



How do I evaluate treatments and interventions?

In looking at information and treatments for your child's disability, it can be intimidating and confusing. You may find disagreement about effectiveness, sometimes even among well known organizations or centers. How can you make an informed decision about what to do for your child?

Here are some things to consider:

- **What is the source of the information?**

Websites created by major medical centers, universities, government agencies and national organizations are the most credible. Those websites will end in .edu, .gov, or .org. Be wary of commercial websites (ending in .com) that promote a single point of view or a single method which claims 100% success or which will "cure" a variety of conditions. Often .com websites are trying to sell their product.

- **Is the information current?**

There are new breakthroughs every year. Information and studies from as recently as the year 2000 may be out of date. Reputable websites will date their information.

- **Is the information scientifically or research-based?**

Has it been reviewed by peers (other researchers or practitioners) in the field? Are university or medical center professionals involved the studies and practices that are promoted? Can the same results be produced on a wider scale? And, how large of a group was used to establish the outcome of an intervention, treatment or practice?

- **Do you find that more than one center/organization has come to the same or similar conclusions and are they sharing their findings with others in their field?**

Is the information on one website verified on other websites? For example, how effective is a particular therapy or whether a treatment is beneficial.

- **Be aware of scams and health fraud.**

Words such as satisfaction guaranteed, miracle cure, new discovery, purify, detoxify, natural, etc. are usually marketing terms used to sell something. It is important to verify the claims with more than "testimonials" by people who have used the product or service. Be aware of amazing claims as well as the potential for harmful side effects.

You may find some treatment methods are not readily accepted by the majority of people in that field. Does that mean they have no merit? Not necessarily, new information and research happens all the time – these are "emerging" treatments. Some of today's most accepted methods or theories may not have been viewed positively at first. However, some information circulating can be very compelling and not true or not safe. Be wary of treatments that are only offered by one entity at a significant cost.

As you come across information, to be an informed consumer, look at the source of the information, question the validity and proceed with a degree of skepticism. Be willing to check out a variety of options and opinions before committing to one viewpoint, intervention or therapy.

One important consideration in evaluating any service is what it may mean for your family – time, money and impact on lifestyle. There is an important balance between activities that build your child's interests and strengths with those that are focused on weak areas.



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