

## Guidelines and Questions to Consider when Making Decisions about Intervention for your Child

When making decisions about intervention for your child, the first thing to remember is that your child is an individual. Like all individuals, your child has his or her own strengths, interests, and preferred learning style. When choosing an intervention consider your child's long term outcomes while remembering the things that are the most important to your child and family.

B.J. Freeman provides guidelines and questions to consider in her article "Evaluation of Intervention Programs for Autism." Consider each of them when making decisions about an intervention program for your child.

- Approach any new treatment with hopeful skepticism. Remember the goal of any treatment should be to help the person with autism become a fully functioning member of society.
- *Beware* of any program or technique that is said to be appropriate for every person with autism.
- *Beware* of any program that thwarts individualization and potentially results in harmful program decisions.
- *Be aware* that any treatment represents one of several options for a person with autism.
- *Be aware* that treatment should always depend on individual assessment information that points to it as an appropriate choice for a particular child.
- *Be aware* that no new treatment should be implemented until its proponents can specify assessment procedures necessary to determine whether it will be appropriate for an individual with autism.
- *Be aware* that debate over use of various techniques are often reduced to superficial arguments over who is *right, moral, ethical and who is a true advocate for the children*. This can lead to results that are directly opposite to those intended including impediments to maximizing programs.
- *Be aware* that often new treatments have not been validated scientifically.

Questions to consider regarding specific treatments:

- Will the treatment result in harm to the child?
- Is the treatment developmentally appropriate for the child?
- How will failure of the treatment affect my child and family?
- Has the treatment been validated scientifically? (Refer to article on Ingredients of Good Research)
- How will the treatment be integrated in the child's current program? Do not become so infatuated with a given treatment that functional curriculum, vocational life, and social skills are ignored.

From Freeman, B.J. (1997). Guidelines for evaluating intervention programs for children with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 27(6), 641—651.