not able to afford the full cost?
- How often am I invoiced? Do you provide a detailed monthly statement? What methods of payment do you accept?

3. MONITORING THE SERVICE

Now that you've hired a Regulated Health Professional, how do you monitor the service?

All consumers have the right to hold professionals accountable for providing quality services.

Take a look at these questions and determine the answers that will satisfy you. Be sure to use this tool on a regular basis.

If you feel the service is not the quality that should be expected of a Regulated Health Professional, you should set up a time to speak with your provider. Write down your questions and concerns and ensure that they are addressed by your provider. If you are not satisfied with the responses you have received or the follow up from your concerns you should contact the regulatory body where he or she is registered.

Performance

- What happens if the Regulated Health Professional is sick? How are appointments rescheduled? How long will you have to wait for another appointment?
- Has the Regulated Health Professional established a good rapport with your child? With you?

Attitude

- Does the Regulated Health Professional ensure confidentiality?
- Are you allowed to observe the service or appointments?

- Are they forthcoming and open when you ask questions?

Parent Education

- Have you been involved in goal setting and recommendations?
- When it's appropriate, has the Regulated Health Professional taught you the skills they are working on with your child? Are there things you can reinforce or follow-up on in different environments (home, in the community, when with family or friends)?
- Are you able to schedule appointments for feedback?

Goals

- If progress is not being made, is there an opportunity to discuss this? How will this be addressed?
- Would you feel comfortable in recommending this Regulated Health Professional to another parent?
- Do you feel there is a good match between your child's needs and the service of the Regulated Health Professional?
- How will it be determined when the service is no longer needed? What happens when a child ages out of a service or needs to move on to an adult provider?
- Does the Regulated Health Professional recommend or help you link with adult service providers?
- Are they continuing to meet the answers they provided you in your initial interview questions?
- Are they open to ongoing communication with you?

Financial

- Are they fulfilling their end of the contract to a satisfactory level?
- Do you agree with the hours they are billing you?

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