



**Easy  
Read**

# Autism in Canada: Considerations for future public policy development

**Weaving together evidence and lived experience**



May 2022

Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

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# What we did

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The government of Canada wants to know more about how to support Autistic people and their families.



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So, the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences studied research and reports about autism.



Canadian Academy of Health Sciences  
Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé



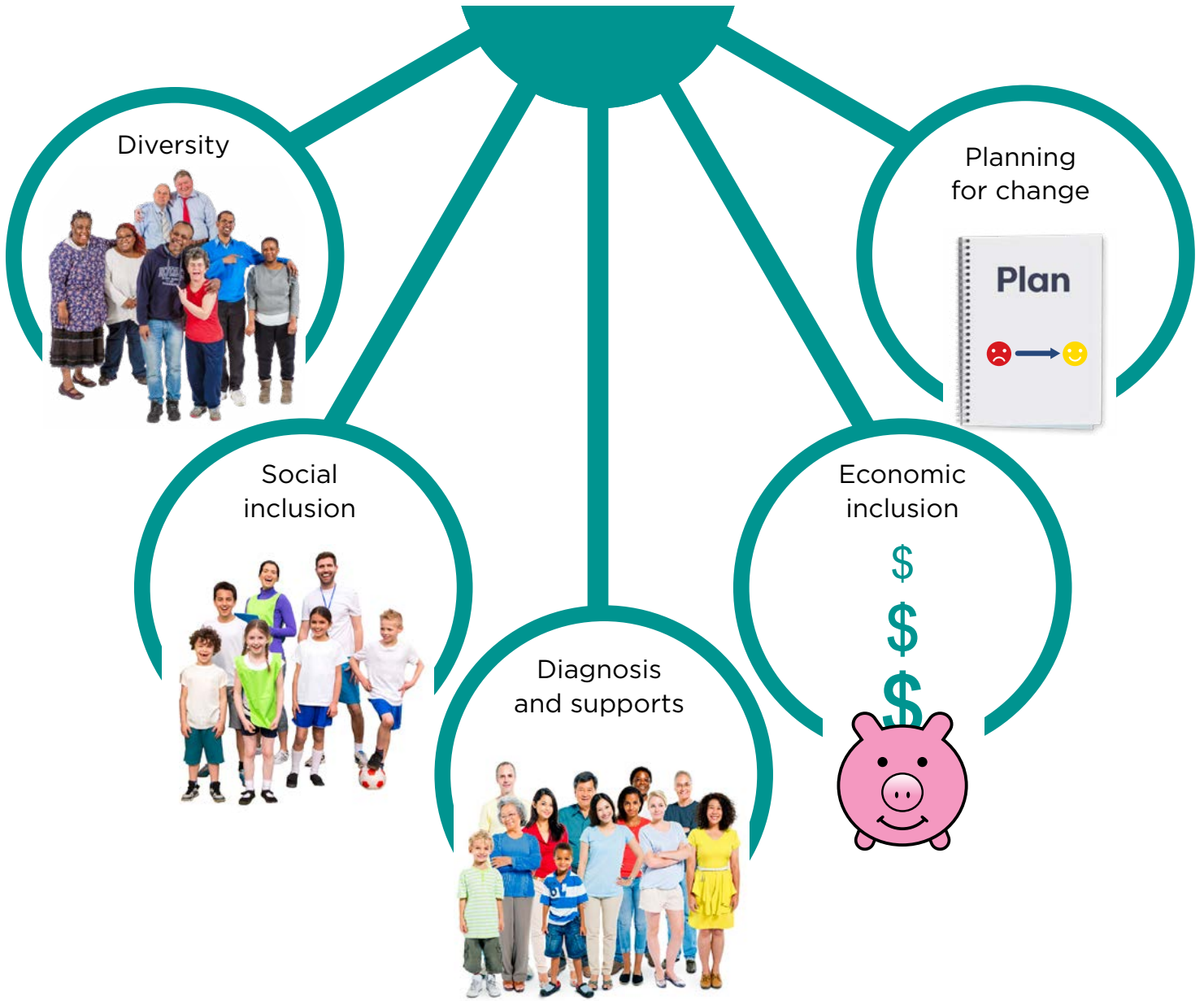
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We also talked to a lot of Canadians, including these people:

- Autistic people and their families
- service providers
- researchers
- organizations



We learned about 5 topics



# Diversity

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We are all different in many ways.



