

BUILD A STRONG AUTISM NETWORK IN ONTARIO

essential CHECKLIST

1. Prioritize Your Own Wellness as a Clinical Necessity

- ☐ Remember that your own mental and emotional health is the very foundation of your family's well-being, not an afterthought.
- ☐ Carve out daily micro-breaks of just 15 minutes to engage in a personal hobby, read, or practice mindfulness to break the cycle of constant hyper-vigilance.
- ☐ Build a peer support network by connecting with local groups in the Toronto or Mississauga areas to share resources and find comfort with people who truly understand.
- ☐ Set clear boundaries and accept help from trusted friends, extended family, or professional respite services to give yourself a vital chance to recharge.

2. Fiercely Protect and Strengthen Your Partnership

- ☐ Keep your relationship strong by intentionally separating your identity as partners from your roles as co-caregivers.
- ☐ Commit to a daily 10-minute "non-autism check-in" each evening to talk about things entirely unrelated to therapies, diagnoses, or schedules.
- ☐ Divide clinical operations equitably by treating the management of your child's care like an organization - explicitly assign tasks like tracking Ontario Autism Program (OAP) funding or coordinating speech therapy so one person doesn't carry the whole mental load.
- ☐ Schedule dedicated "partner time" using close family or trusted respite providers to secure quiet hours together.

3. Create a Predictable, Strengths-Based Home Environment

- ☐ Reduce daily anxiety and help your child navigate transitions by setting up clear visual schedules, social stories, and simple checklists.
- ☐ Focus heavily on proactive positive reinforcement, serving as your child's primary cheerleader with immediate praise, high-fives, or token rewards for their efforts.
- ☐ Build long-term confidence by breaking down household chores and self-care tasks into small, achievable steps that honour your child's unique strengths.
- ☐ Designate dedicated sensory zones in your home, such as a quiet corner with soft textures and blackout curtains, where your child can feel completely safe and secure.

4. Streamline Support Through Centralized, Multidisciplinary Care

- ☐ Reduce the heavy burden of coordinating care by looking for a single, centralized partner that brings key therapies together.
- ☐ Choose a clinic where diagnostic services, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and ABA work under one roof, ensuring professionals communicate seamlessly.
- ☐ Let a cohesive clinical team build an integrated, evidence-based plan tailored to your child's strengths, saving your family invaluable time and energy.

5. Maximize Local Financial Aid and Community Networks

- ☐ Tap into available provincial and federal resources designed to ease the financial responsibilities of specialized care.
- ☐ Review your eligibility for key programs in Ontario, including the Ontario Autism Program (OAP), the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC), the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, and the Assistive Devices Program (ADP).
- ☐ Connect with centralized clinical coordinators who can gently guide you through the initial steps of these complex applications.
- ☐ Seek out local, inclusive recreational spaces and neighbourhood businesses that are actively trained to welcome your child safely and with dignity.



Our Promise to Your Family:

True inclusion means creating a world where your child is celebrated for who they are, and where you feel completely supported every single step of the way. You do not have to carry the coordination of this journey all by yourself. At Monarch House, we are dedicated to providing a warm, safe, and culturally welcoming environment where every family member knows they belong.

