

# Support for the National Standards



## The National Autism Center is pleased to share support for the National Standards Project from individuals and organizations throughout the country.

““ After an autism diagnosis, families are extremely overwhelmed with the sheer number of treatments and therapies they find on the internet and through other resources. Families have waited a long time for something like the National Standards Project, which will provide direction for parents and educators so they can be confident in their decisions, and not waste valuable time and money on unproven treatments. The Project also recognizes the fact that every child responds differently to treatments and encourages families to rely on other factors in addition to research findings.””

–Lisa Borges  
Executive Director, The Doug Flutie, Jr.  
Foundation for Autism, Inc.  
Framingham, Mass.

““ As a speech pathologist, I found The National Standards Project Report to be particularly helpful as it described, scientifically, Established Treatment options and identified the common process they employed. Armed with the knowledge that the preponderance of evidence supports behaviorally based interventions, I am now able to boldly go forward with my “less traditional” speech and language treatment approaches. This report has also encouraged me to try a variety of new behavior based strategies knowing that the foundation on which these interventions were developed is indeed “best practice.” I highly recommend that this document be reviewed by all professionals involved in the treatment of ASDs and believe that students and interns should adopt this document as their autism intervention Bible.””

–Jennifer L. Brock, M.S., CCC-SLP  
Speech Language Pathologist  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, Neb.

““ The marriage of service and science has always been a priority of the authors of the National Standards Project (NSP). In order to treat persons with autism in an ethical manner, we *must* have the science to back up *all* that we do. This NSP may be the most important document that parents and practitioners ever read and the most important weapon in their arsenal to fight autism.””

–Marjorie H. Charlop, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology, Claremont McKenna College  
Director, The Claremont Autism Center  
Claremont, Calif.

““ The Findings and Conclusions Report represents an invaluable resource to parents, educators, service providers, and others in search of comprehensive information about “what works” in the education and treatment of individuals with ASD. It is at once scientific, succinct, and easily accessible. In addition to developing a user-friendly guide to inform practice within the context of four hierarchical categories of scientific rigor, this volume serves as a foundation from which to build as consumers consider implications for both research and practice. I have no doubt that many will benefit from having this reference readily available to them as a bridge between what we have learned from past similar reports and what we still need to learn about the provision of services for individuals with ASD.””

–Richard J. Cowan, Ph.D., NCSP  
Associate Professor & Coordinator  
School Psychology Program, Kent State University  
School of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences  
Kent, Ohio

“...identifies the gaps in our knowledge about effective services for children with autism...”

“The National Standards Report is not the final word on treatment effectiveness in autism—indeed, it is intended to start rather than finish an important conversation—but it may be the best available word. It provides a snapshot of what the available research currently tells us and of what additional research is needed. It also reveals how thinking critically about evidence can lead to surprises in the form of both well-known interventions that lack adequate research support and controversial interventions that are better supported than critics might imply. Yes, we need well-trained professionals to deliver autism therapies, and we need researchers to empirically evaluate each therapy to the best of their ability. But we also desperately need systematic, integrative efforts like this one from the National Autism Center that help us to understand what existing efforts in treatment delivery and research are teaching us.”

—Thomas Critchfield, Ph.D.  
Past President, Association for Behavior Analysis International  
President-Elect, Division 25 of the American Psychological Association  
Normal, Ill.

“With the rapid rise of services for individuals with autism, it is critical that practitioners and families are provided objective information regarding the effectiveness of these services. It serves the very important function of protecting families and practitioners from unwarranted claims of effectiveness. This report identifies the gaps in our knowledge about effective services for children with autism and should guide researchers as they seek to fill these gaps.”

—Ronnie Detrich, Ph.D., BCBA  
Senior Fellow, Wing Institute  
Oakland, Calif.

“Given the complexity of children with autism, it is nice to know that we as providers can have a variety of research-based treatments from a variety of orientations that have been “established as effective” or that have “emerging support.” I look forward to future research in this area, especially concerning how these treatments have been applied outside research settings and what research has shown about their effectiveness when implemented outside a controlled environment.”

—Melanie DuBard, Ph.D., BCBA  
Psychologist, Kennedy Krieger School-Fairmount Campus  
Baltimore, Md.