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All these differences create **diversity**.



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These differences are a good thing.  
But sometimes it can make it harder  
to get autism supports.



We learned that it's important for autism supports to meet the extra needs that may come with some differences.

### Language needs

The screenshot shows the British Columbia COVID-19 website with content in English, Chinese, French, and other languages. Key sections include:
 

- B.C.'s response to COVID-19**: Home > COVID-19 > Guidance and support >
- Rapid antigen testing Get your bo kits dose**: Everyone 18+ can get free rapid antigen testing kits from a community pharmacy. A booster dose helps lengthen your protect severe illness.
- Réponse de la Colombie-Britannique**: Dernière mise à jour: 23 mars 2022. Pour une information actualisée, veuillez consulter la page en anglais.
- Trousseau de dépistage antigénique rapide**: Toute personne âgée de 18 ans et plus peut obtenir gratuitement des trousses de dépistage antigénique rapide d'une pharmacie de sa communauté.
- Recevez votre dose de rappel**: Une dose de rappel permet de maintenir et de prolonger votre protection contre une maladie grave.

### Learning needs



### Housing needs



# Indigenous Peoples

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Indigenous Peoples of Canada accept people with many differences, including Autistic people.



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We can learn from Indigenous Peoples how to accept Autistic people.



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But, Indigenous Autistic people and their families often have to go far away from their homes to get the supports they need.



# Social inclusion

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Social inclusion means you feel like you belong in your community. You feel safe and accepted.



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That means that people include you in activities you want or need to do.



