

The Autism

GAINES PROJECT

Children's Health Checklist

The foundation for every child should focus on

Gut health

Anxiety and mental health

Immune regulation

Nutrition and optimal diet

Exercise

Sound sleep

The Autism GAINS Project was conceived out of the need to raise awareness that children on the autism spectrum and other neurodevelopmental disorders, need to be given not only the same level of care, but a higher level of healthcare. Simply because they are unable to express their needs, discomfort, pain and frustration. AND have a high incidence of underlying medical issues. Even children's basic needs often go unmet. They suffer needlessly and fail to make **optimal gains**. We can change children's outcomes by improving their basic needs and health.

A child's basic needs to grow and develop include gut, immune and mental health, diet and nutrition, exercise and sleep.

Helping to shape your child's future



How to use The Autism GAINS Project Children's Checklist?

This checklist should be used as a guide to see what underlying health and lifestyle issues your child has that may be preventing them from achieving their full potential.

Each item should be a guide to initiate discussion with your child's healthcare provider as to how it is impacting your child's health, or how they interact with the world.

Tick off as many symptoms or issues that your child may be experiencing.

Those items with a **red box**, I consider to have a higher priority and need immediate attention.

Those items with a **blue box** are usually less serious but still need to be addressed at some stage.

The more issues that you identify and address, the more likely that your child will make better **gains** overall.

- More serious issue requiring immediate attention Less serious issue

Gut health

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad breath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loose stools (liquid to "soft serve" consistency) | <input type="checkbox"/> Picky or restricted eating pattern |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflux | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability - especially just prior to a bowel motion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal bloating | <input type="checkbox"/> Anal scratching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal pain or discomfort | <input type="checkbox"/> Anal probing or faecal smearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posturing - tries to put pressure on abdomen | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet training issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foul smelling stools | <input type="checkbox"/> Mother was treated for a yeast infection during pregnancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head banging | <input type="checkbox"/> Caesarean birth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-injurious behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> Child had antibiotics in the first year of life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsolable crying | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing for no apparent reason or behaving like being "drunk" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to thrive | <input type="checkbox"/> Red ring in anal area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty chewing or swallowing | <input type="checkbox"/> History of Colic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History of parasites/ pinworms | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth grinding | |

Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Anxiety and mental health

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour or obsessive behaviour got worse after a throat infection or other illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separation anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail biting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seizures | <input type="checkbox"/> Arm biting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost in thought or unreachable at times | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> Low birth weight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obsessive Compulsive | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor socialisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tics - eye, motor, verbal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased heart rate | <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't like change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Jekyll and Hyde" behaviour - can change quickly | |

Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Immune regulation

- Asthma
- Eczema
- Hay fever
- Frequent ear infections
- Frequent viral infections
- Chronic diarrhoea—gastroenteritis
- Sudden change in behaviour - especially after a throat infection or other illness

- Family history of autoimmunity - diabetes, arthritis, coeliac disease
- Food allergies
- Rarely get sick
- Improve if they have a fever
- Mother experienced a viral infection during pregnancy
- Family history of autoimmunity - diabetes, arthritis, coeliac disease
- History of regression

Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Nutrition and optimal diet

- "Picky" or restricted eater
- Failure to thrive
- Poor appetite
- Chronic constipation or loose stools
- Food craving
- Craves salty foods
- Minimal or no meat or family is vegetarian/vegan
- No eggs
- No fish
- Minimal or no vegetables
- Minimal or no fruit
- Only eats a few specific foods
- Nose bleeds or easy bruising

- Giving "gummy bear" multivitamin or fish oil supplements
- Craves sugar
- Craves carbohydrates - bread, cakes, rice, potatoes
- Behaviour worse after eating
- Behaviour worse if doesn't eat
- Behaviour worse after a "typical" children's birthday party
- Problem "latching" onto breast or poor sucker

Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Exercise

- Excessive screen time (Under 2 years no screen time, 2-5 years 1 hour a day, 5-17 less than 2 hours a day)
- Fatigues easily or wants to be carried
- Doesn't like to be outdoors

