



It takes a community to raise a child. To raise a child with ASD takes a community who are knowledgeable, committed and prepared to work together. No single person can do it alone.

What is tips for autism?

tips for autism is a course where the people in a child's community learn together about their child, about ASD and how their child learns. Over three days they work together to develop an immediate and long-term plan to help their child to be able to learn, participate in and contribute to their community.

Why is it important that there is a team?

Children with ASD need consistency and structure in order to learn new skills. When different people are using different strategies (even if they appear similar), the child can spend their time trying to cope with or make sense of the situation rather than learning.

If the people who know the child best can agree on an effective approach and educate other people around them, the child will be able to learn new skills and participate and contribute in their classroom, home and community settings.

What are the criteria and how much does it cost?

The course is free to participants and available for teams who support students aged between 5 and 12 years. tips for autism is funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Some funding is also available for teams' expenses, for example, as a contribution to teacher release costs.

Who should come?

The child's parent and school representative (teacher) must attend and there is no maximum number who can attend (the more people who know the child well, the better the outcome).

Teams can include other family members, people who work with the child in respite or recreation settings, teacher aides, health and other professionals, behaviour support staff, special education needs co-ordinators, etc. At the course, we also look at developing information to help other people who work with the child to use the same strategies.

What is the evidence?

The course is based on up-to-date international evidence, adapted to meet the needs of New Zealand children, the New Zealand curriculum, teachers and classrooms and is fully consistent with *The New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline* (2008).

Ki te kotahi te kaakaho ka whati, ki te kapuia e kore e whati

- *Standing alone a kaakaho is broken easily; several bound together will never be broken*
- Unified in thought and process, coming together to achieve dreams and aspirations

Course location details and applications are available on the website: www.tipsforautism.org.nz



Massey University has completed a 3-year evaluation of the programme which is available from the Ministry of Education's *Education Counts* website (http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/special_education/evaluation-of-the-tips-for-autism)

The evaluation concluded that tips for autism shows:

Over the three years of the evaluation all data sources confirmed that the 'tips for autism' course was considered a very valuable, high quality programme in respect to its content, design and delivery. A large majority of participants reported that it either met or exceeded their expectations. Areas identified as particular strengths included: multidisciplinary team structure and a focus that facilitated collaborative and interactive partnerships; skilled and credible facilitators; practical, relevant and informative content that was evidence- and research-based; strong design; and its child-focus including the opportunity the course provided to concentrate on the interests, strengths, goals and education support needs of a single child.

What if I already know about ASD?

It doesn't matter how much or how little you know because the focus is on where your student and your team are at. Each person plays an important role in the team. You'll learn more about your student, about each other and about the impact of ASD. By the end of the course, you'll feel confident that you're all heading in the same direction, are focused on your student, and are supported to understand and resolve the problems and distractions that come along.

Who runs the course?

The course is co-facilitated by a special education professional (Ministry of Education, Special Education staff or Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour or similar) and a parent who is also qualified as a teacher. They are both experienced facilitators, tuned in to the latest evidence, and have real life examples to make theory practical.

What happens at the course?

tips for autism is not prescriptive and is based on theory to practice learning rather than lecturing. There is plenty of opportunity for discussion and practical application of what you learn – about half the time is spent working with your team. Resource material is available at different levels and individualised to meet the needs of different children's strengths and interests. You only share information about your particular child/student within your team, not with the full group.

Where are the courses held?

There are about 26 courses held nationwide each year. For information about course locations and to download applications, go to www.tipsforautism.org.nz and look under the heading "Courses" or email us asking for more information at tipsfor.autism@minedu.org.nz.

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If there is no course scheduled in your area, you could help to organise one (information about registering your interest as a participant or course organiser is also on the website).

Course content

Each session follows a set pattern:

- a 'chalk and talk' presented by a facilitator, which gives key information for the topic
- a team activity to focus on assessing each individual child's strengths and needs in this area
- demonstration of a range of practical evidence-based strategies, supports and resources
- a team activity to plan a goal for the child using the strategies
- each participant receives a course workbook containing slides, worksheets and resources and participants can also access resources used on the course through the website.

What else do we need to know?

- The cost of the course is funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. In addition, the school in each team is able to claim \$150 per day (\$600 plus GST per course) as a contribution towards the expenses of team members, for example, towards teacher release costs or parents' childcare or petrol costs. Each team will receive a form at the course explaining how to claim the payment after the course is completed.
- Participants are responsible for their own lunch, any childcare and transport costs.
- After all the applications have been received, we will let you know if your team has a place at the course. Each participant named on the application will get a letter of confirmation outlining the dates, times and venue for the course.
- You will also get some pre-reading and further information. There are usually 6-8 teams on each course (between 25 and 40 participants). Each team works together and information about individual children is only shared amongst those who support that child.
- There is some homework before the course and after each day. This is usually a small amount (1-2 pages) of material to read.
- Each participant will be asked to sign a form on the first day agreeing to the following:
 - The course is for 3 days (9.00am – 3.00pm) and all participants must agree to attend all sessions unless prior arrangements have been agreed.
 - Information shared in the sessions must remain confidential and not be disclosed outside the sessions. tips for autism will not use any personal information without consent and participants have the right to request access to any records at any time.
 - Facilitators may need to ask for information about the child's history, assessments and interventions, but this information will not be used for any purpose other than to assist the team around that child.
 - Participants will be asked to complete feedback about the course. The feedback does not require you to identify yourself.

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