

## JSON

```
"
},
{
  "instruction": "How does the concept of a 'spectrum' apply to autism?",
  "output": "The term 'spectrum' in Autism Spectrum Disorder highlights the wide variation in how autism presents. Autistic individuals differ greatly in their characteristics, strengths, challenges, and support needs. There isn't a single way autism appears; it encompasses a broad range of experiences and abilities across areas like communication, social interaction, sensory processing, and behaviour. This variability underscores the need for individualized supports rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.[1, 2, 3]"
},
{
  "instruction": "What terminology is preferred when referring to individuals with autism in Canada?",
  "output": "Canadian health authorities and organizations acknowledge that terminology preferences vary. Some individuals prefer person-first language (e.g., 'person with autism'), while many autistic self-advocates prefer identity-first language (e.g., 'autistic person'). The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends using the language preferred by the individual autistic person.[1] Organizations like Autism Canada provide guides like the 'Words Matter Guide' [4], and Autism Alliance of Canada has updated its name to reflect community preferences, signalling a shift towards identity-first language aligned with the neurodiversity movement.[5]"
},
{
  "instruction": "What is neurodiversity?",
  "output": "Neurodiversity is the concept that brain differences are a natural part of human diversity. It suggests that variations in neurological wiring and function (including conditions like autism, ADHD, learning disabilities) should be recognized and respected, similar to other forms of human variation like ethnicity or gender. It moves away from viewing these differences solely as deficits, instead valuing the unique strengths and perspectives they bring.[6, 7]"
},
{
  "instruction": "What is the neurodiversity movement?",
  "output": "The neurodiversity movement is a social justice movement advocating for
```

the civil rights, equality, respect, and full societal inclusion of neurodivergent individuals (including autistic people). Key tenets include self-advocacy ('Nothing About Us Without Us'), acceptance of neurological differences as natural variations rather than pathologies to be cured, and challenging societal barriers and stigma. It emphasizes accommodating needs and celebrating differences.[6, 8, 9, 10]"

},  
{

"instruction": "How is the neurodiversity perspective reflected in Canadian autism organizations or policies?",

"output": "The neurodiversity perspective is increasingly influential in Canada. The federal Framework for Autism and National Autism Strategy explicitly incorporate principles like 'Nothing Without Us' and involve consultations with autistic individuals.[2, 11] Organizations like Autism Alliance of Canada emphasize autistic leadership and membership [5, 12], and AutismBC aligns with values of acceptance and neurodiversity.[13, 14] The language used by public health bodies is also evolving to reflect preferred terminology.[1] However, tension exists between this perspective and the deficit-focused language often inherent in diagnostic systems like the DSM-5.[15, 16]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What diagnostic manual is used for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Canada?",

"output": "Healthcare professionals in Canada use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) to evaluate and diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).[15, 16]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What is the general process for getting an autism diagnosis for a child in British Columbia?",

"output": "The process typically starts with a parent discussing concerns with their family doctor. The doctor provides a referral, either to a specialist (pediatrician, psychiatrist, registered psychologist) or directly to the BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN). BCAAN provides publicly funded assessments, while specialists may offer private assessments. The assessment involves reviewing history, observing the child's behaviour, communication, and social interaction, and often includes standardized tests.[17, 18, 19, 20, 21]"

},  
{

"instruction": "Who is qualified to diagnose autism in British Columbia?",

"output": "In British Columbia, autism diagnostic assessments are typically

completed by qualified specialists: pediatricians, psychiatrists, or registered psychologists who are trained in diagnosing autism.[18, 19, 21, 22, 23] Assessments can be done through the public BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) or via private practice specialists.[18, 22]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is the BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN)?",

"output": "The BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) is a publicly funded program operated by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and regional Health Authorities across British Columbia. It provides free diagnostic assessments for children and youth up to age 19 suspected of having ASD, using standardized provincial guidelines. Referrals typically come from family doctors or pediatricians.[18, 21, 22, 24]"

},

{

"instruction": "Are there long wait times for public autism assessments (BCAAN) in BC?",

"output": "Yes, there can be significant wait times for publicly funded autism assessments through the BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN). Estimates mentioned in resources suggest waits can be lengthy, sometimes cited as approximately 21 months or even up to two years, although this can vary by region and fluctuate. Priority is often given to children under six.[19, 20, 21]"

},

{

"instruction": "Can I get a private autism assessment in BC, and how does it differ from BCAAN?",

"output": "Yes, families in BC can pursue a private autism assessment from a qualified specialist (pediatrician, psychiatrist, or registered psychologist). This option requires families to pay out-of-pocket, but may have shorter wait times than the public BCAAN system.[18, 19, 21] To be eligible for BC Autism Funding, private assessments must adhere to specific provincial standards, including the use of standardized tools like the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) and the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R).[18, 23]"

},

{

"instruction": "What diagnostic tools are required for a private autism assessment to be eligible for BC Autism Funding?",

"output": "For a private autism assessment in British Columbia to meet eligibility requirements for the provincial Autism Funding program, the assessment must be conducted by a qualified BC specialist (pediatrician, psychiatrist, or registered

psychologist) and must include the administration of both the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) and the Autism Diagnostic Interview–Revised (ADI-R).[18, 23]"

},

{

"instruction": "What should I do if my child was diagnosed with autism outside of BC?",

"output": "If your child received an autism diagnosis outside of British Columbia, the diagnosis must be confirmed by a qualified BC specialist (pediatrician, psychiatrist, or registered psychologist) before you can apply for BC's Autism Funding program. You will need to make an appointment with a qualified BC specialist who will review the previous assessment, observe the child, and attest that the diagnosis meets DSM-5 criteria using the required provincial form.[18, 25, 26]"

},

{

"instruction": "What are some early signs or indicators of autism parents might observe?",

"output": "Early indicators of autism can vary widely but may include differences in social interaction (e.g., lack of appropriate eye gaze, not responding to name, limited sharing of enjoyment), communication differences (e.g., delay or loss of language, no back-and-forth sharing of sounds/smiles, lack of gestures like pointing by 12 months, unusual tone of voice), and repetitive behaviours or restricted interests (e.g., repetitive movements with body or objects, intense focus on specific items, insistence on sameness). Parents concerned about their child's development should consult a doctor.[25, 26, 27]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is the official position of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) on the causes of autism?",

"output": "The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) states that the exact cause of autism is unknown. Current understanding suggests that both genetic and environmental factors likely play a role in its development. PHAC emphasizes that an increased risk associated with certain factors is not the same as a direct cause.[1, 28, 29]"

},

{

"instruction": "Do vaccines cause autism, according to Canadian health authorities?",

"output": "No, vaccines do not cause autism. This is the clear stance of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, BC health authorities like Fraser Health, and major international health organizations.[1, 29, 30, 31,

32, 33, 34, 35] Extensive scientific research, including large-scale studies, has consistently shown no link between vaccines (including the MMR vaccine and thimerosal-containing vaccines) and autism.[31, 33, 36]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is the origin of the myth linking the MMR vaccine to autism?",