- Poor gross motor skills - clumsy, poor ball catching skills
- Poor co-ordination
- Poor physical strength

Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Sound sleep

- Problems falling asleep
- Wakes at night and wants to play
- Wakes crying or screaming
- Wakes laughing
- Early morning waking

- Difficult to wake
- Daytime sleepiness
- Sweating at night
- Snoring at night
- Mouth breathing at night

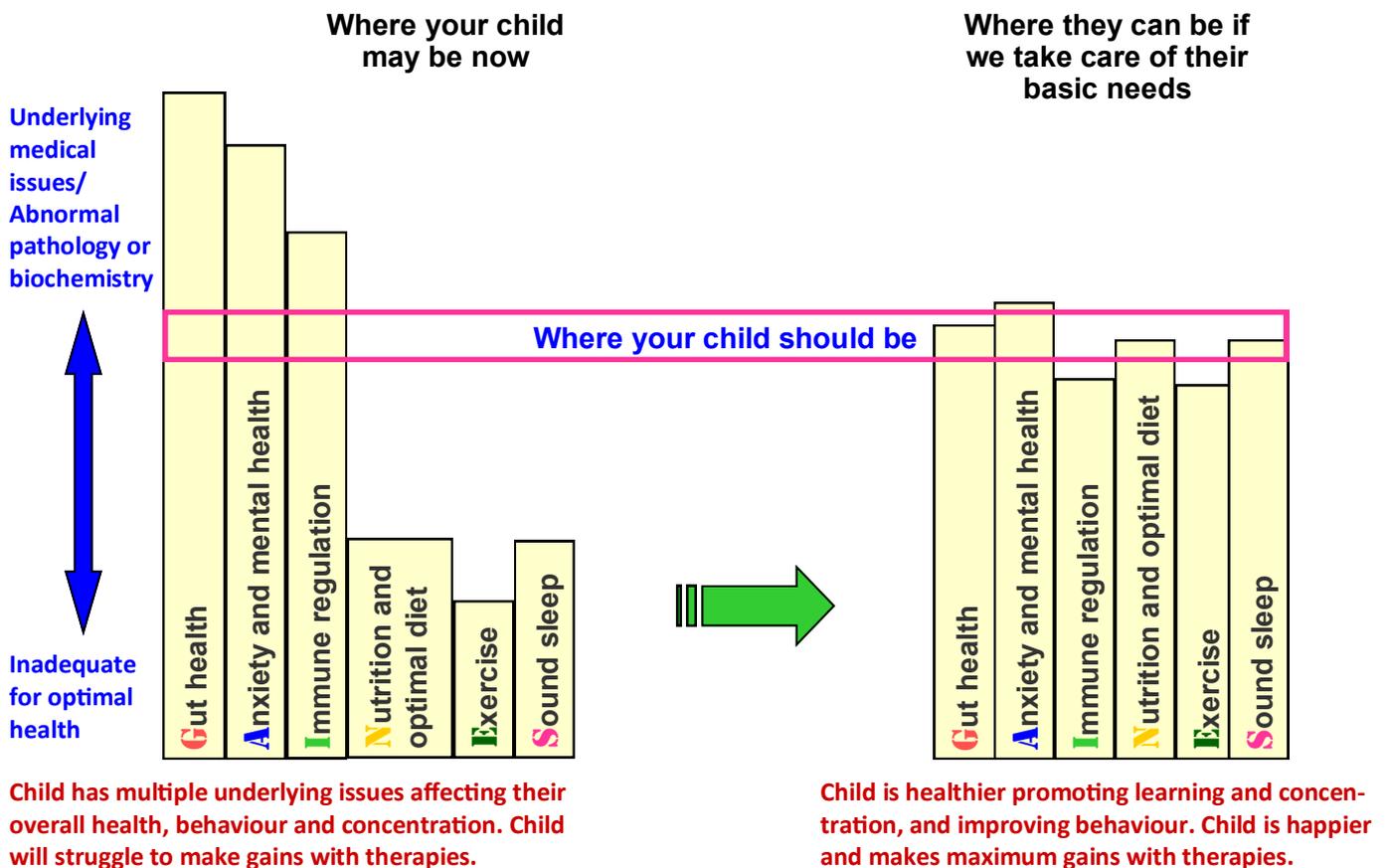
Number of boxes ticked =

Number of boxes ticked =

Additional Issues or “clues”