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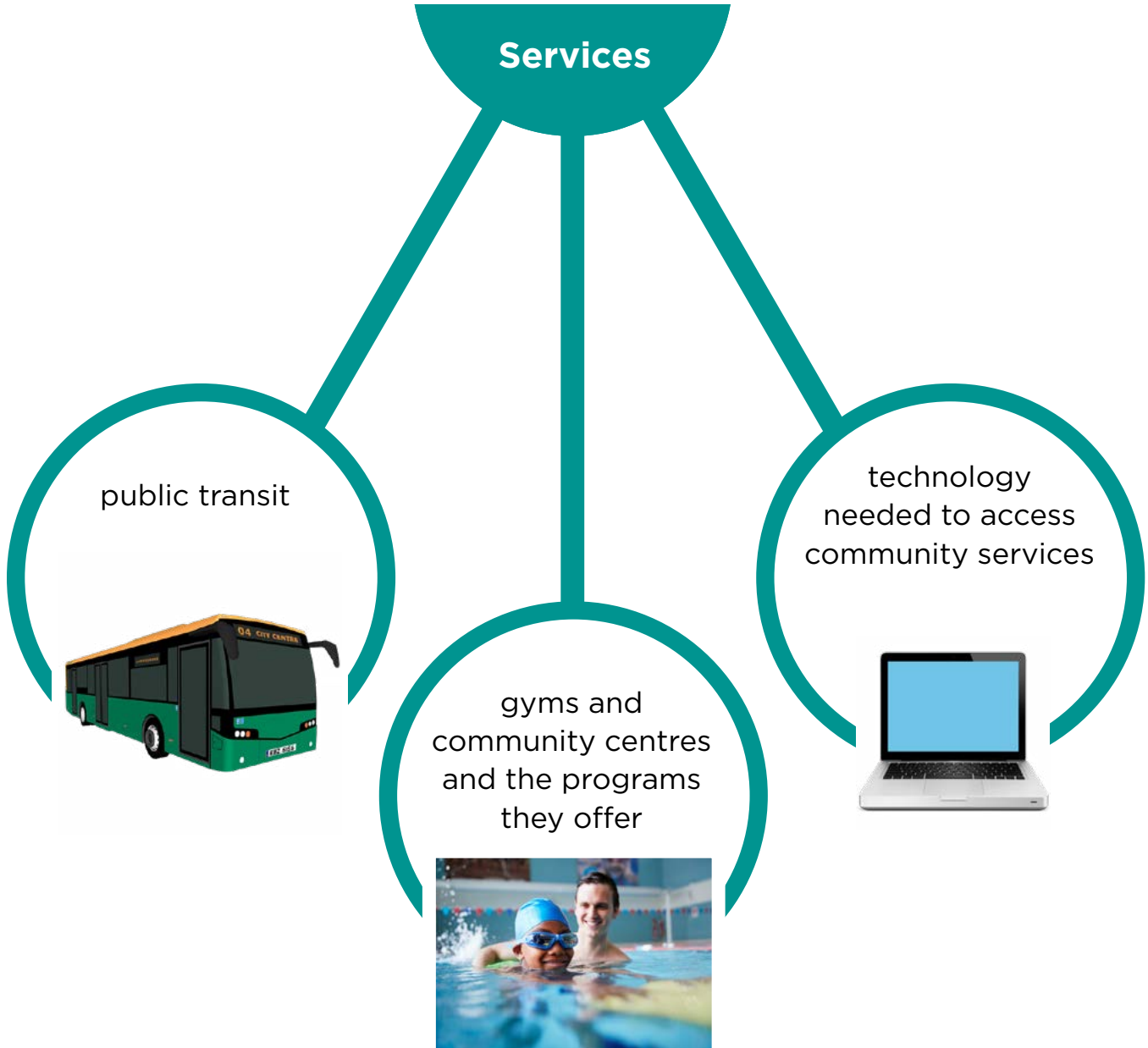
Social inclusion also means that you can **take part in community activities**. For example: You can go to places you want or need to go. You can be with the people you like or need to see.





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**Many Autistic people do not feel accepted  
because these services do not meet their needs:**



## How to help non-autistic people ACCEPT the Autistic people in their communities

Help non-autistic people to accept autism as a difference, **not** an illness.



Recognize that Autistic people contribute to the community but also sometimes need support.



Make sure training is available for people who support Autistic people.



Support Autistic people as they make decisions about their own lives.



## How to keep Autistic people SAFE

Communities can work with Autistic people to do these things:

- Design **spaces** where Autistic people feel like they belong.
- Develop **programs** that are easy for Autistic people to take part in.



Help Autistic people to see, understand, and act when decisions may hurt them.



Police and paramedics can learn the best ways to keep Autistic people safe. Police and paramedics can learn from Autistic people and their families.



## How to help Autistic people TAKE PART in community activities

Ask Autistic people and family members how to make community services easier for them to use.



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For example, ask Autistic people what would help them to take the bus or train.