“I predict that the National Standards Project Report will quickly become an invaluable resource for Developmental/Behavioral Pediatricians and other physicians who practice in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Our goal of providing evidence-based treatment for children with ASDs requires the integration of appropriate and effective biomedical and educational/behavioral treatments. The outcomes of this comprehensive project clearly report the evidence supporting educational and behavioral treatments and will greatly assist us as we collaborate with families, caregivers and other professionals in selecting the ‘best’ treatments for individual children with ASDs.”

—Cynthia R. Ellis, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry  
Munroe Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, Neb.

“...an important step toward defining practices  
that work...”

“In a field rife with fads, pseudoscience, and popular, yet unproven, interventions, the findings of the National Standards Project are a welcome and much-needed counterbalance to much of the hyperbole for both professionals and families. This thoughtful and comprehensive review of the peer-reviewed research on autism intervention confirms the effectiveness of interventions based on the principles of applied behavior analysis, highlights other interventions with promise, and places an appropriate warning label on those interventions with little, if any, research base. Given the unprecedented rate with which new research is being funded, conducted, and published, the only real challenge for National Autism Center is to now keep updating their findings so they stay as valid and useful as they are today.”

–Peter F. Gerhardt, Ed.D.  
President & Chair, Scientific Council  
Organization for Autism Research  
Arlington, Va.

“We support the National Autism Center’s efforts in the creation of the National Standards Project. We believe the National Standards Report will help parents navigate the often confusing and sometimes conflicting information available on autism.”

–Cariann Harsh  
Director, Autism Division, Department of  
Developmental Services  
Boston, Mass.

“Children with autism deserve access to practices and strategies that are evidence-based. Too often trendy ideas have outstripped hard evidence. This report provides an important step toward defining practices that work, practices that are practical, and practices that can be adapted to fit local contexts, families, and children.”

–Robert Horner, Ph.D.  
Alumni-Knight Professor, Special Education  
Department of Special Education and Clinical Sciences  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Ore.

“The National Standards Report provides a resource that is unsurpassed in its usefulness. With the information from this systematic, intense review of the available ASD treatment research, I now feel confident in making treatment recommendations to families and implementing treatment strategies in my practice. It is a resource that should be utilized by all practitioners working with families who have children on the autism spectrum, and is written in a very user-friendly format that creates easy accessibility for both practitioners and families.”

–Melissa Hunter, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist, SunPointe Health  
State College, Pa.

“As a special education teacher, I find the National Standards Report to be extremely beneficial in helping to provide a meaningful education for my students as well as useful research-based resource to share with parents. It is helpful knowing that there are 11 Established Treatments that have proven evidence of effectiveness. As teachers and parents are faced with so many choices, being able to focus on the treatments that are effective saves both time and disappointment.”

–Jennifer Jettner, M.Ed.  
HOPE Educator of the Year, Autism Society West Shore 2009  
Spring Lake, Mich.

“I have long been a supporter of increased evidence-based research to better detect and treat those affected by autism. I commend the work the National Autism Center is doing to promote research and education and provide resources to the families living each day with the realities of this disease. There is still much work to be done, and I will continue to support policies to treat all disorders on the autism spectrum.”

–Senator John Kerry  
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

“...this report is the most comprehensive, critical review of the literature...”

“ The National Standards Project is a vitally important effort. As the parent of a newly diagnosed child, I found myself overwhelmed with the sheer volume of information that I needed to absorb. The National Standards Project provides a coherent, evidence-based guide to treatment approaches for ASD, and I am certain it will remain an essential reference for our family as we advocate for our son’s best interests.”

–Regina LaRocque, M.D., M.P.H.  
Parent of a child on the autism spectrum  
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases  
Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School  
Boston, Mass.

“ Every day at Autism New Jersey, we hear from parents and professionals who desperately want to provide the most effective interventions for their loved one(s) or learner(s) with autism spectrum disorders. The National Standards Project objectively analyzes the evidence behind each treatment. This invaluable resource should empower caregivers with the confidence that they are focusing their financial and emotional resources on the treatments that are most likely to be successful. We’re pleased to add the National Standards Project to our arsenal of support for the autism community.”

–Linda Meyer, Ed.D., M.P.A., BCBA-D, CPT  
Executive Director  
Autism New Jersey  
Ewing, N.J.

