

WHAT IS AN NDBI?

NDBI stands for Naturalistic Developmental Behavioural Intervention.

NDBIs are evidence-informed interventions designed primarily for young autistic children, combining principles from developmental science with applied behaviour analysis (ABA). They are delivered within natural, everyday activities and are designed to support development while respecting the child's interests, communication, and motivation.

1 WHAT MAKES AN INTERVENTION “NDBI”?

NDBIs typically:

- Follow the child's interests and motivation
- Take place in natural environments and routines
- Use play and everyday activities as opportunities for learning
- Incorporate developmental goals such as communication, social interaction, play, imitation, and joint attention
- Use behavioural strategies such as reinforcement, prompting, shaping, and naturalistic teaching
- Create frequent opportunities for child choice and initiation
- Involve caregivers as active partners
- Individualize teaching based on the child's developmental level and strengths

2 A NEUROAFFIRMING PERSPECTIVE

NDBI does not mean making a child appear more neurotypical or requiring behaviours such as eye contact, stillness, or compliance for their own sake.

A neuroaffirming approach focuses on meaningful outcomes such as:

communication • autonomy • connection • participation • learning • wellbeing

For example, rather than requiring a child to make eye contact before receiving a favourite toy, an NDBI approach might use the child's interest in the toy to create a natural opportunity for communication and shared engagement.

NDBI brings learning into the child's world—using their interests, relationships, and everyday activities to support meaningful development.