

Discover the Difference:

# Davis<sup>®</sup> Stepping Stones Program



# We understand Autism, and can help you unlock potential

Are you a dedicated parent, educator, therapist or caregiver tired of seeing your child or student struggle with the challenges that come with autism?

Do you wish you could help them so that their everyday experiences aren't a source of stress and overwhelm?

Are you experiencing frustration and overwhelm due to the challenges of sensory sensitivities, meltdowns, social interactions and communication barriers?

If so, we invite you to embark on a journey of insight and empowerment with the Davis Stepping Stones Program, specially crafted for young children on the autism spectrum and non-speaking autistic individuals of any age.

Imagine a world where autism is not a barrier to communication and connection, where your child has the understanding they need to thrive in their own unique way. Our goal is to help you and your child embrace their autism, supporting you as you help your child transform challenges into opportunities for growth and self-discovery.



**"There has been phenomenal progress with my son thanks to his Stepping Stones program."**

**Pfanani, father of Stepping Stones client. South Africa**



## Who is the Davis® Stepping Stones program for?

The Davis Stepping Stones Program was created by an autistic individual as a roadmap for navigating life with autism by focussing on the unique needs and perspectives of younger autistic children and non-speaking individuals, as well as their families and carers.

This program is wonderful for children under 8, or individuals of all ages with limited (or no) language. Using clay and gentle real-world explorations, your expert Davis Facilitator will guide and support you and your child through the transformational Davis journey.

# Benefits of the program

Clients who have completed the program have experienced many positive changes. These are some of the most common results Davis Autism Facilitators see in their clients, which have been confirmed through independent research:

- better self-awareness (e.g. expressing appropriate pain when injured)
- improved self-regulation (can calm themselves down)
- fewer meltdowns
- less resistance to change
- willingness to try new things
- increased ability to refer to self as 'I' or 'me'
- increase in pretend play
- growth in language
- increased understanding of cause and effect
- can follow instructions using the ideas of before and after



**"This program is not like work. It is just a simple and enjoyable way of learning while going about your daily routine."**

**Cathie, mother of a boy who is autistic and was non-speaking prior to going through the program**

# Davis® Stepping Stones is a Four Step Program

## Step 1: Tools for the Helper

Each support person/helper learns two mental strategies to help remain calm and relaxed while working with their child/participant. These tools are called 'Release' and 'Dial'.

### Release

Release allows the helper to ease any stress, tension or anxiety they may be feeling. Autistic individuals are often highly sensitive to their environment and the emotions of the people around them. When working with autistic individuals, if we are feeling anxious, we can inadvertently add to their own sense of anxiety. Maintaining a calm state provides a calm environment for the participant and enhances their receptiveness to learning.

### Dial

Is a visualization technique that enables the helper to determine and self-regulate personal energy levels.

Both Release and Dial enable co-regulation– the process where you, as the helper, bring your own sense of calmness to help the autistic individual manage their emotions, in turn fostering self-regulation skills.



**"As you co-regulate with someone, the mirror neurons in their brain are activated, and this enables the person in the deregulated state to literally 'mirror' your calmness."**

**Caroline Leaf, PhD**

## Step 2: Awareness of Self

The participant is gently guided through a process that helps them become more present in the world. They develop accurate perceptions and gain an awareness of Self. This process includes:

### Auditory Orientation

The participant listens to a specifically engineered sound through headphones leading up to and, if necessary, during program sessions. This auditory stimulus – affectionately referred to as the 'Davis Ting' – was designed by Ron Davis to help each participant to develop accurate, stable perceptions and an awareness of being separate from others.

### Release

A self-regulation tool to help the participant manage stress and anxiety levels.

### Exploring the idea of Self, Another and Others

The idea of 'self' or 'me' is introduced to the participant, guiding them to make, in modelling clay, a 3D model that represents themselves.

Following that, the idea of 'another' and 'others' are also introduced using the 3D models.

Plenty of time is spent doing fun activities, exploring the idea of self, another and others in daily life.



## Step 3: Davis® Stepping Stones Life Concepts

Once the participant has developed more accurate perception and is able to focus, we can help them to learn fundamental life concepts that they may not have picked up previously.

