



TAP FAMILY SERVICES – Parent Guide

In-Home Support – How Does It Work?

Introduction to Services

The Transforming Autism Project (TAP) is a new autism charity with a focus on *early detection and intervention*. We offer a [distinctive and empowering conception of autism](#) that challenges the traditional view of autism as an impairment and emphasizes the great potential inherent within each autistic child.

Our new Family Services are designed to unlock and nurture that potential, and to facilitate the best possible quality of life and future prospects of happiness and success for each child.

The interventions we offer do not treat autism as illness or aim to modify a child's behaviour. Instead we propose a respectful approach that is designed to unlock an autistic child's inner potential to live a contented and fulfilling life, and provide the emotional support to overcome any challenges or obstacles that may be in the way of this.

What Is the In-Home Support and What's Unique About It?

This is Transforming Autism's first direct face-to-face support programme and the cornerstone of our new Family Services.

We propose therapy in the home environment because that's the best way a therapist can really focus on the dynamics of the family and tune into the child and their needs in their own environment.

An experienced specialist child mental-health professional will visit the family home on a weekly basis for one hour to work with the family and the child with a view to improving mutual understanding, reducing the child's anxiety, improving relationships and giving the child the best possible opportunities for growth and personal development.

We focus on crucial factors for a child's wellbeing that are traditionally neglected by conventional approaches, but which we understand to be central to the optimal development of a child, including:

- Helping parents to [understand their child's experience and what they are attempting to communicate](#)

- Helping parents to know and feel confident in *understanding & responding to their child's needs*
- Creating a *nurturing trust-based relationship* between parent and child
- Creating a *safe, accepting environment* around the child

Our therapists will first observe and get to know the child and parent(s) at home, and then support the parents in the areas above, working themselves with the child as part of this process. A treatment plan will be drawn up for each family and regularly reviewed to ensure we're doing the very best we can.

How Long Do We Work With Each Family?

The optimal length of time for the service can vary considerably from family to family and will be continually reviewed. Typically, a longer-term relationship is the best way to see the most significant results that can then be sustained. We will have regular checkpoints with each of our families to understand and decide together whether we should continue, adapt or end the service at this point. We envisage that there will be 48 sessions per family per year.

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Who Are Our Therapists?

Our therapists are all registered child mental health professionals and have experience and deep understanding of working with autistic children, and they all resonate deeply with Transforming Autism's approach to autism.

They all use a holistic and integrative child-psychotherapy approach, meaning they bring together many theories and practices of working with children, all of them focused on building relationships with the child and family and focusing on their social and emotional development and well-being (as opposed to training them in specific desired behaviours). They are likely to use play as a primary means of communicating and establishing an ongoing relationship with the child.

You will soon be able to meet our therapists, see a short video introduction from each of them, as well as webinars that they have recorded for our families on the webinars page of our website – <https://transformingautism.org/webinars/> You can also find out which areas each of them operates in.

Why Are We Offering This Service?

Feedback from the Autism Parenting Community has highlighted a real gap in the support available to them in terms of being able to manage daily life with their children. Like these parents (and many of us are Autism Parents ourselves), we deeply recognise this lack, and understand the profound difference this sort of support could make in the lives of autistic children and their families.

What Results Can Be Expected?

Our services aim to bring about the following benefits for the participants:

For the Parents:

- Better and deeper understanding of their child
- Deeper emotional connection with their child
- Confidence in how to parent therapeutically
- A better understanding about stress triggers in their child, themselves and in the family system and how to prevent and reduce the stress
- New ways of relating with and enjoy being with their child
- A deeper ability to advocate for their children
- Support on collaborating with nursery/school

For the Children:

- A feeling of being truly understood
- Confidence and trust that their parents can look after their interests
- A stronger emotional connection with their parents
- A sense of safety in their environment
- Improved play and social communication skills
- Greater ability to manage triggers of stress their environment
- A better ability to manage their feelings
- More emotional resilience
- An ability to heal and recover from traumatic experiences
- A stronger sense of self and other
- A greater ability to self advocate

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How Does The Programme Work?

Week 1 – The first step is a longer (90 minutes rather than one hour) consultation with the parents alone to find out more about the particular situation and any difficulties that the child and family are facing, and their potential strengths to overcome them.

Weeks 2-5 – These will be introductory sessions where the therapist gets to know and understand the child and family more deeply, and engages with the child. During this period, the therapist will develop a much better feel for the dynamics in the family and a clear understanding of what is required to facilitate optimal development for the child. This period will also give parents and child the opportunity to assess whether they feel comfortable continuing to work with the therapist that has been assigned to them. In some cases, one of these sessions may be a nursery/school observation.

Week 6 – A review session to reflect on what has been learnt so far about the child and family's needs. This will lead to the creation of an individual treatment plan that will be implemented in the sessions that follow.

