

# Autism Therapy Comparison Guide

## A Side-by-Side Look at Common Therapies

This guide provides an overview of the most common autism therapies. Every child is different — the right therapy plan depends on your child’s specific needs, your family’s capacity, and what’s available in your area. Always consult qualified professionals when making therapy decisions.

### Speech-Language Therapy

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Communication: expressive language, receptive language, social communication, AAC
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	1–3x/week, 30–60 min
<b>Provider Type</b>	SLP (Speech-Language Pathologist)
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Often covered by insurance and available through school IEP

### Occupational Therapy (OT)

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Fine motor, sensory processing, self-care, regulation, handwriting
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	1–2x/week, 30–60 min
<b>Provider Type</b>	OT (Occupational Therapist)
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Often covered; school OT focuses on educational impact only

### ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Communication, social skills, daily living, behavior reduction
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	10–40 hrs/week (varies widely)
<b>Provider Type</b>	BCBA designs; RBT implements
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Most insurance covers; high hours = high cost if not covered

### Social Skills Groups

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Conversation, friendship, reading social cues, turn-taking
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	1x/week, 60–90 min

<b>Provider Type</b>	Psychologist, SLP, or BCBA
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Sometimes covered; often private pay (\$50–\$150/session)

## Floortime / DIR

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Emotional development, engagement, communication through play
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	1–3x/week + parent practice daily
<b>Provider Type</b>	DIR-certified therapist
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Less commonly covered by insurance; parent-led component is free

## CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)

<b>What It Addresses</b>	Anxiety, rigid thinking, emotional regulation, phobias
<b>Typical Frequency</b>	1x/week, 45–60 min
<b>Provider Type</b>	Psychologist or licensed therapist
<b>Cost / Coverage</b>	Usually covered for diagnosed anxiety/depression

## Questions to Ask Any Provider

- What is your specific experience with autistic children?
- What does a typical session look like?
- How do you set goals and measure progress?
- How do you handle it if my child resists or says no?
- What can I do at home to support the work you're doing?
- How do you communicate with our other providers and school team?
- What does “success” look like to you for my child?

### Red Flags for Any Therapy

*Be cautious of providers who: guarantee specific outcomes, refuse to let you observe sessions, focus on making your child “indistinguishable from peers” rather than functional and happy, suppress all stimming, use shame or punishment, or dismiss your concerns. Trust your instincts — you know your child best.*