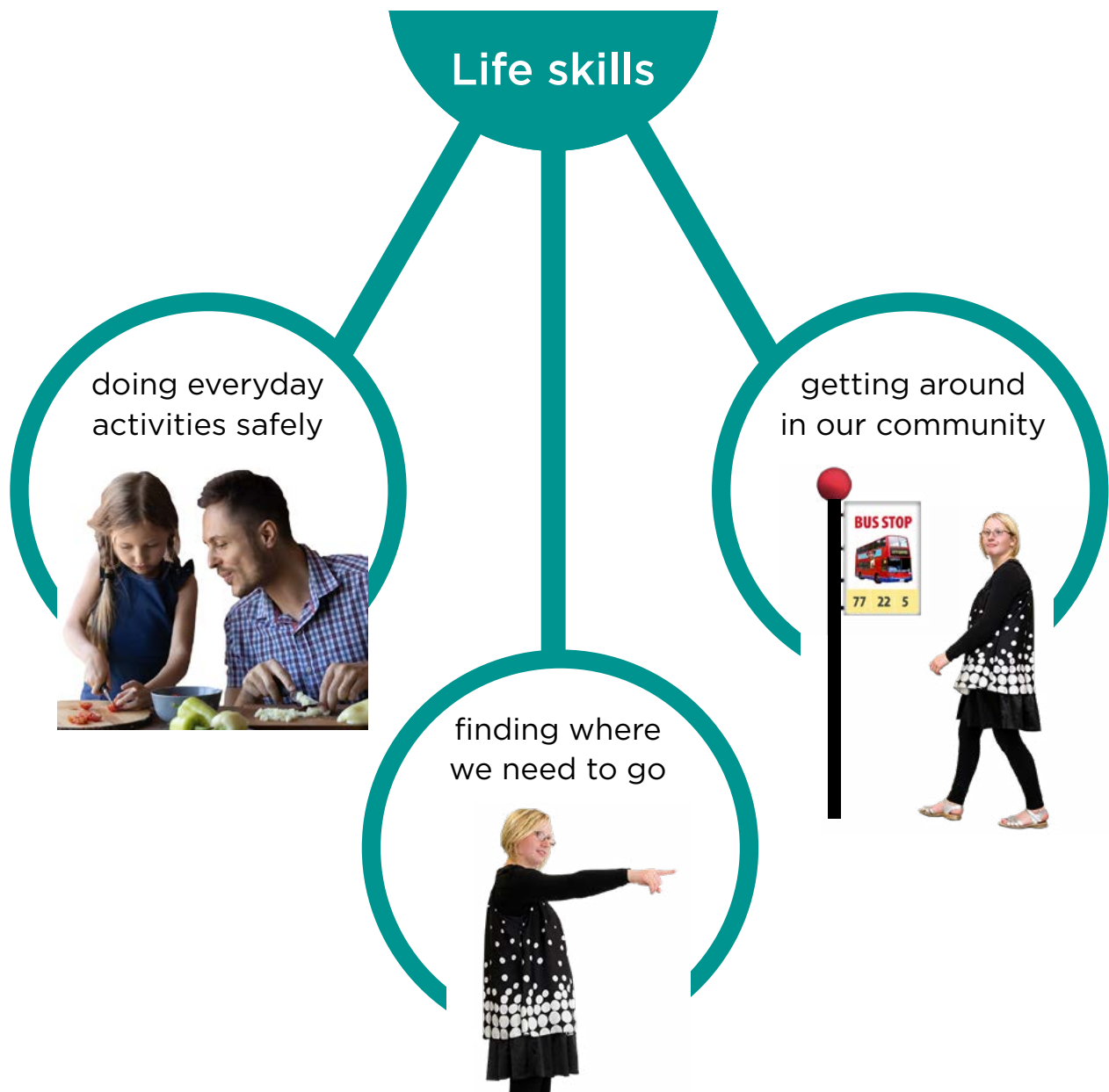


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Offer ways to learn life skills.



These are some life skills we all need and use every day:



# Diagnosis and supports

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Many people are **not** diagnosed with autism early enough. Many people do **not** get the supports they need.



## How to make it easier to get a DIAGNOSIS

Train more health professionals to diagnose autism.



Develop tools that focus on a person's needs.



Be clear about how long someone will have to wait for a diagnosis or supports.



## How to make it easier to get SUPPORTS across Canada

Hire and train more diverse service providers. They need to learn the best ways to work with many different Autistic people and their families.



Offer more supports online. This is really important for people who live far away from cities.



Help Autistic people and their families find and use the supports that they need.



