

Consultant, Approach and Plan

Professional and Personal Background

My work as an autism consultant has developed through the intersection of professional education, personal experience, and more than two decades of supporting children, families, and their teams.

I am a mother of an adult son on the autism spectrum, and I hold a medical degree as well as training in special education. Navigating the unique needs and challenges experienced by my son and our family in the late 1990s in Hamilton, Ontario, profoundly shaped both my personal and professional path.

My early work involved developing and implementing individualized approaches for my son and, subsequently, supporting other children with significant autism-related support needs. This experience also led me to connect with organizations in Ontario and British Columbia that support children and families living with significant disabilities.

Over the years, my work has increasingly focused on **education, empowerment, consultation, and capacity-building**—helping families and the people who support their children develop a deeper understanding of the individual child and identify meaningful ways to support learning, communication, participation, and emotional well-being.

Consultancy Approach

I have more than a decade of experience developing and implementing **Individualized Program Plans** and supporting families and teams with their implementation.

My primary experience has been with children who have limited or emerging communication, significant sensory needs, anxiety, and behaviours that may be difficult for families and support teams to understand or respond to.

My approach begins with understanding the individual child rather than applying a predetermined program. I consider the child's **sensory experiences, interests, communication, strengths, engagement, relationships, and emerging abilities** when identifying meaningful opportunities for exploration and learning.

Through individualized planning and ongoing observation, the aim is to support progress across relevant learning domains while also considering **emotional well-being, engagement, generalization, and meaningful participation in everyday life**.

As appropriate, the **AAPT framework** is used to help identify skills, organize observations, select meaningful priorities, and develop an individualized program plan.

For more than 20 years, I have also shared my experience and strategies through **workshops, webinars, discussion forums, and training**, supporting parents, professionals, and paraprofessionals both locally and internationally.

Consultancy based on AAPT is educational and supportive in nature and is intended to assist families and support teams with observation, understanding, individualized planning, implementation, and ongoing learning, with the help of AAPT Resources and my guidance. Consultancy does not replace medical diagnosis, psychological assessment, regulated clinical treatment, or other professional services that may be required. Families remain responsible for determining which additional services and supports are appropriate for their child.

AAPT – Autism Skill Assessment and Programming Tools

AAPT (Autism Skill Assessment and Programming Tools) is a 26-domain skill-tracking and programming framework created for children with autism and other early developmental delays.

AAPT was registered with **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) in 2018**. The framework provides a structured way to identify skills across 26 learning domains and to develop an individualized program plan based on the child's current abilities, needs, interests, and learning priorities.

The resulting program plan can include **measurable goals and objectives** and may be incorporated into an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other individualized support planning, where appropriate.

AAPT is intended to support a **child-centered, relationship-based approach**, with the child's individual profile helping to guide where and how learning begins.

What to Expect from the Consultation Process

The consultation process is individualized and may vary according to the child's needs, family priorities, existing supports, and goals. Where appropriate, the process may include:

1. AAPT Questionnaire

The AAPT questionnaire is completed with the participation of parents or primary caregivers to gather information about the child's history, strengths, interests, communication, sensory experiences, routines, and current areas of concern.

2. Identification of Relevant Domains

Relevant AAPT domains are identified based on the child's history, current abilities, family priorities, and information gathered through the initial consultation.

3. Individualized Observation

Where appropriate, objective-based observations of the child's sensory- and interest-based exploration and engagement are conducted.

This may involve approximately **four to six one-hour sessions**, depending on the individual circumstances and the goals of the consultation.

4. Initial Program Plan

An initial individualized support and learning plan is developed and shared with the family for discussion and consideration.

5. Customized Learning Supports

Where appropriate, customized materials may be developed, including **booklets, visual supports, communication materials, activity boards, and other learning supports**.

6. Implementation and Team Training

The family and members of the child's support team are supported in understanding and implementing the agreed-upon strategies, activities, and learning objectives.

7. Ongoing Consultation and Team Support

Follow-up consultation, team meetings, supervision, and review may be arranged according to the family's needs and the terms of the consultation agreement.

Consultation Fees are \$100 per hour

An initial six-month service contract is **not required**.

However, where appropriate, a six-month period may be recommended to allow sufficient time for observations, implementation, review, and evaluation of meaningful progress.

Consultation may be arranged on a **monthly or quarterly basis**, with meeting frequency and invoicing determined according to the client's needs, goals, support plan, and other relevant circumstances.

The consultation process is individualized, and specific services, frequency of meetings, observations, materials, and team support will be discussed and agreed upon before services begin.

A Collaborative Approach

The consultation process is intended to be collaborative.

Parents and caregivers bring important knowledge of the child's history, personality, preferences, routines, strengths, and everyday experiences. Professionals and support team members bring additional observations and areas of expertise.

Together, these perspectives can help create a more complete understanding of the child and support the development of meaningful, individualized goals.

The goal is not simply to teach more skills. It is to understand the child, recognize where learning can begin, and create opportunities for meaningful participation, connection, communication, and growth.

Contact

For further information or to discuss consultation availability:

Saima Ijaz

Autism Consultant

sijaz@autismsolutions.info