"output": "The myth originated from a small, flawed study published in The Lancet in 1998 by Andrew Wakefield and colleagues. The study suggested a possible link between the MMR vaccine and developmental regression in 12 children.[36, 37] However, the study was later retracted by The Lancet due to serious methodological flaws, ethical violations, and scientific misconduct. Numerous large-scale, rigorous studies have since refuted its findings.[35, 36, 37]"

},

{

"instruction": "Does thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative previously used in some vaccines, cause autism?",

"output": "No, there is no evidence linking thimerosal to autism. Large-scale studies, including research analyzing data from hundreds of thousands of children, have found no difference in autism rates between children who received thimerosal-containing vaccines and those who received thimerosal-free versions.[31, 33, 34, 36] Thimerosal (which contains ethylmercury, different from the methylmercury found in fish) has not been used in routine infant and childhood vaccines in Canada for many years, yet autism prevalence has continued to be identified.[31, 35]"

},

{

"instruction": "What factors are currently being researched as potentially contributing to autism?",

"output": "Research into the causes of autism is ongoing worldwide. Key areas of investigation include genetics (identifying specific genes or gene combinations associated with autism risk) and various environmental factors that might interact with genetic predispositions. Environmental factors studied include prenatal exposures (e.g., infections, medications), parental age at conception, and pregnancy or birth complications, although findings for many environmental factors remain inconsistent or inconclusive.[1, 28, 38, 39, 40, 41]"

},

{

"instruction": "Are there specific genetic research projects related to autism involving Canadian institutions?",

"output": "Yes, Canadian institutions have been involved in significant autism genetics research. For example, the MSSNG project, aimed at creating a large

genomic database, was a collaboration involving Autism Speaks Canada (prior to its closure), Google, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto, and other researchers.[38, 39, 41] The Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE) is another large DNA repository used by researchers globally, initially established by a predecessor organization to Autism Speaks.[38]"

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What are common co-occurring conditions associated with autism?",  
"output": "Autistic individuals frequently have co-occurring conditions. Common ones include other neurodevelopmental conditions like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities/disorders. Mental health conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) are also common. Physical health conditions can include epilepsy, sleep disorders, gastrointestinal issues, and hypotonia (low muscle tone).[1, 3, 42, 43, 44, 45]"
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What is the estimated prevalence of autism in Canadian children and youth?",
```

```
"output": "Based on the 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY), the Public Health Agency of Canada reported that approximately 1 in 50 (or 2.0%) Canadian children and youth aged 1 to 17 years had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.[16, 42, 43, 46] Earlier data from the National Autism Spectrum Disorder Surveillance System (NASS) estimated a prevalence of 1 in 66 for children aged 5-17 in 2015 across participating regions.[3]"
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "Is there a gender difference in autism diagnosis rates in Canada?",  
"output": "Yes, Canadian surveillance data consistently shows that males are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder significantly more often than females. The 2019 CHSCY reported males were diagnosed approximately four times more frequently than females (3.1% vs 0.8%).[42, 43] The 2015 NASS data also showed a male-to-female ratio of about 4:1.[3] This disparity may be influenced by differences in presentation, diagnostic criteria, or potential under-diagnosis in females."
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "How common are co-occurring health conditions among autistic children and youth in Canada?",
```