Never had a blood test to check for

- Iron or iron stores** - especially if eat little or no meat
 - Thyroid function** - especially if there is a family history
 - Vitamin D level checked** - especially if don't like being outside or frequently use sunscreen
 - Vitamin C level checked** - especially if eat little or no fruit (scurvy is increasingly being reported in ASD children)
 - Blood lead** - there is increasing concern about lead levels in our water faucets. The World Health Organisation has warned that there are NO SAFE levels of lead
 - A full blood exam**
 - Liver function test**
 - Plasma zinc or serum copper levels** - copper levels are often elevated in autism
- Never had an **abdominal x-ray** done if they have a history of constipation or alternating loose stool and constipation. It is important to determine the degree of constipation in the bowel, so that it can be treated effectively
 - Streptococcal titres** (if suspect PANDAS—Paediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infections) - especially if these has been a sudden change in behaviour
 - A **Multiplex PCR Parasitology test** - especially if parasites are suspected (i.e. anal scratching, loose stools, abdominal pain)
 - Your child has “good and bad days”** - use a symptom diary to track foods eaten, frequency of bowel motions, sleep quality, etc., to see if you can see a pattern that correlates with the good and bad days. You can download a copy of my **Children's Symptom Diary** from my website.



Each underlying issue your child has that is treated effectively, will help them make amazing **gains**. With each **gain** you increase your child's chance to achieve their full potential in life.

Lets make a plan of action

No doubt there will be some or many boxes that you may have ticked that apply for your child. That's great as you have acknowledged that there are issues that would improve your child's health and well-being if these were corrected.

In reality, this is where it begins and ends for most parents and their child. Most parents fail to get past the acceptance stage that this really needs to be a priority for their child, in order for their child to make **GAINS**.

Let's prioritise a plan of action!

Select the two highest red box [] totals from the checklist headings (ie. Nutrition, Gut, Anxiety, etc)

1 _____

2 _____

Select the two highest blue box [] totals from the checklist headings (ie. Nutrition, Gut, Anxiety, etc)

1 _____

2 _____

There you go! Now you have a priority of where to start and what you need to focus on to help your child make significant GAINS.

Gut health - If your child is constipated, has loose stool, bloated, in discomfort or pain, how can you expect them to be happy, be able to concentrate and perform well with any therapies they may be enrolled in?

Anxiety and mental health - If your child is anxious, under constant stress ("fight or flight"), no wonder they will react by being irritable, aggressive or even violent

Immune regulation - If your child has allergies, chronic loose stools, then there is an underlying inflammatory process that will affect the brain. It is well established that there is a close link between the immune system, nervous system and the gut.

Nutrition and optimal diet - This is a basic need for any child to be provided with the essential nutrients they need for optimal growth and mental development. Ignoring this need on the grounds of "picky eating" or restricted eating does not improve a child's outcome later in life. You need to check your child for nutrient deficiencies and correct them as soon as possible. You need to implement innovative ideas and strategies to expand your child's diet, so they get their nutrients from good quality food.

Exercise - It may not be possible for every child to exercise for an hour a day. However, getting them outside and doing things in the fresh air and sunshine is essential for all of us. Minimise their screen time by getting them outside or doing other activities. Excessive screen time is addictive and can lead to aggression and violence once they become addicted

Sound sleep - Sleep is restorative to the body. It helps create memories and detoxify the brain. We all know

For more information as to how to go about making changes to ensure your child has their basic needs met and improve their health, go to the **All Natural Advantage website: www.allnaturaladvantage.com.au**

For more specific advice about your child's unique issues contact me, john@allnaturaladvantage.com.au