

After a Diagnosis of ASD



What do you do now and where do you go from here?

These are five things you can do to get started helping your child:

- Learn about autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Develop the support network that you need.
- Concentrate on your child's capabilities.
- Set aside some time to spend with each other child in your family.
- Look after yourself and your partner, if you have one.

Learn about ASD

One of the most important things you can do is to learn about ASD. Nobody knows your child the way you do. Through the years, you will need to speak up for the needs of your child. The more you understand ASD, the more you will know the best ways to help her.

Develop the support network that you need

Many parents find it helpful to get support to help them find the services they need. Some

parents have one person that they can talk to and solve problems with. Some parents join a support group and meet with a number of parents to talk about their situation. Choose whatever feels right for you.

Other parents of children with ASD can help you to understand how the school system works and how other services work in your community. Remember, you are not alone.

Focus on your child's capabilities too

It is easy to think only about your child's difficulties. Concentrate on your child's capabilities too. Look at the skills your child may need help with. But do not forget to look at the things she does well. Build on those skills. Celebrate your child. Your acceptance and encouragement are essential to her feelings of worth.

Set aside time to spend with your other children

Many parents have difficulty balancing the needs of their child with ASD with the needs of their other children. These siblings may have a lot of feelings about having a brother or sister with ASD. They may feel frustrated, confused, embarrassed, guilty, or jealous. They may also feel proud, compassionate, and loving toward their brother or sister. They are often wonderful playmates and role models, but they also need special attention for themselves.

Many parents find that setting aside a special time for each other child is very important. It can help these siblings feel included when they

may otherwise feel left out. It can also give them a chance to talk about their feelings. Or they can simply enjoy spending time on their own with their parents.

Look after yourself

It is easy to concentrate all your attention on the needs of your child and your family. Do not forget your own needs in the process. And do

not feel guilty when you do take time for yourself and your partner, if you have one.

Draw on the supports that you may already have. Work on finding other supports if you need them. Looking after yourself is an overlooked, sometimes almost impossible, but very important part of caring for your child.