```
"output": "Co-occurring health conditions are very common. According to the 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, over two-thirds (68.7%) of autistic children and youth aged 1-17 had at least one other diagnosed long-term health
```

condition. The most frequently reported were Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) (36.5%), learning disability/disorder, and anxiety disorder.[43]"

},

{

"instruction": "What are some common functional difficulties reported for autistic children and youth in Canada?",

"output": "The 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth found that nearly three-quarters (73.3%) of autistic children and youth aged 2-17 experienced difficulty in at least one functional domain. Common areas of difficulty reported varied by age but included communication, accepting change, making friends, learning, controlling behaviour, and anxiety.[43]"

},

{

"instruction": "Are co-occurring mental health conditions common in autistic adults?",

"output": "Yes, research indicates that autistic adults have significantly higher rates of co-occurring psychiatric conditions compared to non-autistic adults. Studies summarized by AIDE Canada suggest high prevalence rates for anxiety (around 29-30%), depression (around 26%), ADHD (around 11%), OCD (around 8%), and notably higher rates of schizophrenia (potentially 22 times more likely) and suicide attempts (potentially 5 times more likely).[44]"

},

{

"instruction": "What communication supports are available for autistic individuals in Canada?",

"output": "Supports vary but can include Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) services focusing on verbal and non-verbal skills, conversation, and using speech-output devices.[47] Visual supports like schedules, picture cards, and written instructions are widely used to aid understanding and predictability.[48, 49, 50] Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), are also used, particularly for non-speaking individuals.[8, 51, 52] In BC, SLP, AAC devices, and related training/materials may be covered by Autism Funding.[26, 53, 54]"

},

{

"instruction": "What are visual supports and how are they used for autistic individuals?",

"output": "Visual supports use pictures, symbols, objects, written words, or other visual formats to help autistic individuals understand expectations, routines, tasks,



and social information. They leverage visual processing strengths common in autism. Examples include visual schedules (showing daily activities), first-then boards (showing task sequence), choice boards, task analyses (breaking down steps), rule charts, and timers. They aim to increase predictability, reduce anxiety, promote independence, and support communication.[48, 49, 50, 55, 56]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "Where can I find examples of visual schedules?",

"output": "Examples of visual schedules can be found through various resources.

ACT - Autism Community Training offers online videos demonstrating different types, including within-activity schedules (e.g., showering, morning routine) and using tools like timers.[48, 57] Websites like TACA Now [49], Indiana Resource Center for Autism [58], and TEACCH [56] provide descriptions and examples. Formats can include pictures, icons, photos, objects, or written words, often arranged vertically or horizontally, sometimes using Velcro or check-off systems.[49, 50, 59]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)?",

"output": "PECS is an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system designed to teach functional communication, particularly initiation. It involves teaching an individual to exchange a picture of a desired item or activity with a communication partner to obtain that item/activity. It follows six distinct phases, starting with simple exchanges and progressing to sentence structures, attributes, and commenting. PECS is based on principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and emphasizes visual aids and systematic prompting.[51, 52, 60, 61]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "Is PECS considered an evidence-based practice?",

"output": "Yes, PECS is generally considered an evidence-based practice for teaching functional communication skills to individuals with autism and other communication challenges. A substantial body of research worldwide supports its effectiveness.[51, 60, 61, 62, 63]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "Can BC Autism Funding be used for PECS training or materials?",

"output": "Yes, BC Autism Funding may potentially cover costs associated with PECS. The funding program allows up to 20% of the annual allocation to be used for eligible Training, Travel, and Equipment (TTE).[26, 64] PECS workshops for parents/caregivers or related materials could fall under eligible training or equipment expenses, but families should confirm eligibility and seek pre-approval from the Autism Funding



Branch.[26, 54]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What are common approaches to supporting social interaction for autistic individuals?",

"output": "Approaches vary. Traditional methods often involve direct social skills training, teaching specific rules, interpreting non-verbal cues, and practicing interactions in structured settings or groups.[47, 65] Newer, neurodiversity-affirming approaches focus less on teaching conformity and more on fostering self-understanding, self-advocacy, understanding different communication styles (autistic and non-autistic), building authentic connections in accepting environments, and peer support groups.[9, 66, 67, 68, 69]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What is 'masking' or 'camouflaging' in autism?",

"output": "Masking or camouflaging refers to the conscious or unconscious effort by autistic individuals to hide or suppress their natural autistic traits (like stimming, avoiding eye contact, direct communication style) and perform behaviours considered more neurotypical in social situations. While it can be a strategy to fit in or avoid negative reactions, research and autistic accounts indicate masking is often mentally and emotionally exhausting and can lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, loss of identity, and increased suicide risk.[9, 66, 69, 70, 71]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What is the 'Double Empathy Problem'?",

"output": "The Double Empathy Problem, theorized by autistic researcher Dr. Damian Milton, suggests that communication difficulties between autistic and non-autistic people are not solely due to deficits in the autistic person. Instead, it's a mutual misunderstanding arising from differing ways of experiencing and interpreting the world and different communication norms. Empathy and understanding challenges exist in both directions. This theory shifts the focus from 'fixing' autistic social skills to fostering mutual understanding and accommodation.[9, 66, 67, 69, 72]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What are neurodiversity-affirming approaches to social support?",

"output": "Neurodiversity-affirming social support prioritizes acceptance, authenticity, and well-being over conformity. It rejects training autistic individuals to mask or mimic neurotypical social skills. Instead, it may involve: educating individuals about different communication styles (autistic and non-autistic), fostering self-advocacy and boundary setting, promoting understanding of the Double Empathy

Problem, helping individuals find accepting peer groups and communities, and focusing on building genuine connections based on shared interests and mutual respect.[9, 66, 67, 68, 69, 73]"

},

{

"instruction": "Are there social or support groups for autistic individuals and families in BC?",

"output": "Yes, British Columbia has numerous social and support groups. Organizations like AutismBC offer 'Meets' for caregivers and autistic adults.[74, 75] The Canucks Autism Network (CAN) runs programs including peer groups.[76, 77] The Family Support Institute of BC (FSIBC) hosts various online hangouts with specific themes.[78, 79] The Autism Support Network (ASN) holds events.[80] Pacific Autism Family Network (PAFN) offers social programs.[81] Online directories like Psychology Today also list groups in BC.[82]"

},

{

"instruction": "What topics are commonly discussed in BC autism support groups?",

"output": "Common themes in BC autism support groups include navigating parenting challenges, school advocacy (including IEPs), accessing services and funding, dealing with transitions (e.g., school entry, adulthood), mental health support for autistic individuals and caregivers, understanding challenging behaviours, building relationships and friendships, finding community, self-care for caregivers, grief, experiences of specific groups (e.g., single parents, Indigenous families, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals), and sharing resources and strategies.[74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 82, 83]"

},

{

"instruction": "How can sensory needs be supported for autistic individuals?",

"output": "Supporting sensory needs involves identifying individual sensitivities (over-responsiveness) and seeking patterns (under-responsiveness) and implementing environmental accommodations or providing tools. Strategies can include modifying the environment (e.g., reducing noise with headphones, adjusting lighting, providing calming spaces), using sensory tools (e.g., fidgets, weighted blankets - though check funding eligibility), adapting tasks or settings (e.g., adapted lunch settings, high contrast materials), preparing for sensory challenging situations, and teaching self-advocacy skills to communicate needs. Occupational therapists often play a key role in assessing sensory needs and developing support strategies.[47, 67, 84, 85, 86]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)?",

"output": "Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a therapeutic approach based on the science of learning and behaviour. In the context of autism, it typically involves breaking down desired skills (e.g., communication, social, daily living) into smaller steps and using reinforcement strategies (rewards) to teach and increase those behaviours. It may also involve strategies to decrease behaviours deemed challenging. Data collection and analysis are key components to track progress and adjust interventions.[71, 87, 88]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is the controversy surrounding ABA therapy?",

"output": "ABA therapy is highly controversial. Critics, particularly autistic self-advocates and neurodiversity proponents, argue that it often focuses on normalization and forcing autistic individuals to mask their traits, potentially leading to distress, trauma (PTSD symptoms reported in some studies), and low self-esteem.[66, 70, 71, 89, 90] Concerns include historical use of punishment, overly repetitive methods, lack of focus on internal experience or underlying needs, and insufficient autistic input or consent.[70, 71, 87, 91, 92] Proponents argue modern ABA is different, focuses on positive reinforcement and skill-building, improves quality of life and independence, and can be individualized and effective for specific goals.[71, 87, 88, 91]"

},

{

"instruction": "What is Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)?",

"output": "Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an approach aimed at understanding the reasons (functions) behind challenging behaviour and developing proactive, positive strategies to support individuals. It emphasizes prevention, teaching alternative skills (like communication), modifying environments, and using reinforcement-based strategies to improve quality of life for the individual and those around them.[57, 93, 94, 95, 96] Some view PBS as a distinct, person-centered framework, while others describe it as an application of ABA principles.[57, 88]"

},

{

"instruction": "Are ABA or PBS services available and funded in British Columbia?",

"output": "Yes, services based on ABA and PBS principles are available and integrated into the BC autism support system. Behaviour Consultants (often with ABA backgrounds) are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) and are a primary eligible expense under the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 program.[26, 53, 64] Behaviour Interventionists (BIs), who typically implement plans designed by consultants, are also funded.[20, 26] Organizations like TeamPBS explicitly offer ABA/PBS services in BC [88, 97], and groups like Autism Support Network promote science-based (often ABA) approaches.[80] The historical Auton court case in BC

centered on funding for ABA.[98]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What are the roles of Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), and Physical Therapy (PT) for autistic individuals in BC?",

"output": "In BC, these therapies support autistic individuals in various ways. Occupational Therapy (OT) helps develop daily living skills (dressing, eating), fine and gross motor skills, and sensory processing/regulation.[47, 99] Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) addresses verbal and non-verbal communication, social communication, language comprehension, and use of AAC devices.[47, 99] Physical Therapy (PT) focuses on movement dysfunction, coordination, balance, and gross motor skills.[53, 99] These services can be accessed through BC Autism Funding [26, 53, 64] and potentially through the school system as part of an IEP.[99, 100]"

},  
{

"instruction": "How are therapies like OT, SLP, and PT provided within the BC school system?",

"output": "In BC schools, OT, SLP, and PT services are considered part of inclusive education supports for students with identified needs, including autism. These services are typically provided or coordinated by the school district, potentially involving district staff or contracted professionals from health authorities.[99, 100] Services should be integrated into the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and focus on supporting educational participation and goals. Direct, intensive treatment may be limited within schools, with a focus often placed on assessment, consultation with teachers/staff, and strategies for the classroom environment. Families might need to access more intensive therapy through community providers, potentially using Autism Funding.[99, 101, 102]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What is the Autism Alliance of Canada?",

"output": "Autism Alliance of Canada is a national, pan-Canadian network comprising autistic people, families, clinicians, researchers, service providers, and policy influencers. Its main goal is to champion a National Autism Strategy ensuring equal rights and opportunities for autistic individuals. It operates as a collective impact organization, emphasizing shared leadership and the inclusion of autistic voices in its work, including its board and staff.[5, 12, 103, 104]"

},  
{

"instruction": "What is Autism Canada?",

"output": "Autism Canada is a national organization formed from the amalgamation

of Autism Society Canada and Autism Canada Foundation. It aims to enhance the quality of life for autistic individuals and their families through education, advocacy, and support. They offer resources like screening tools, funding information, publications (including a Self-Advocacy Guide), a Family Support team, literacy programs, and events like the Au-Some Conference.[4, 105]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What happened to Autism Speaks Canada?",

"output": "Autism Speaks Canada, the Canadian arm of the US-based organization Autism Speaks, ceased operations effective January 31, 2025.[38, 106] While the organization cited strategic factors, its closure was welcomed by some autistic advocacy groups in Canada (like Autistics for Autistics - A4A Ontario) who criticized its historical focus on cures, genetic research practices, and lobbying efforts related to the National Autism Strategy.[89] Autism Speaks US continues to operate.[38, 106]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the purpose of Canada's National Autism Strategy?",

"output": "Canada's National Autism Strategy, guided by the Federal Framework on Autism Spectrum Disorder Act, aims to improve the lives of autistic individuals, their families, and caregivers across Canada. It outlines federal actions across five priority areas: Screening, Diagnosis and Services; Economic Inclusion; Data Collection, Public Health Surveillance and Research; Public Awareness, Understanding and Acceptance; and Tools and Resources. It seeks to provide a common direction, coordinate efforts, and address gaps, while respecting provincial/territorial jurisdiction over most service delivery.[2, 11, 107, 108, 109]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the 'Nothing Without Us' principle in Canada's Autism Strategy?",

"output": "'Nothing Without Us' is a key guiding principle for Canada's Framework for Autism and the National Autism Strategy.[2, 11] It signifies a commitment to meaningfully involve autistic individuals and their families/caregivers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs that affect their lives. This reflects a broader shift towards self-advocacy and ensuring lived experience informs decision-making.[5, 8, 110, 111]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the National Autism Network (NAN) in Canada?",

"output": "The National Autism Network (NAN) is an initiative being established and led by the Sinneave Family Foundation in partnership with Autism Alliance of Canada,

with funding from the federal government.[12, 107, 112] Its purpose is to provide a forum for the autism community, including individuals with lived experience, to be involved in the development and implementation of federal policies and programs related to Canada's Autism Strategy. It will convene advisory committees to support the strategy's priority areas.[5, 107]"

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What is AIDE Canada?",
```

```
"output": "AIDE Canada (Autism and/or Intellectual Disability Knowledge Exchange Network) is a national resource hub providing free, accessible information about autism and intellectual disability. Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, it offers resources like a searchable library of books, articles, toolkits, online courses, peer advice videos featuring individuals with lived experience, and a map to locate programs and services across Canada.[113]"
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What is AutismBC?",
```

```
"output": "AutismBC (Autism Society of British Columbia) is a provincial non-profit organization supporting the autism community in BC. Founded in 1975, it provides information, resources, support, and connection opportunities through programs, workshops, events ('AutismBC Meets', 'AutismBC Goes'), and a resource team. They emphasize listening to members, valuing lived experience, and promoting inclusion and acceptance, aligning with neurodiversity principles.[13, 14, 114, 115, 116]"
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What is the Autism Support Network of BC (ASN)?",
```

```
"output": "The Autism Support Network of BC (ASN) is a provincial organization focused on providing families with access to information, education, and support related to 'quality, science-based treatment' for autism, often associated with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). They offer resources like web series, workshops, a parent support group, and aim to build community connections for families navigating autism.[80, 117, 118]"
```

```
},  
{
```

```
"instruction": "What is the Pacific Autism Family Network (PAFN)?",
```

```
"output": "The Pacific Autism Family Network (PAFN) is a BC-based organization operating a central hub in Richmond and satellite 'spoke' locations across the province (e.g., Prince George, Kelowna). They aim to be a 'one-stop shop' offering a range of services across the lifespan, including assessment support, therapy services, social programs, employment training (e.g., JET, Employment Works), and an inclusive
```



