

**Autism Resolution Ontario's One-Year Challenge to the Ontario government:
Make sufficient and personalized provincially subsidized ABA available
to children with autism where and when they need it by World Autism Awareness Day 2010**

Between now and next World Autism Awareness Day, ARO challenges the Government of Ontario to make significant progress towards a well-designed, integrated, funded and managed set of services for children with autism in Ontario. ARO invites the government to meet with us to discuss our proposals, and to engage in a constructive dialogue aimed at achieving these goals within this timeframe. Below are some practical, cost-effective solutions based on existing studies and reports that the government can use to make ABA more accessible to children with autism. More details can be found in our whitepaper, *Making ABA More Accessible to Children in Ontario with Autism*, available at www.autismresolutionontario.com.

1. Early Detection and Immediate Intervention

- √ Adopt the Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT) and begin training paediatric primary health-care workers in its use.
- √ Adopt mandatory early screening for autism at 18 and 24 months.
- √ Include a psychologist's assessment for autism under OHIP.
- √ Create a website listing all qualified medical doctors and psychologists who can assess and diagnosis autism as a public reference, to ensure more efficient and effective use of provincial resources.
- √ Begin training paediatricians to perform basic assessments needed to confirm a diagnosis of autism.

2. Prompt and Sufficient Pre-school Intensive Intervention

- √ All children who show signs of developmental delay and autism should be immediately eligible for intensive early intervention programs.
- √ Create a new provincial organisation to oversee the Autism Intervention Program.
- √ Eliminate the two-tier (DFO/DSO) structure and create one common set of policies and procedures for all service providers to follow, from intake to discharge.

3. Smooth and Personalized Transition to School

- √ Create guidelines to allow for personalized and flexible school-transition plans that are based on ability instead of age, and allow for children's gradual integration into regular classrooms.
- √ Allow IBI therapists to provide IBI to children in school as necessary to enable smooth transitions.
- √ Adopting the funding policy of *Let the Funding Follow the Children*, as outlined by the Fraser Institute, to quickly access school placements for more children, and to create specialized individual programs public schools can use for complex cases.
- √ Require all school boards to prepare and implement a plan for supporting students with autism — 1% of their current total enrolment — using evidenced-based best practices (ABA) for teaching children with autism.

4. A well-designed, effective and professionally delivered school-based ABA program

- √ The Ministry of Education must move quickly to establish IBI classrooms across the province. All boards should, by the 2010/11 school year, be required to have IBI classrooms in place.
- √ Ask all school boards to consider creating alternative schools for autism, within their board, with programs specifically designed to meet the needs of children with autism who are not (yet) good candidates for full integration into regular classrooms.
- √ Mandate that special education funding to school boards be used exclusively for special education, and that they publicly account for how their special education dollars are spent.
- √ Establish a distinct category of Special Needs Assistant who will specialize in working with children with autism, and be required to have a recognised ABA certification or completion of ABA training from one of Ontario's community college programs.
- √ Make classrooms follow the students: Require school boards to collect the necessary information to understand where children with specific disabilities live, so that programs can be placed where they're most convenient to the population, rather than where school principals are willing to accept them.
- √ Allow a child's outside ABA therapists into schools in the same way other professionals are permitted (speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists) with explicit rights to evaluate individual children in their classroom setting and make recommendations to teachers, educational assistants and school administration.