

# Evidence-Based Practices for Autistic Students Tips and Resources for Caregivers



## What is evidence-based practice (EBP)?

An intervention is an evidence-based practice when there is scientific evidence to support its claims. Evidence-based practices must be selected for implementation based on sound professional judgment, coupled with the careful review of available data, input from individuals and family members, and an honest evaluation of the educators' and service providers' capacity to implement the interventions accurately.

## Why is it important to identify evidence-based practices?

The long-term outcomes for autistic children and adults are greatly impacted by the types of interventions that they receive. Intervening early and with efficacy can make a difference in the academic, cognitive, social, behavioral, communicative, and self-help outcomes for autistic individuals. For this reason, extra time and resources are rarely available to invest in unproven or inconsistently effective practices. Educators, caregivers, and practitioners who serve autistic children are empowered when they can select treatments that are likely to have a maximal positive impact and will be acceptable and feasible.

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## How are evidence-based practices identified for the treatment of ASD?

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team identified and published a list of 28 evidence-based practices that have positive effects with autistic children and youth. Panels of experts reviewed 31,779 research abstracts and ultimately 972 research studies in which practices were tested with autistic individuals under 22 years of age. The panelists checked the quality of studies and evaluated the effects of the interventions (Steinbrenner et. al, 2020).

## What evidence-based practices have been identified for autistic children?

- Antecedent-Based Interventions
- Ayres Sensory Integration
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Behavioral Momentum Intervention
- Cognitive Behavioral Instructional Strategies
- Differential Reinforcement of Alternative, Incompatible, or Other Behavior
- Direct Instruction
- Discrete Trial Training
- Exercise and Movement
- Extinction
- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Functional Communication Training
- Modeling
- Music-Mediated Intervention
- Naturalistic Intervention
- Parent-Implemented Intervention
- Peer-Based Instruction and Intervention
- Prompting
- Reinforcement
- Response Interruption/Redirection
- Self-Management
- Social Narratives
- Social Skills Training
- Task Analysis
- Technology-Aided Instruction and Intervention
- Time Delay
- Video Modeling
- Visual Supports

TRIAD offers a variety of professional development and training about many of the EBPs listed identified by the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team.

The following infographic highlights many of the EBPs TRIAD features during trainings.

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES



### **ANTECEDENT-BASED INTERVENTIONS (ABI)**

Arrangement of events that precede an activity to increase the likelihood that the desired behavior occurs again.



### **AUGMENTATIVE & ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)**

Interventions using and/or teaching the use of a system of communication that is not verbal or vocal.



### **DIRECT INSTRUCTION (DI)**

A systematic approach to teaching using a sequenced instructional package with scripted protocols or lessons.



### **MODELING (MD)**

Demonstrating the desired target behavior by the instructor that leads to acquisition of the target behavior by the learner.



### **NATURALISTIC INTERVENTION (NI)**

A collection of strategies that are embedded in typical activities, that are learner directed.



### **PROMPTING (P)**

Verbal, gestural, or physical assistance given to learners to support them in acquiring or engaging in a target behavior or skill.



### **REINFORCEMENT (R)**

A response following a learner's use of a desired skill or behavior that increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again.



### **SOCIAL NARRATIVES (SN)**

Interventions that describe social situations in order to highlight relevant features of a target behavior or skill to increase appropriate responding.



### **TASK ANALYSIS (TA)**

Dividing an activity or behavior into small, manageable steps in order to assess or teach the skill.



### **VISUAL SUPPORTS (VS)**

A visual display that supports the learner in engaging in a desired behavior independent of additional prompts.

# How can caregivers learn more about evidence-based practices for autistic children?

## TRIAD Resources

TRIAD is a Vanderbilt Kennedy Center program dedicated to improving assessment and treatment services for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families while advancing knowledge and training. [Visit our website](http://triad.vumc.org) (triad.vumc.org).

TRIAD's [Families First Program](http://triad.vumc.org/ffp) (triad.vumc.org/ffp) is a free program for caregivers of young children (ages 2-7) newly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The primary goal is to equip caregivers with practical tools to support their child, to provide resources to apply strategy and planning ideas more easily, and to give caregivers an opportunity to meet other caregivers with similar questions or concerns.

TRIAD offers Brief Online Training Sessions (BOTS) and archived webinars to provide information about evidence-based practices for individuals with autism. Check our [online learning portal](http://triad.vkclearning.org) (triad.vkclearning.org) to access these free trainings and resources.

## Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

Provides free information, referral sources, and help with navigating services via phone, email, and website. Assistance is available to individuals of all ages, all types of disabilities, and all languages spoken. Call (615) 322-8529, (800) 640-4636, or [visit the Pathfinder website](http://TNPathfinder.org) (TNPathfinder.org).

## Other Resources

National Autism Center's ['A Parents' Guide to Evidence-based Practice and Autism](https://nationalautismcenter.org/resource-library/for-families/), 2nd Edition (https://nationalautismcenter.org/resource-library/for-families/)

[2020 EBP Report from the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice](https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/EBP-Report-2020.pdf) (https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/EBP-Report-2020.pdf)

## Reference

Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). *Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with autism*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team.

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