preschool. They partner with various service providers.[81, 114, 118, 119]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is ACT - Autism Community Training in BC?",

"output": "ACT - Autism Community Training is a BC-based organization providing information, training, and resources for individuals, families, and professionals supporting neurodivergent individuals. Key offerings include live and online training events featuring specialists, an extensive online video library (Autism Videos @ ACT), the Autism & Intellectual Disability (AID) searchable database, BC-specific resources like the Autism Manual for B.C., and hubs for navigating new diagnoses and transitions to adulthood.[20, 57, 95, 120, 121]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the Family Support Institute of BC (FSIBC)?",

"output": "The Family Support Institute of BC (FSIBC) is a provincial non-profit society supporting families who have a member with any disability, including autism. They operate on a peer-to-peer support model using trained volunteer Resource Parents/Family Members. FSIBC offers free support, information, guidance, connection opportunities (including numerous online support groups/hangouts), workshops, and resource navigation tools like FindSupportBC.ca.[78, 79, 118, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the role of the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) regarding autism support?",

"output": "The BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is the primary provincial ministry responsible for providing specialized services and funding for children and youth with support needs, including autism. This includes administering the Autism Funding program (Under 6 and 6-18), the At Home Program, and other Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) services. Families typically interact with CYSN workers to access these programs.[20, 94, 122, 130, 131, 132]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC)?",