“ The findings of the National Standards Project are presented in a fair and balanced manner, with limitations and caveats clearly explained. I believe this report and future versions will provide parents and practitioners with a clear, empirically guided tool to aid in their decision making when choosing appropriate treatments for individuals with ASD.”

–Victoria Moore, Psy.D.  
Clinical Evaluator  
Southeast Missouri State University Autism Center  
for Diagnosis and Treatment  
Cape Girardeau, Mo.

“ In an era when everyone is asking ‘Where’s the evidence?’ about treatments for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the results of the National Standards Project provide the answers in a clearly articulated, understandable, and thorough report. To date, this report is the most comprehensive, critical review of the literature on focused intervention practices involving participants with ASD. It will provide guidance for service providers and families in search of the most efficacious practices. I expect this report will be a tool that is used to guide practice well into the future.”

–Samuel L. Odom, Ph.D.  
Director, FPG Child Development Institute  
Principal Investigator, National Professional Development Center  
on Autism Spectrum Disorders  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

“ After getting a diagnosis of autism, the first question we had is “What do we do now?” This information from the National Standards Project can help answer that question. It contains information that parents can use to decide which treatment(s) best fit their child.”

–Parent of a child on the autism spectrum  
Millard, Neb.

“ This very thorough analysis will be helpful to both families and clinicians in navigating the maze of treatments for children with autism spectrum disorders.”

–Deirdre B. Phillips  
Executive Director, Autism Consortium  
Boston, Mass.

“...should be embraced by the health care community at large as the benchmark work that it is.”

“The National Standards Project fills an important gap in our current practice standards, by providing families and professionals a succinct tool for comparing the evidence basis of different treatments. The project has accomplished the impressive feat of summarizing the available treatment literature in an intelligent and highly usable format. Not only does the reader learn about whether a given treatment has scientific support in general; that information has been further described by diagnosis, age, and the behaviors or skills that are impacted. It is a monumental endeavor that will be truly helpful for families looking for information about the utility of the myriad treatments available for autism spectrum disorders. I look forward to being able to share this information with the families I work with and the health service providers I train.”

– Jennifer Phillips, Ph.D.  
Director of Assessment Training  
Stanford Autism Center at Packard Children’s Hospital  
Clanford, Calif.

“Individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families expect that an evidence base to ensure appropriate interventions guide the professionals who work with them. The National Standards Project has been a thoughtful, rigorous process over the course of several years to create a document through careful analysis of the available research to provide this needed guidance. It is a significant contribution to the autism community in identifying those interventions most likely to lead to positive change for individuals affected by autism.”

– Patricia A. Prelock, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Professor, Communication Sciences  
Dean, College of Nursing & Health Sciences  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, Vt.

“Families and professionals have traditionally faced a daunting task in determining the best course of treatment for children and adolescents with autism. The results of the National Standards Project provide a long-awaited yardstick against which to measure possible treatment options. Established treatments have been identified as best practices and favorable outcomes have been described for specific skills, reducing deficits, different age groups, and the three diagnostic populations falling on the autism spectrum. The Standards are a useful tool for treatment selection in concert with family preferences and professional evaluations. This level of guidance holds huge promise to maximize the possibility that the best treatment can be selected for each individual with autism.”

– Dennis C. Russo, Ph.D., ABPP  
Professional Advisory Board member, May Institute  
Head of Behavioral Medicine, Department of Family Medicine at  
Brody School of Medicine, East Carolina University,  
Greenville, N.C.

“Although much emphasis is being placed these days on ‘evidence-based practice,’ to most it is still a popular term to be somehow embraced, and yet is poorly understood. True evidence-based analysis requires pain-staking efforts at data collection and analysis that must be tempered with a deep understanding of the subject analyzed. In this document, the National Autism Center has succeeded in such an endeavor. This publication detailing suggested National Standards for the assessment of treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorders gets it right. The data analysis is impeccable, and the conclusions are as close to biased-free as can possibly be. The findings and conclusions should be embraced by the health care community at large as the benchmark work that it is.”

– G. Bradley Schaefer, MD, FAAP, FACMG  
Professor of Genetics and Pediatrics  
Founding Director, Division of Genetics  
University of Arkansas for Medical Science  
Little Rock, Ark.

“...the National Autism Center has succeeded in deriving a definition of evidence-based practice...”

