

Handout 1—Accurate and reliable information

By finding accurate and reliable information sources on autism spectrum disorder (ASD), you can make sure you are reading the best and most useful articles and research regarding autism in young children.

- **Accurate:** Information that is accurate provides correct and true information regarding ASD.
- **Reliable:** Information that is reliable means that it is consistent and dependable. Information from a reliable source will be fair and well-rounded.

Here are a few tips on how to do this:

- **Make sure the information is up-to-date.** The information should have a date of publication on it. A general rule is to stick with sources from the last 2 years—or maybe even more recent sources if the subject is about treatment.
- **Consider where the information came from.** Is it from a research journal article, a newspaper, a magazine, a Web page, the government, an organization, or an advocacy group? Research journal articles, government and organization Web pages, and advocacy groups most likely offer the most accurate and reliable information.
- **Be careful using the Internet.** Searching can yield a lot of hits, but it may not bring back useful or credible information.
- **Consider who wrote the information.** Who is the author? Who funded the research? An article funded by a drug company may present biased information about the company's medication, for instance.
- **Is the information based on research or on someone's opinion?** An opinion could offer ideas of where to look for more information, but most likely it should not be considered a reliable source.
- **Where is the research published?** If a research article is not published by a government or known agency or a scientific journal, consider ignoring it. Research that has not been reviewed by experts in the field may not provide helpful information.
- **How can the information help your family?** Does the information you find answer questions you have?

It can be really helpful to keep a record of good places to find information. Then, you can go back to these resources when you want to read them again or find additional information.