"output": "Autism Information Services BC (AIS BC) is a provincial information centre operated under the BC government. It provides information, support, and training to families, service providers, and professionals across BC regarding autism. AIS BC staff (Autism Support Specialists) help explain treatments, navigate the Autism Funding program and BC service system, and connect families with resources. They offer support via phone and email in multiple languages.[20, 21, 119, 122, 133]"



```
},  
{  
  "instruction": "What are the Family Connection Centres (FCCs) in BC?",  
  "output": "Family Connection Centres (FCCs) are part of a pilot project in four BC regions (Central Okanagan/Kelowna, Haida Gwaii/Prince Rupert, Terrace/Kitimat, Bulkley Valley/Stikine).[134, 135, 136] They are intended as 'one-stop shops' offering a range of services (therapy, behaviour support, family support, inclusive childcare support) for children and youth (birth-19) with any developmental delay or support need, without requiring a specific diagnosis.[134, 136] In pilot areas, families with an autism diagnosis can choose between receiving services through the FCC or the traditional Individualized Autism Funding (IAF) program.[133, 134, 135]"
```

```
},  
{  
  "instruction": "What was the controversy surrounding the introduction of Family Connection Centres in BC?",  
  "output": "The initial announcement of the FCC model in 2021 caused significant controversy because it indicated a plan to phase out BC's long-standing Individualized Autism Funding (IAF) program by 2025.[137, 138] Many families and advocates expressed concerns about a lack of consultation, potential loss of choice and control over services and providers, the severing of relationships with trusted professionals, and fears of long waitlists within the new hub system.[137, 138] While the current pilot allows choice between FCC and IAF in specific regions, the underlying concerns about the potential impact on individualized support remain.[134, 135]"
```

```
},  
{  
  "instruction": "How does BC Autism Funding work?",  
  "output": "BC Autism Funding is an individualized funding program administered by MCFD for children diagnosed with ASD. There are two streams: Under Age 6 (up to $22,000/year) and Ages 6-18 (up to $6,000/year).[26, 130, 132] After diagnosis, families apply through their local CYSN office, sign a funding agreement, and an account is set up.[20, 135] Families choose eligible service providers (following RASP rules for Under 6) and submit forms (like Request to Pay) to authorize payments. Funds can be managed via invoice payment or Direct Payment (for ages 12+). Up to 20% can be used for eligible training, travel, and equipment.[26, 133, 139, 140]"
```

```
},  
{  
  "instruction": "What is the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) in BC?",  
  "output": "The Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) is a list managed by the BC government (MCFD) of professionals who meet specific qualifications to provide certain autism intervention services.[19, 53] Professionals on the list include Behaviour
```

Consultants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists.[53] Families using the Autism Funding: Under Age 6 program \*must\* select these types of professionals from the RASP.[26, 53, 132] For the Ages 6-18 program, using the RASP is recommended but not mandatory.[26, 132]"

},

{

"instruction": "What are the rules for Behaviour Interventionists (BIs) under BC Autism Funding?",

"output": "Behaviour Interventionists (BIs) provide direct implementation of intervention plans, often designed by a Behaviour Consultant. BIs are an eligible expense under both BC Autism Funding streams (Under 6 and 6-18).[20, 26, 64] BIs themselves are not required to be listed on the RASP. However, for the Under Age 6 program, it is expected or required that BIs work under the supervision of a RASP-listed professional (typically a Behaviour Consultant).[25, 26] For the Ages 6-18 program, supervision by a qualified professional is recommended.[26, 141]"

},

{

"instruction": "What specific services and items are eligible expenses under BC Autism Funding?",

"output": "Eligible expenses differ slightly between the Under 6 and 6-18 programs but generally cover intervention services promoting communication, social-emotional, academic, and functional life skills. Examples include services from RASP professionals (BCs, SLPs, OTs, PTs - mandatory for Under 6), Behaviour Interventionists, family counselling, life/social skills programs (mainly 6-18), specialized camps/activities (6-18), dietary counselling (6-18), and out-of-school tutoring (6-18). Up to 20% can cover eligible parent/BI training, travel (>80km round trip for services/training), and pre-approved equipment/materials (e.g., specific communication aids, one computer/tablet every 3 years).[26, 64, 139]"

},

{

"instruction": "What expenses are generally ineligible under BC Autism Funding?",

"output": "Ineligible expenses typically include home repairs/renovations, general household items, general recreation/sports fees or equipment, clothing, food (except small therapy reinforcers), vitamins/medical supplies, items used only in school, childcare, respite care, medical services, psychoeducational assessments, services provided out-of-province, and monthly smartphone/data plans.[26]"

},

{

"instruction": "Where can I find the official BC Autism Funding Parent's Handbook?",

"output": "The 'Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Programs' provides detailed

policy and procedure information for BC Autism Funding. It can usually be downloaded from the BC Government website, specifically on pages related to Autism Spectrum Disorder forms and resources or support needs. Links may appear on the main ASD page, the Forms and Resources page, or through searches on gov.bc.ca.[20, 25, 26, 133, 139, 140, 142, 143, 144]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in the BC school system?",  
"output": "An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a documented plan required for students identified with special needs in BC schools. It outlines individualized goals, adaptations (changes to teaching methods or materials), modifications (changes to learning outcomes), support services (like OT, SLP, EA support), and measures for tracking progress. It's developed collaboratively by the school team (teachers, specialists, administrators) in consultation with parents/guardians and, where appropriate, the student.[84, 85, 99, 100, 101, 145, 146]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the difference between adaptations and modifications in a BC IEP?",

"output": "Adaptations are strategies used to help a student meet the regular learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum. They involve changes to teaching methods, materials, or assessment procedures (e.g., extra time, visual aids, preferential seating, different format for assignments) but do not change the fundamental learning goals.[84, 147, 148] Modifications involve changing the learning outcomes themselves because the student is unable to meet the regular curriculum expectations. This might involve goals related to functional life skills or significantly altered academic expectations.[84, 147, 148]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "What is the parent's role in the IEP process in BC?",  
"output": "Parents/guardians play a crucial role in the IEP process in BC. Schools are required to consult with parents when developing the IEP.[84, 101, 145, 147] Parents have the right to attend IEP meetings, provide input based on their knowledge of their child, ask questions, bring support people, and advocate for their child's needs. While the school makes the final decision on the IEP content, meaningful consultation is expected.[84, 121, 145, 146]"

```
},  
{
```

"instruction": "Where can parents find resources about IEPs in BC?",  
"output": "Several organizations offer resources for parents navigating the IEP

process in BC. AutismBC has blog posts and potentially workshops.[84] The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) has a guide for parents on IEPs.[145, 149] Inclusion BC includes information on IEPs in its Inclusive Education guide.[145] ACT - Autism Community Training may offer videos or resources.[121] Advocacy groups like BCEdAccess also provide support and information related to educational rights.[123]"

```
},  
{  
  "instruction": "How can I find online autism communities or forums relevant to  
Canadians?",  
  "output": "While direct links to large, unstructured Canadian forums aren't prominent  
in the provided government/organizational resources, you can connect with the  
Canadian autism community online through: 1. Social media groups run by  
organizations (e.g., Autism Speaks had groups like 'Adulthood on the Spectrum' [150],  
check Canadian orgs). 2. Online support groups offered by Canadian/BC organizations  
like FSIBC [78], AutismBC [74, 75], CAN [77], Chronically Queer.[151] 3. Platforms like  
AIDE Canada which feature peer advice videos.[113] 4. General social networks for  
parents like MyAutismTeam.[150] 5. Facebook groups focused on specific topics like  
BC Autism Funding [132] or education advocacy.[123]"  
},  
{  
  "instruction": "What kind of training is available for caregivers of autistic individuals  
in Canada/BC?",  
  "output": "Caregiver training is available through various avenues. The Public Health  
Agency of Canada supports initiatives like the Caregiver Skills Training Program [108]  
and provides general information on training topics.[47] In BC, Autism Funding (both  
streams) allows a portion (up to 20%) to be used for eligible parent/caregiver training  
related to autism.[26, 64, 139] Organizations like ACT - Autism Community Training offer  
numerous workshops and online videos for parents and professionals on topics like  
Positive Behaviour Support, communication, transitions, etc..[20, 57, 95, 120]  
PBS-focused organizations also offer parent training.[93, 96]"  
}  
]
```