““ The National Standards Report is a welcome and much-needed resource in the sea of confusion and misinformation often surrounding the education and treatment of individuals with Autism. This critical appraisal of the state of the evidence for the most commonly used treatment and educational approaches, and strategies, will provide professionals and families with a tool to assist in assuring that valuable time and resources are devoted to bringing evidence-based instruction to learners with the most challenges.”

–Cathy Scutta, M.S., OTR/L, BCBA  
Lead Consultant, Autism Initiative and CLM Project  
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network  
Harrisburg, Pa.

““ As I read the National Standards Report, I experienced feelings of gratefulness, validation, and hope. Gratefulness that professionals qualified to speak on the topic of treatment and intervention in autism had identified a systematic approach that would serve to guide and direct future efforts. Validation that many of my personal experiences and decisions in working with my son and his providers were (and are) reflective of an aspiration to established treatment practices. Hope that the collaborative efforts demonstrated within this report are indicative of a continuum of progress eventually leading to mainstream acceptance, implementation and support of established treatments for individuals with autism all across our country.”

–Dawn Sidell, RN, BSN  
Parent of a child on the autism spectrum  
Executive Director  
Northwest Autism Center  
Spokane, Wash.

““ The National Standards Report does an incredible job of pulling together a huge amount of information regarding intervention for individuals with autism into a clear, readable, and most importantly, useful document. The explanation of the process is clear, and the intervention studies have been well specified to help treatment providers and families learn more about specific interventions and the research support behind them. The report offers a balanced view of research, family priorities, child needs, and clinical judgment in the section on how to choose specific treatment methods.”

–Aubyn C. Stahmer, Ph.D., BCBA-D  
Child and Adolescent Services Research Center  
Rady Children’s Hospital  
San Diego, Calif.

““ The National Standards Project is the most comprehensive analysis ever conducted about treatments for children and adolescents with an autism spectrum disorder. The National Standards Report provides the clear answers families need when making treatment choices. It presents accurate, up-to-date information on which treatments have the most evidence of effectiveness in a format that is easy for non-clinical individuals to understand. This will simplify the often overwhelming task parents face when deciding which interventions to use and provide reassurance that they are making the best choices for their children.”

–Phillip S. Strain  
Director, Positive Early Learning Experiences (PELE) Center  
Professor, Ed. Psych & Early Childhood SPED  
University of Colorado, Denver  
Denver, Colo.

“ This should be a treasured reference for parents and professionals alike.”

“ Educated families and other consumers have increased the demand to close the gap between research and practice and to truly establish standard guidelines for evidence-based practice specific to individuals with ASD. Through a comprehensive and multi-tiered process involving a number of well-respected researchers and clinicians in the field, the National Autism Center has succeeded in deriving a definition of evidence-based practice to most effectively classify and categorize treatment studies within a phenomenally written document that is accessible to layperson, clinician, and researcher alike. This will be an essential document for parents, healthcare professionals, school personnel, and members of the scientific community in making important decisions about intervention.”

– Naomi B. Swiezy, Ph.D., HSPP  
Clinical Director, Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center  
Riley Hospital for Children and the  
Indiana University School of Medicine  
Indianapolis, Ind.

“ In the often contentious field of autism, the National Standards Project has produced a thoughtful, user-friendly evaluation of commonly recommended treatments, complete with recommendations for choosing the best one(s), limitations of their work, and a promise to expand their scope in the near future. This should be a treasured reference for parents and professionals alike.”

– Jo Webber, Ph.D.  
Professor, Special Education  
Executive Director, Clinic for Autism Research, Evaluation,  
and Support (CARES)  
College of Education, Texas State University  
San Marcos, Tex.

“ This report gives us guidance in taking our first steps toward developing a treatment plan for our child. We feel confident that we are making the best choices for our son, since the information in this report is derived from sound scientific study. Once the sting from the autism diagnosis has subsided, and as a parent you are able to move forward, this information is your next step.”