Thereafter, the programme will run in 6-weeks cycles, with the treatment plan being implemented for the first 5 weeks, and in the 6th week the treatment plan will be revisited and updated. A joint review session takes place where the parent and therapist reflect together on how the work has gone and whether any changes would be helpful. All sessions will be in person at the family home, though there is a possibility if necessary to occasionally conduct a review session by video-conference.

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What Do We Expect From Parents?

- Attendance at all sessions and be fully present and available to engage.
- Sufficient notice (to be agreed) if a session needs to be rearranged or cancelled (exceptions will usually be made and sessions rearranged in situations of sudden illness as long as the therapists are kept well-informed)
- Willingness to reflect, adjust and try something new.
- Willingness to work on a long-term basis in a child-led manner to support the building blocks of the development of their child (as oppose to training them isolated sets of "age appropriate" skills and adult led activities).
- Will complete feedback forms regarding the service.
- Will pay a small fee per session. The amount of this is to be decided, but it will cover a small part of the price of the services. Reductions will be available for families on means tested benefits.

Who Is Eligible for the In-Home Support?

Families with autistic children are eligible to apply for this service if they meet one of the following criteria:

- The child has an autism diagnosis
- The child is waiting for an autism assessment

We prioritise working with children from as early an age as possible, as we believe that this is when the most profound lifelong changes can be achieved. Therefore we prioritise younger children. We would generally expect that children accessing these services will be up to 5-6 years old, though places may be offered to slightly older children depending on availability.

Families must be within reasonable travelling distance for therapists to visit them. Below are areas that are covered or partially covered by our existing therapists. We are always looking to expand our reach, so please do register your interest even if you're not in one of these areas.

- North West London
- Buckinghamshire
- South-West London
- North-East Surrey
- Jersey

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How Do I Register My Interest?

Simply send an email to services@transformingautism.org stating your name, the age of your child, your location, a brief summary of your current situation and which of the eligibility criteria from above you meet.

What Happens Next?

Someone will get back to you to let you know if we're currently operating in your area. If we are and there's a potential space for you, then nearer the time the service launches, one of our therapists will call you to arrange a time to briefly talk over your situation. This will give both you and the therapists a better idea of whether this service is right for you.

What If There's Another Lockdown During The Programme?

If the visits need to be suspended, the therapists will instead offer to build on the foundations already established through the visits to offer instead parent support via video-conference until they are able to resume working with the family in person. These will be subject to the same financial contribution as the visits.

What If The Current Lockdown Is Still In Place At The Start Of The Programme?

The start of the In-Home support will need to be delayed until the lockdown is sufficiently lifted to allow such visits to take place.

Parents will be given the option either to wait, or to instead receive parent-support from their therapist on their autism parenting issues via video-conference until they are able to begin working in person with the family. These will be subject to the same financial contribution as the visits.

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What Other Services Does Transforming Autism Expect to Offer?

Our Family Services programme will also include an expansion of our current Webinar series, as well as the introduction in due course of parent-groups, where parents can receive support, share experiences and learn new skills – from the therapists, from each other, and through actions or principles they are given to implement at home and then report back on.

Our longer term plans include the creation of a comprehensive one-stop portal of carefully created support for Autism Parents on all areas of bringing up their autistic children, and eventually bringing Israel's pioneering Mifne early intervention autism Centre to the UK. The charity has been greatly influenced by work of the Mifne Centre, where the life of our CEO's family was transformed in 2011.

Please see our brochure for more details on our future plans – <https://transformingautism.org/brochure>

Additional Logistics

Use Of Recordings

It's often difficult to pick up on the nuances of a fast moving interaction while it's happening. For this reason, our therapists may propose to record parts of the sessions and use the recordings to help reflect with the parents on aspects of the relationship and what is going on for the child that would otherwise not be possible to notice. Some of our therapists have used videos for this purpose with great success, and it has the potential to dramatically increase the effectiveness of the therapy, and to help parents grasp aspects of their relationship with their child which are not easily obvious.

All videos will be kept confidential and not shared with anybody other than our therapists (and possibly their supervisors) and the family.

A video recording consent form will need to be signed by the parent/s before any recording is made. Parents should advise the therapist assigned to them if they are not comfortable with the use of video.

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How Much Does a Session Cost?

The charity is subsidising most of the cost of the service through its fundraising efforts. Parents will be expected to pay a contribution per visit (amount to be decided) towards the service. Those who can demonstrate that they are in receipt of means-tested benefits will be eligible for a reduction of up to 50%.

How Do I Make Payment?

Direct Debit details must be submitted to the charity when registering for the service.

What If I Want To Stop The Visits?

There'll be an opportunity to review how the visits are going at the 6-weekly review sessions. If at that time you feel it would be a good time to end the programme for your family, you can discuss this with the therapist, and may choose to end your participation, agreeing an ending plan with them, which would typically last a few weeks.