

Checklist – What do I do next?

- ø Confirmed diagnosis. If you are reading this, then you've seen someone who has provided you with the descriptor "Autism" or autism spectrum disorder, Asperger's Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder. Reading through the Autism Society's Parent to Parent information package is a good way to start answering your questions. If at all possible, try to arrange a visit to speak to someone (by phone or at one of the offices) to be sure you understand what the spectrum of autism is all about and that there is hope for the future.
- ø Discuss treatment options with the diagnosing physician and/or team that provided you with an assessment of your child. There are treatments for Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorders. Your physician or assessment team will have a "picture" of your child that will assist you in effectively developing a treatment plan. (see below re where to get more information about therapies and treatment options)
- ø Get in touch with the Ministry for Children & Families Development, Community Living Services. (Not Child Protection, Resources or Probation) You will speak to an intake worker and be assigned a caseworker. This is where service delivery starts. Depending on the age of your child, you may ask for an assistant to enable you child to attend preschool, speech and language support, behavior support and Respite. Some services are managed by Supported Childcare but it is all accessed through your CLS worker. If you have problems getting a CLS worker call the Autism Society.
- ø Read through the *Services Guide for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (available from ASBC) so you have an idea of what the services are. Get your child's name put on the waitlist for services, even if you don't feel you need the service right now. Later, when you child's name does come up you may be in need of the service and if you don't need it you can turn it down.
- ø Join a community group. Only another parent of a child like yours can truly understand. No doctor or professional can offer the type of suggestions and support that has come from first hand, trial and error experience. Other parents are great sources of information on such issues as what's happening in your community, knowledgeable professionals in the area etc. ASBC has community parent groups around the province. There are also many groups that are for special needs in general.
- ø Be sure to ask about: Income tax credits passes and discounts (BC Ferries, BC Parks) See the ASBC Service Guide.