The focus of the Stepping Stones life concepts is to facilitate solid understanding of the following fundamental ideas, as they relate to oneself and to others:

- change
- consequence
- cause and effect
- before and after

This is achieved through explicit teaching of each concept. Each concept is introduced through demonstration and experienced together with the child in a fun way that appeals to their interest. Then the child is guided to create a clay model of their own choosing, which visually represents that concept. For example, they may choose to depict the life concept of change, by making a ball becoming a squashed ball out of clay.



## Step 4: Integration of life concepts

The most effective way to consolidate learning is for the participant to have many meaningful, fun experiences during each program session.

After each concept has been modelled in clay, the participant needs to have lots of opportunities to recognize and experience the concept in the real world, lead by their helper. These experiences are essential, as they help the participant to integrate the concept into their own identity.

Physically interacting with the concepts in their day-to-day environment embeds an understanding of these important life principles and enables the participant to draw on understanding to make sense of situations within their daily life.

**"A really great program that makes sense from the start. The kind of idea that makes you wonder why you hadn't thought of it before, but leaves you really excited at the prospect of trying it out."**

Stepping Stones Workshop Participant, UK





# Program format and timeframe

Our highly trained and caring facilitators guide you as the helper and your child/participant directly through the program, or alternatively coach you to work with your child in their preferred environment. A third option is to utilize a combination of both approaches. Sessions can be conducted face-to-face or online, depending on what works best for you and the child.

The duration of the Davis Stepping Stones Program is flexible, tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual. While a typical program may range from 15 to 30 hours of time with a facilitator, the focus is on providing wrap-around support. This means that a helper needs to be involved in the program every step of the way, whether in-person or online.

## Support on your journey

At Davis, we believe that every child has the potential to thrive, regardless of their abilities or challenges. Let the Davis Stepping Stones Program be your guide as you navigate the world of autism together with your child/participant, supporting them to reach their full potential and embrace their unique journey. Together, we can create a world where every young explorer feels empowered, understood, and valued.



**"Simply put, the Davis therapy has allowed us to meet our son for the very first time. We thank God every day for answering our prayers by introducing this program to our family."**

Daniel and Sara, parents, USA

# What happens next...

Join us as we guide you through each stage of your journey with Davis. We encourage you to ask as many questions as you'd like along the way, ensuring you feel empowered and confident that Davis is the right fit for you.

## 1. Free Discovery Call

To find out more about Davis, our programs and workshops, we invite you to **book a complimentary Discovery Call** and spend up to 30 minutes confidentially sharing details of your situation with us. This will help you start to get an idea of which Davis solutions could be of value.

## 2. Initial Assessment

If what you hear resonates, **schedule an Initial Assessment** meeting (in person or online).

Davis Stepping Stones program assessments are typically covered in two meetings (if appropriate to your situation) – first with a family member, then with the child to build rapport before getting started with the program.

## 3. Recommendations

At or following the Initial Assessment, your facilitator will:

- Determine whether Davis is suitable for you and your situation
- Recommend which program is best for your needs
- Indicate appropriate next steps

## 4. Book a program

If you and your facilitator feel that Davis is a good fit, at this point, you can **book a program**.

## 5. Program delivery

A Davis Autism Approach Facilitator can take the client through the full program, while coaching a support person on how to reinforce the learning at home, school, work, or in a therapy setting.

Alternatively, a facilitator can coach the support person, who can then work with the client.

## 6. Program follow up

- Program follow up work as needed
- All program packages provide you with:
- Training of a support person
  - Telephone and email support post-program
  - Access to follow up review sessions (in person or online)

**"My son has developed a stronger sense of self and his own identity. He very rarely speaks in the third person now. He is increasingly more independent as he sleeps in his own bed now and it is easier to leave him with others. He is much more able to cope with change and is less anxious. He is able to find his own strategies or justification for things happening that he doesn't like or is unsure of."**

**Mother of a 7 year old Stepping Stones client**

# Contact Us

To find out more about  
Davis® Stepping Stones



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**"The Davis program opens a new door on  
life, but does not shut the door on the past  
nor detract from the spirit of the  
individual"**

Abigail Marshall from 'Autism and the Seeds of Change'