## Works cited

1. Autism: Overview - Canada.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd.html>
2. Framework for Autism in Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-condition>

- [s/framework-autism-canada.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder-children-youth-canada-2018.html)
3. Autism Spectrum Disorder among Children and Youth in Canada 2018, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder-children-youth-canada-2018.html>
  4. Autism Canada | Resources | Support | Education, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismcanada.org/>
  5. A Better Way Forward - Autism Alliance of Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://autismalliance.ca/a-better-way-forward/>
  6. Autism & Neurodiversity | Specialisterne Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://ca.specialisterne.com/autism-and-neurodiversity/>
  7. For those in the neurodiversity movement the key to systems change is solidarity: researcher | News | University of Calgary, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/news/those-neurodiversity-movement-key-systems-change-solidarity-researcher>
  8. What We Believe - Autistic Self Advocacy Network, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/what-we-believe/>
  9. Neurodiversity-Affirming Therapy: Positions, Therapy Goals, and Best Practices, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://therapistndc.org/neurodiversity-affirming-therapy/>
  10. BRAIN EQUALITY: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEURODIVERSITY IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE - NYU Journal of International Law and Politics, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://nyujilp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NYJ102.pdf>
  11. Canada's Autism Strategy, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/canada-autism-strategy.html>
  12. Autism Alliance of Canada: Home, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://autismalliance.ca/>
  13. Welcome, Autism BC! - Inclusion BC, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://inclusionbc.org/welcome-autism-bc/>
  14. About — AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/about/>
  15. Autism: Signs and characteristics - Canada.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/signs-characteristics.html>
  16. About Autism, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismontario.com/about-autism>
  17. Get a diagnostic assessment - Province of British Columbia, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/diagnosis>
  18. How autism is diagnosed - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/diagnosis/how-autism>

[-is-diagnosed](#)

19. 4 Steps to Autism (ASD) Diagnosis, Funding, and Treatment in BC (Updated 2024), accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://arbutusspeechtherapy.com/4-steps-to-autism-asd-diagnosis-funding-and-treatment-in-bc>
20. New Diagnosis Hub - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/information/new-diagnosis-hub/>
21. Autism Diagnosis in BC - ACT, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/information/autism-diagnosis-in-bc/>
22. BC Autism Assessment Network - Provincial Health Services Authority, accessed on April 19, 2025, <http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/bc-autism-assessment-network>
23. Frequently Asked Questions for Qualified Professionals - Autism Assessments - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/diagnosis/how-autism-is-diagnosed/frequently-asked-questions-qualified-professionals>
24. BC Autism Assessment Network | BC Children's Hospital, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.bcchildrens.ca/clinics-services/bc-autism-assessment-network>
25. A Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Programs - NONA Child Development Centre, accessed on April 19, 2025, [https://nona-cdc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/autism\\_handbook\\_web.pdf](https://nona-cdc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/autism_handbook_web.pdf)
26. www2.gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism\\_handbook\\_english.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism_handbook_english.pdf)
27. Autism spectrum disorder - Fraser Health Authority, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/school-health/learning-and-developmental-disorders/autism-spectrum-disorder>
28. Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - The Health of Canada's Children and Youth, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://cichprofile.ca/module/8/section/7/page/prevalence-of-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/>
29. Causes of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) - Canada.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/causes-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd.html>
30. Reactions & side effects | immunizecanada, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://immunize.ca/resources/126>
31. Autism | immunizecanada, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://immunize.ca/resources/89>
32. Facts vs. myths about immunizations - Fraser Health Authority, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/immunizations/immunization-b>



[asics/facts-vs-myths](#)

33. Evidence Shows Vaccines Unrelated to Autism - Immunize.org, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.immunize.org/clinical/a-z/evidence-vaccines-unrelated-autism/>
34. Evidence shows vaccines unrelated to autism - CanVax.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://canvax.ca/sites/default/files/2018-06/IAC\\_EvidenceShowsVaccinesNotRelatedToAutism\\_2014.pdf](https://canvax.ca/sites/default/files/2018-06/IAC_EvidenceShowsVaccinesNotRelatedToAutism_2014.pdf)
35. Vaccines: Myths and facts - Caring for kids - Canadian Paediatric Society, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunization/vaccines-myths-and-facts>
36. Do vaccines cause autism? - Autism Speaks, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/do-vaccines-cause-autism>
37. Lancet retracts 12-year-old article linking autism to MMR vaccines - PMC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2831678/>
38. Autism Speaks - Wikipedia, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism\\_Speaks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism_Speaks)
39. Autism Speaks Canada - Supported Charity - Wise Family Foundation, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://wisefamilyfoundation.org/charities/autism-speaks-canada/>
40. Environmental factors associated with autism spectrum disorder: a scoping review for the years 2003–2013 - PubMed Central, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5480297/>
41. Autism Speaks and Autism Speaks Canada Support Launch of the Canadian Platform for Genomics and Precision Health, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/press-release/autism-speaks-and-autism-speaks-canada-support-launch-canadian-platform-genomics-and>
42. AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2022/aspc-phac/HP35-153-2021-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2022/aspc-phac/HP35-153-2021-eng.pdf)
43. Autism spectrum disorder: Highlights from the 2019 Canadian health survey on children and youth - Canada.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder-canadian-health-survey-children-youth-2019.html>
44. Autism and Co-occurring Psychiatric and Medical Conditions: Adults More Likely to Have More than One Condition - AIDE Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://aidecanada.ca/resources/learn/health/adults-with-autism-more-likely-to-have-co-occurring-psychiatric-and-medical-conditions>
45. Prevalence and Correlates of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Quebec: Prévalence et corrélats des troubles du spectre de l'autisme au Québec - PMC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5894913/>
46. A new report from the Public Health Agency of Canada: What this report tells us, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://autismalliance.ca/phac-autism-2022/>
47. Autism: Supports and services - Canada.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-diso>



[rder-asd/supports-services.html](https://www.actcommunity.ca/education/videos/visual-support-strategies-for-individuals-with-asd/)