## How to improve SUPPORTS for Autistic people and their families

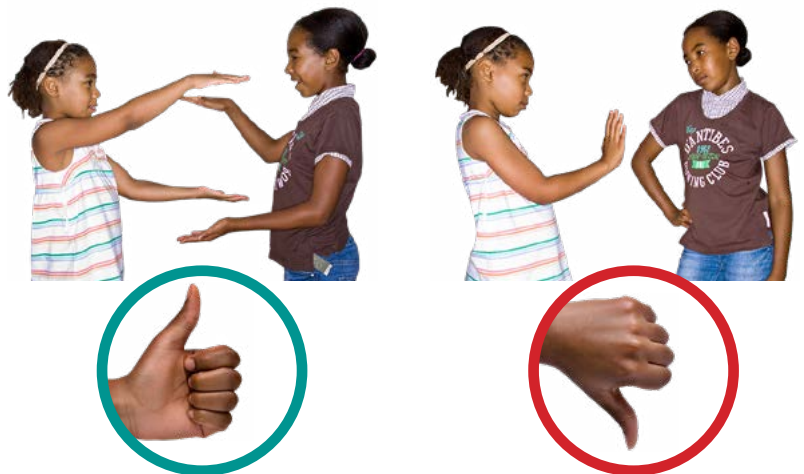
Find out what kind of support the Autistic person needs. Then decide how many people the Autistic person needs to support them, and who they are.



Help people support their Autistic family members.



Teach all children to accept differences. This helps to stop bullying.





## Very young children

Offer supports to young Autistic children in lots of places, including these:



Encourage Autistic children's parents to take part in, or lead, some supports and activities. For example, to support communication and play.



Have skilled service providers manage the supports.



## School-aged children

Help school-aged children to succeed in these areas:

school work



play and  
life skills



social and  
communication skills



mental  
health



Offer this help at home, at school,  
and in the community.

home



school

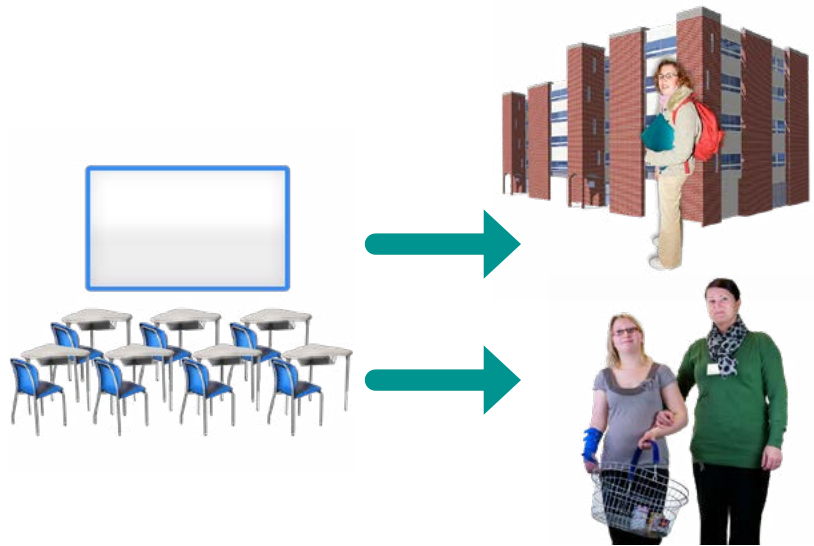


community



## Early adulthood

Help Autistic adults to progress from high school to adult life.



Make sure Autistic young adults get the mental health support they need.



