

ASD Plus: Education for Families

The programme

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Plus education for families programme is person-centred and individualised. It is delivered by IDEA Specialist Services and jointly funded by Ministries of Health and Education.

A learning plan is developed with the family. The best content and methods of delivery are chosen together.

There are three ways of getting ASD Plus – group sessions, individual sessions, and distance learning. Each has follow-up to support families to apply their learning to their own child and home situation.

The programme has seven modules, with learning objects as follows:

Module One – Introduction to ASD

- Clearly describe the programme structure and expectations
- Describe the key characteristics of ASD
- Identify some of the ways that ASD affects my child
- Describe the spectrum of conditions related to ASD
- Describe the causes of ASD

Module Two – Understanding My Child's Communication

- Describe the key communication characteristics that are common in children who have ASD
- Identify some of the ways that my child's communication is affected by ASD
- Describe key communication support strategies that are useful in supporting children with ASD
- Identify changes I could make to improve communication with my child
- Describe some specific/specialised communication support strategies

Module Three – How My Child Senses the World

- Describe how the senses can be affected in children who have ASD
- Identify my child's sensory profile
- Identify how I can support my child with his/her sensory needs

Module Four – My Child's Learning Style

- Describe common elements in the learning styles of children with ASD
- Identify what helps and hinders my child's learning
- Identify some changes I can make to the way I help my child to learn

Module Five - Stress, Anxiety and Routines:

- Describe the factors that can contribute to stress/anxiety in children with ASD
- Identify possible causes and signs of stress and anxiety in my own child
- Describe strategies to develop predictability and decrease stress/anxiety for children with ASD
- Decrease stress and anxiety for my child and our family

Module Six – Understanding Behaviour – Why does my child do that?

- Recognise what can influence behaviour in children with ASD
- Describe a Positive Behaviour Support Approach and why it is useful
- Put together a simple plan to manage and change behaviour

Module Seven – Managing Into the Future: A Roadmap

- Describes what makes a successful intervention, and different types of successful interventions
- Can access information about strategies and interventions
- Has information on available services to assist future planning
- Has information on the importance of self care and maintaining a strong family

How it is delivered

Families in ASD Plus will first be visited at home to:

- build a relationship with families
- learn more about each family's learning needs and strengths
- tailor the education programme to the family members needs and
- find out the best way to deliver the programme.

There are three ways to be part of ASD Plus depending on the family's needs:

- group sessions involving a small number of families - usually once a fortnight.
- individualised sessions for a particular family or whanau group delivered to suit each family
- distance learning - via internet, DVD, reading material, and phone/email/face to face contact, depending on the needs and location of each family

This flexibility allows us to meet the needs of people in rural and isolated locations, and to better cater to cultural and language needs.

Who delivers ASD Plus?

The programme is run by IDEA Specialist Services. Our team of facilitators are all very skilled and experienced specialist workers who have experience in supporting young children with ASD and their families

Accessing the Programme

Where is the programme available?

Anywhere in New Zealand

Who can participate?

Families of pre-school children who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This could include parents, guardians, other main caregivers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, other family or whanau members. We encourage all key adult family members to participate.

How do I get ASD Plus?

If you would like to find out more or want to participate complete the ASD Plus expression of interest form online. A member of our team will make contact with you.

Professionals may complete the form on behalf of a family, but the family must have given consent and be happy to be contacted by our team.