

# B WORDS OF CAUTION

This document lists possible risks or constraints associated with the statements of the framework for evidence-based practice for technology for autism. Words of caution are first presented for categories of evidence (reliability, engagement, effectiveness) and then for specific statements across categories.

## FOR CATEGORIES OF EVIDENCE:

### Reliability

- The company's website can be a good source of information as long as it provides enough details to determine the overall quality of the company. Though it does not constitute independent evidence, it remains useful for the documentation and resources it provides for the product's usage.

### Engagement

- Sometimes there is the risk of a digital product being too engaging. For example, some parents report that their child spends too much time on screen and is uninterested in other activities.
- Whether a piece of technology is more engaging than supporting the goal it was introduced for needs to be assessed.

### Effectiveness

- Effectiveness is a challenging construct to capture, as expectations vary across ages, developmental levels, and personality.
- A person might not yet be ready for a specific product, that's why a trusted professional should be consulted in cases where effectiveness is the primary goal.
- Somebody else's experience may be very different from one's own. If a product does not work for a specific user, it does not necessarily mean the technology was of bad quality, but only unsuitable in a specific case.

## FOR SPECIFIC STATEMENTS ACROSS CATEGORIES OF EVIDENCE:

### Read online reviews

- Take into account the number of reviews, as only a couple of them would not be enough to form an opinion.
- Pay attention to the credibility and impartiality of the source.

### Get an expert opinion

- It is possible that an expert only relay the experience of other people whose needs may be different
- It might be easier for people that know the consumer personally to identify a suitable piece of technology.

- The experts should ideally have hands-on experience with the specific pieces of technology they are recommending.
- If a product is very new, there might not be enough research available to relevant professionals.

### Seek academic opinions

- Access to academic papers is more restricted for those outside of academia.
- As academic reviews take time to be completed, they might not include up-to-date products / include discontinued products.
- Academic research relies on statistics and other metrics and is not a personalised recommendation.
- Mainstream media writing might not report research with the same accuracy and attention to detail as an academic paper.
- Reading a review of multiple independent studies is good, but ideally users would read the actual studies to understand how those were undertaken and what results were deduced from them.