Learn how to support these people better:

Autistic adults



Autistic parents



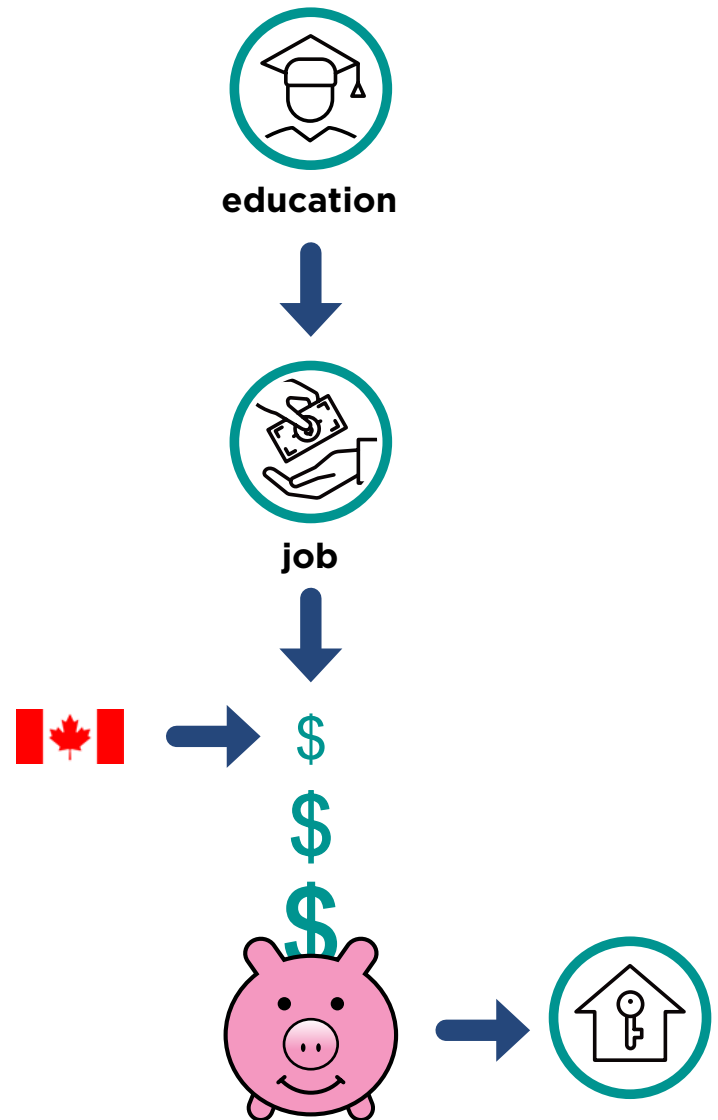
older Autistic people



# Economic inclusion

Economic inclusion means having enough **money** to pay for what you need. A good **education** can help you to get a good **job**. A good job makes it easier for you to pay for the things you need like a **place to live**.

Money can also come in the form of government benefits.

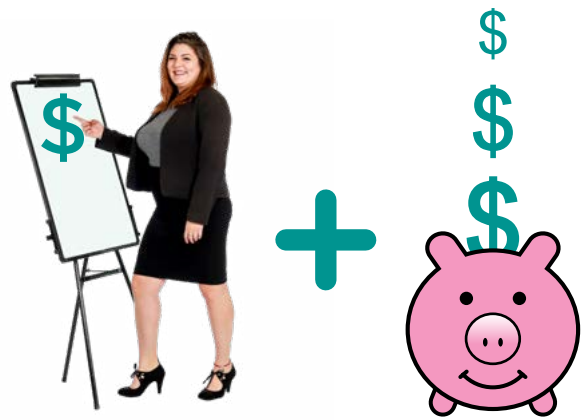


Autistic people often get support from their families. So, their family members need supports too.



## How to help Autistic people and their families get the MONEY they need

Help Autistic people and their families learn about money and how to save money for the future.



