

THE ECOSYSTEM OF EVIDENCE

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Artificial intelligence and digital transformation in research and healthcare

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Parents' experiences with early intervention for children aged 0 - 6 years with autism:

A qualitative evidence synthesis

Gunnhild Berdal
Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH), Norway

Co-authors (NIPH): Hans Bugge Bergsund, Tonje Lehne Refsdal, Ingeborg Beate Lidal

30th GIMBE 1996-2026 EVIDENCE FOR HEALTH

Background and aims



Background

- Early intervention is widely recommended for young children with autism
- Parents play a key role in implementation
- Knowledge of parents' experiences is needed to inform national guideline development

Aim

- To identify, appraise, and synthesize qualitative studies exploring how parents experience early intervention for children (aged 0-6 years) with autism

Methods

A qualitative evidence synthesis (QES)

- Systematic literature search
- Thorough and transparent selection process
- Assessment of methodological quality of the included studies
- Thematic analysis
- Assessment of confidence in the review findings (GRADE-CERQual)
- Close dialogue with an expert group
- Scientific peer review (NIPH and external)
- Stakeholder review by a representative from the Autism Association

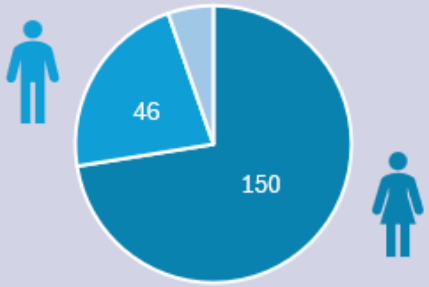
Results





Parents (n =207)
aged 23-58 years

- Education
- Employment & income
- Ethnicity



165 children
aged 1–6 years
diagnosed with autism



2018 records

↓

135 full texts assessed

↓

21 studies included

↓

16 studies synthesized

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Parents' experiences before intervention	Parents' experiences with early intervention	Parents' competence, role and parent-child relationship	Parents' experiences related to the child	Contextual factors influencing delivery
moderate confidence	moderate confidence	high confidence	high confidence	high confidence

Limits and conclusions



Limitations

- Fathers and families in vulnerable situations underrepresented
- Most studies conducted outside Nordic countries
- Critical parental perspectives largely absent

Conclusions

- Parents generally experienced early intervention positively
- Parents' and children's needs and preferences vary
- Flexible and tailored support is essential
- Clear information and trusting relationships matter

Key message: One size does not fit all
Parents' and children's needs and preferences vary, highlighting the importance of flexible, individually tailored support.