48. Visual Support Strategies for Individuals with ASD - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/education/videos/visual-support-strategies-for-individuals-with-asd/>
49. Strategies for a Calmer Home - The Autism Community in Action, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://tacanow.org/family-resources/strategies-for-a-calmer-home/>
50. Visual Schedules – Next Steps - IU Pressbooks, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://iu.pressbooks.pub/nextsteps/chapter/visual-schedules/>
51. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/aid-info-resource/picture-exchange-communication-system-pecs-2/>
52. Facilitated Communication vs. PECS Communication: Understanding the Key Differences, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://bcotb.com/blog/facilitated-communication-vs-pecs-communication/>
53. Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) - Province of British Columbia, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/build-your-support-team/registry-autism-service-providers>
54. Funding Resources - Pyramid Educational Consultants of Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pecs-canada.com/funding-resources/>
55. How to Implement Visual Schedules for Children with Autism, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.advancedautism.com/post/how-to-implement-visual-schedules-for-children-with-autism>
56. TEACCH Tip #1 Visual Schedule - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/aid-info-resource/teacch-tip-1-visual-schedule/>
57. Positive Behavior Support: What Parents Need to Know! - ACT ..., accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/education/videos/positive-behavior-support/>
58. Visual Supports: Resources - Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/resources/visual-supports/index.html>
59. Visual Schedules in a Special Education Classroom - Autism Adventures, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismadventures.com/visual-schedules-in-a-special-education-classroom/>
60. Picture Exchange Communication System and Autism - ACT, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/aid-info-resource/picture-exchange-communication-system-and-autism/>

61. PECS®: An Evidence-Based Practice - Pyramid Educational Consultants of Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pecs-canada.com/pecs/>
62. Research Archives - Pyramid Educational Consultants, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pecsusa.com/research/>
63. Predictors of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) outcomes - PMC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10748685/>
64. How much funding is available - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/autism-funding/funding-amount>
65. Information by topic - Autism Speaks, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismspeaks.org/information-topic>
66. Social Skills Training | Therapist Neurodiversity Collective, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://therapistndc.org/social-skills-training/>
67. Neurodiversity Affirming 'Social Skills' Support for Autistic Children - Part 1: The Big Ideas, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://playlearnchat.com/podcast-2/>
68. Social Skills Group for College Students | Bay Area | Palo Alto, CA 94306, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://opendoorstherapy.com/college-group/>
69. Should Autistic Children Be 'Trained' to Socialize? | Psychology Today, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychology-meets-neurodiversity/202308/should-autistic-children-be-trained-to-socialize>
70. Is ABA therapy harmful? The controversy explained - Medical News Today, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/is-aba-therapy-harmful>
71. The Controversy Around ABA - Child Mind Institute, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://childmind.org/article/controversy-around-applied-behavior-analysis/>
72. Nothing about Social Skills Training is Neurodivergence-Affirming - Absolutely Nothing. - Therapist Neurodiversity Collective, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://therapistndc.org/nothing-about-social-skills-training-is-neurodivergence-affirming/>
73. Neurodiversity-Affirming Social Skills Group Curriculum - TPT, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Neurodiversity-Affirming-Social-Skills-Group-Curriculum-11275270>
74. Support Groups — AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/programs/connection/support-groups/>
75. AutismBC Meets and Community Groups — Autistic Adults, Blog, Caregivers, Programs, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/meetsandcommunity-groups/>
76. Canucks Autism Network: Home, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://canucksautism.ca/>
77. Women's Peer Group - Canucks Autism Network, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://canucksautism.ca/program/womens-peer-group/>

78. Online Support Groups - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/canada-resource/online-support-groups/>
79. FSI Events - Family Support Institute, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://familysupportbc.com/events/>
80. Autism Support Network of British Columbia, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismsupportbc.ca/>
81. The Pacific Autism Family Network Foundation - Here to Help BC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/the-many-faces-of-neurodiversity-vol18/the-pacific-autism-family-network-foundation>
82. Find Autism Group Therapy and Support Groups in British Columbia - Psychology Today, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/groups/british-columbia?category=autism>
83. Pilot Survey - Free Monthly Online Young Sibling Peer Support Groups, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://surveys.vch.ca/Survey.aspx?s=8d39cfab1e094d38805f8ba576d62a84>
84. A Guide to Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in BC - AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/iep-bc/>
85. Understanding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) - Brighter Strides ABA, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.brighterstridesaba.com/blog/individualized-education-programs-ieps-for-autism>
86. Neuroaffirming mental healthcare for autistic clients - AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/autism-q-and-a/neuroaffirming-mental-healthcare-interview/>
87. ABA Therapy Controversy: Is It Harmful Or Helpful?, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.totalcareaba.com/autism/aba-therapy-controversy>
88. ABA Therapy | Applied Behavior Analysis | PBS Corporation, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.teampbs.com/>
89. Autism Speaks Canada shuts down in January. Good. - A4A Ontario, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://a4aontario.com/2024/12/17/autism-speaks-canada-shuts-down-in-january-good/>
90. Resources Documenting the Controversy Around Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy - Neurodiversity Labs, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://neurodiversitylabs.com/aba>
91. Concerns About ABA-Based Intervention: An Evaluation and Recommendations - PMC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9114057/>
92. The Controversy Around ABA Therapy (Applied Behavior Analysis) - YouTube, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=tuRZrto-ZwE>
93. PBS Trainings | Center for Excellence in Disabilities - Positive Behavior Support Program, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://pbs.cedwvu.org/pbs-trainings/>
94. Positive Behavioural Support and Intervention Program - Reach Centre, accessed

on April 19, 2025,

<https://www.reachdevelopment.org/child-development-programs/positive-behavioral-support/>

95. Positive Behavior Support: What Parents Need to Know! - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.actcommunity.ca/aid-info-resource/positive-behavior-support-what-parents-need-to-know/>
96. Positive Behaviour Support and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Online Course, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://behaviourhelp.com/positive-behaviour-support/online-courses/positive-behaviour-support-strategies-for-children-and-adolescents-with-autism-spectrum-disorder>
97. ABA Therapy in British Columbia | PBS - Positive Behavior Supports, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www.teampbs.com/aba\\_therapy.aspx?Region=BC&RegionName=British%20Columbia](https://www.teampbs.com/aba_therapy.aspx?Region=BC&RegionName=British%20Columbia)
98. Accessing Autism-Related Funding for Children In Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://aidecanada.ca/resources/learn/asd-id-core-knowledge/under-18-supports>
99. www2.gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/inclusive\\_ed\\_policy\\_manual.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/inclusive_ed_policy_manual.pdf)
100. Inclusive education resources - Province of British Columbia, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/resources-for-teachers/inclusive-education>
101. Inclusion Policy - School District 43, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www.sd43.bc.ca/school/portmoody/ProgramsServices/IB/PMSS\\_IB\\_Policies/\\_layouts/15/download.aspx?SourceUrl=/school%2Fportmoody%2FProgramsServices%2FIB%2FPMSS\\_IB\\_Policies%2FDocuments%2FInclusion+Policy.docx](https://www.sd43.bc.ca/school/portmoody/ProgramsServices/IB/PMSS_IB_Policies/_layouts/15/download.aspx?SourceUrl=/school%2Fportmoody%2FProgramsServices%2FIB%2FPMSS_IB_Policies%2FDocuments%2FInclusion+Policy.docx)
102. INTER-MINISTERIAL PROTOCOLS for the PROVISION of SUPPORT SERVICES TO SCHOOLS - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[http://docs.openinfo.gov.bc.ca/d7897013a\\_response\\_package\\_edu-2012-00149.pdf](http://docs.openinfo.gov.bc.ca/d7897013a_response_package_edu-2012-00149.pdf)
103. autismalliance.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://autismalliance.ca/#::~:~:text=Autism%20Alliance%20of%20Canada%20is.and%20organizations%20from%20across%20Canada.>
104. Membership - Autism Alliance of Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://autismalliance.ca/membership/>
105. About - Autism Canada, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismcanada.ca/about>
106. Autism Speaks Shrinks Its Footprint - Disability Scoop, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2025/01/23/autism-speaks-shrinks-its-footprint/>