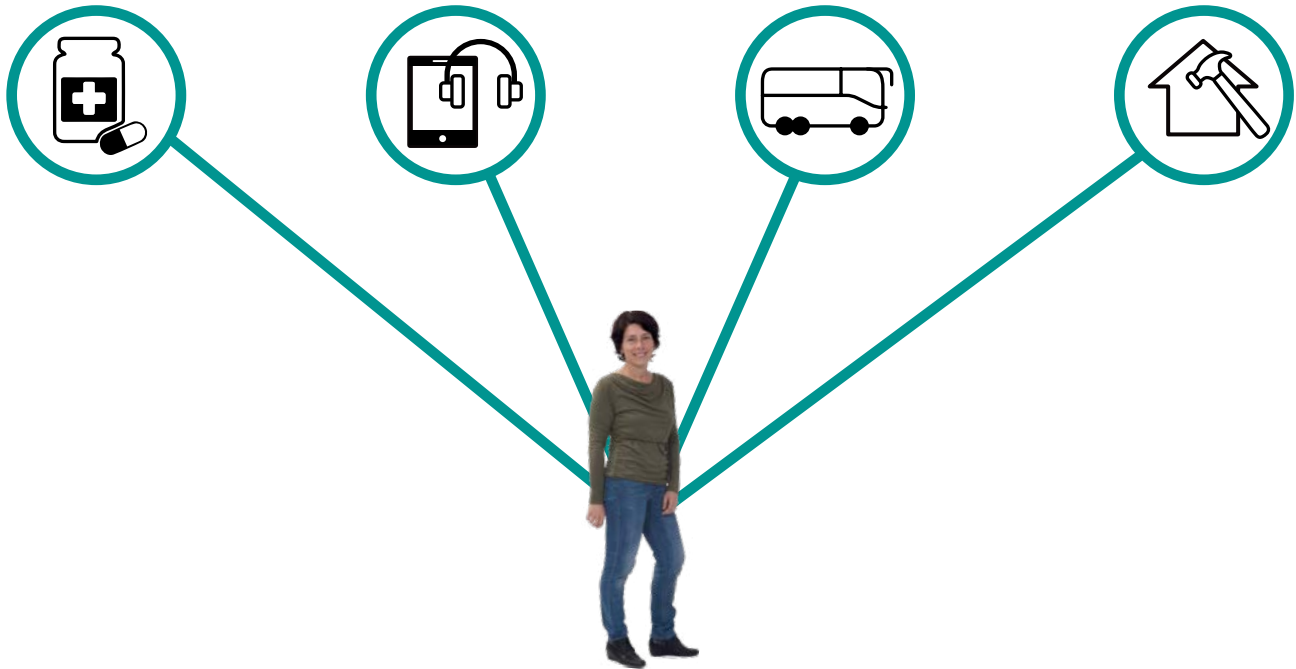
Some Autistic people and their families may need help to pay for the extra things they need.

medication

sensory and communication tools

transportation

home safety



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Make it easier to fill out the paperwork to get government benefits.

A graphic of a light blue form titled "Please fill in this easy read form". It features three sections: "Your name" with a small icon of a person, "Address" with a small icon of a house, and "Phone" with a small icon of a mobile phone. The text "easy read" is written in a stylized font in the top left corner of the form.

## How to help Autistic adults get post-secondary EDUCATION

Develop autism-specific campus programs.



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Offer peer mentoring and support groups.



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Provide academic and mental health counselling.



## How to help Autistic adults get and keep JOBS

Make it easier to find jobs and do interviews.



Help employers to hire and keep Autistic workers. Make workplaces more accepting of Autistic people.



Offer Autistic students this kind of help starting in high school:

- job coaching
- internships
- co-op positions



## How to make it easier for Autistic people to have a PLACE TO LIVE

Help Autistic people to plan for what they need in a home.



Offer Autistic people training in the life skills they need.



Design and build housing with support to meet many different Autistic people's needs.





# Research

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We can improve supports for Autistic people through research.



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Research can help us answer questions like these:

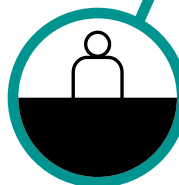
How many people are diagnosed as autistic each year?



How healthy are Autistic people?



What gets in the way of Autistic people getting supports?



How can supports help families too?



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Include a diverse group of Autistic researchers and participants.



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Do research that follows participants throughout their lives.



# Conclusion

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When we accept, include, and support Autistic people and their families, everyone in Canada can benefit.