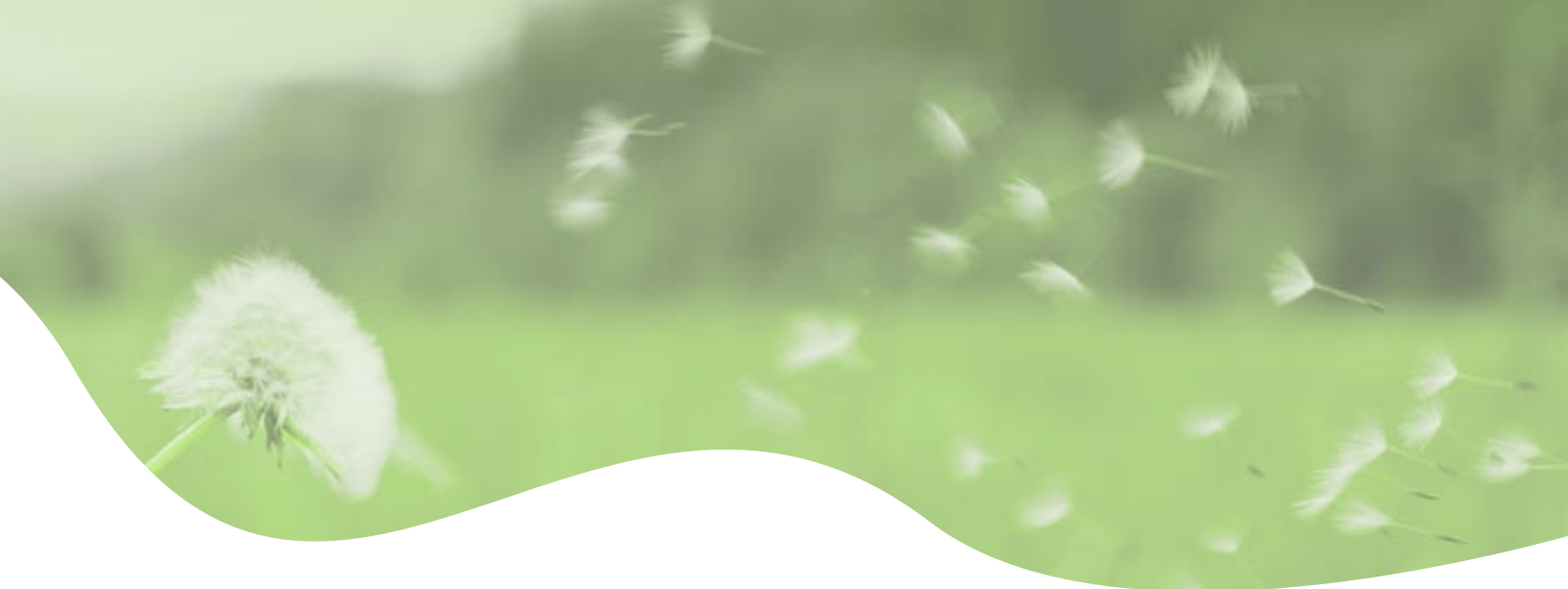
– Rebecca Woodcock, M.Ed.  
Parent of a child with autism  
Grade 2 Special Needs Teacher  
Fall River, Mass.

“ The No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) Act mandates that educators use scientifically based research methods. Prior to this report is has been difficult for professionals and families to identify and evaluate commonly used interventions for students on the spectrum. The National Standards Report provides a comprehensive, unbiased analysis of the treatments available. It will be an invaluable resource for school districts and others in the field of autism spectrum disorders.”

– Annette Wragge  
State Coordinator, NE ASD Network  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln  
Lincoln, Neb.

“ Individuals with autism can and do lead meaningful, productive lives. Effective services and supports in childhood can contribute greatly to life outcomes. With the plethora of information available, it is incredibly difficult for families and professionals to discern an appropriate treatment path. The National Standards Project will provide guidance, encourage families and service providers to make informed decisions, and promote the use of evidence-based treatments. And, with the implementation of these standards, our outcome will be citizens with autism who move into adulthood with increased skills and the ability to contribute their talents to our diverse communities.”

– Patricia Wright, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
National Director, Autism Services, Easter Seals, Inc.  
Chicago, Ill.



## About the National Autism Center

The National Autism Center is one of May Institute's centers for service, training, and research. It is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting effective, evidence-based treatment approaches for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and to providing direction to families, practitioners, organizations, policy-makers, and funders. The Center's goal is to serve individuals with ASD by responding to the rising demand for reliable information and by providing comprehensive resources for families and communities.



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