[31260/](#)

107. Government of Canada announces the organization to establish and lead the National Autism Network, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2025/03/government-of-canada-announces-the-organization-to-establish-and-lead-the-national-autism-network.html>
108. Autism: What Canada is doing, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/autism-spectrum-disorder-asd/what-canada-doing.html>
109. Guiding a National Autism Strategy, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://autismalliance.ca/initiative/guiding-nas/>
110. A Global Discussion on National Autism Strategies Brings Lived Experience to the Forefront, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://autismalliance.ca/un-crpd-2023/>
111. Stability and good governance needed for national autism strategy - Policy Options, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/july-2021/stability-and-good-governance-needed-for-national-autism-strategy/>
112. National Autism Network, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://autismalberta.ca/national-autism-network/>
113. AIDE Canada | Resources for Autism & Intellectual Disability, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://aidecanada.ca/>
114. Autism BC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.pacificautismfamily.com/autism-bc>
115. Autism Society of British Columbia - Child Development Centre . Fort St. John, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.cdcfsj.ca/resources/98-autism-society-of-british-columbia>
116. AutismBC: Providing Autism Support and Resources, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/>
117. Resources - Autism Support Network, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismsupportbc.ca/resources>
118. Build your support team - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/build-your-support-team>
119. Autism Information Services British Columbia (AIS BC), accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.pacificautismfamily.com/ais-bc>
120. Autism Community Training, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/>
121. School-Age Children with Autism - ACT, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/information/school-children-autism/>
122. Family Resources | BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.bcchr.ca/navigationproject/family-resources>
123. Advocacy Support in BC — Autistic Adults, Blog, Resource Guide - AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025,

- <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/advocacy-support-in-bc/>
124. Family Support Institute: FSIBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://familysupportbc.com/>
  125. Supports for Disabilities - Family Support Institute of BC - Pathways Comox Valley, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://comox-valley.pathwaysbc.ca/programs/2095>
  126. Supports for Disabilities - Family Support Institute of BC - Central Okanagan, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://central-okanagan.pathwaysbc.ca/programs/2095>
  127. How can I find a support group? | Kelty Mental Health, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/how-can-i-find-support-group>
  128. Family Support Institute (FSI) : British Columbia - eMentalHealth.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.ementalhealth.ca/74286>
  129. Find Support BC: Locating helpful groups in your community is only a click away, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/resources/find-support-bc-locating-helpful-groups-in-your-community-is-only-a-click-away/>
  130. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), accessed on April 19, 2025, <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/transition-to-adult-care/Documents/ChildandYouthwithSpecialNeedsCYSNSupportServices.pdf>
  131. British Columbia - CanChild, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.canchild.ca/en/resources/53-british-columbia>
  132. Autism Funding — Autism Q & A, Blog, Caregivers, Funding ..., accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/autism-funding/>
  133. Autism spectrum disorder - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder>
  134. AFU and FCCs Comparison — Resource Guide - AutismBC, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www.autismbc.ca/blog/resource-guide/comparing-afu-and-fccs/>
  135. Service delivery options for families in Kelowna and the Northwest - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/service-delivery-options-for-families-in-kelowna-and-the-northwest>
  136. Pilot family connections centres in four communities - Province of British Columbia, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/pilot-family-connections-centres-in-four-communities>
  137. Funding Change in B.C. Speaks to Urgent Need For National Autism Strategy, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://autismalliance.ca/funding-change-in-bc/>
  138. B.C. to launch 'circle of care' for neurodiverse kids but parents have many questions | Lethbridge News Now, accessed on April 19, 2025,



- <https://lethbridgenewsnow.com/2022/05/16/b-c-to-launch-circle-of-care-for-neurodiverse-kids-but-parents-have-many-questions/>
139. Autism funding - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/autism-funding>
  140. After Your Child's Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder A Quick Start Guide for Ages 6-12 - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism\\_quick\\_start\\_guide\\_ages\\_6-12.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism_quick_start_guide_ages_6-12.pdf)
  141. After Your Child's Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism-quickstartguide-2023-6to12-2023-web.pdf>
  142. Forms and resources - Province of British Columbia - Gov.bc.ca, accessed on April 19, 2025, <https://gov.bc.ca/autism-forms-resources>
  143. Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Programs - Crown Publications Online Catalogue, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www.publications.gov.bc.ca/Product/Details/7665003700\\_S](https://www.publications.gov.bc.ca/Product/Details/7665003700_S)
  144. ACT's Autism Manual for BC - Chapter 4 "MCFD Funded Services for Children with ASD", accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://www.actcommunity.ca/files/pdf/act/manual/New\\_Dx\\_parent\\_package\\_appendix.pdf](https://www.actcommunity.ca/files/pdf/act/manual/New_Dx_parent_package_appendix.pdf)
  145. Individual Education Plan (IEP) – They aren't just Words on a Page - Speaking Up BC, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.speakingupbc.com/2025/03/30/individual-education-plan-iep-they-arent-just-words-on-a-page/>
  146. Starting the School Year Strong with an IEP: A Guide to Academic Success and Support, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://ldsociety.ca/starting-strong-with-an-iep/>
  147. Student Support Services IEP Handbook - West Vancouver Schools, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://westvancouver.schools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/IEPHandbookforweb.pdf>
  148. Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning - McCammon Elementary, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
[https://mccammon.sd33.bc.ca/sites/mccammon.sd33.bc.ca/files/2018-07/Parent%20Guide%20to%20IEP\\_0.pdf](https://mccammon.sd33.bc.ca/sites/mccammon.sd33.bc.ca/files/2018-07/Parent%20Guide%20to%20IEP_0.pdf)
  149. Individualised Education Plans for Children with Autism, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.cyautism.org/publications/individualised-education-plans-for-children-with-autism>
  150. Finding your community - Autism Speaks, accessed on April 19, 2025,  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/finding-your-community>
  151. Online Support Group - ACT - Autism Community Training, accessed on April



19, 2025, <https://www.actcommunity.ca/canada-resource/online-support-group/>