



## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Caregivers

Families living with autism spectrum disorder often look for tips on how to handle the many different challenges that may arise. “Real Life Tips for Kids with Autism” is a series of practical videos and resources presented by the experts at Children’s Specialized Hospital.

Autism is not something that any parent wishes for their child. Suddenly your world becomes very unclear, your future is unsettling and you don’t know what it all means for your family and for your child. It’s a very scary time, so being a caregiver, you kind of put your needs and your hopes on the backburner and you’re just trying to sort through everything and trying to figure out how best to help your child and what kind of treatments they need, what kind of therapies are going to help them make progress.

Asking for help is hard because, as a parent, you think you’re just supposed to manage it all and you have so much coming at you that’s new, as far as listening to what doctors have to say, how best how to help your child, therapies that they need. You’re trying to schedule appointments. As a parent you don’t even know what kind of help you need. So just sorting through that and knowing what’s going to be helpful and what to ask is really important and it helps you to take care of yourself in getting that help.

Some of the ways that you could find some help as far as babysitting and respite could be to ask family members, to ask neighbors. People want to help and there is so much help out there, but they don’t know what kind of help you need. Even going to your school district, there are many kids that are looking for babysitting jobs. I’ve found help within the neighborhood, some young mother’s helpers, going to your church. My church has been huge as far as helping out and offering to pitch in a hand. Also, looking online there’s are lots of outlets for respite and babysitting. Something that is really important to know is that people want to help and the help is out there and don’t be afraid to ask.

Accepting that life is going to be different, but not less, is really important and it’s one of the harder things to accept. Autism, it really does change your world and your child is going to need more attention and more help and things are harder for them. It takes longer for your child to learn things. Having said that, just because life is going to be different, doesn’t mean that you are not going to do things that you want to do as a family. Your hopes and dreams are still attainable. You’re probably going to have to work a little harder at it and build some more supports in for your child, but they’re absolutely attainable.

One of the things my husband and I always say is, “How can we do this? How can we make it happen for my child?” Not that we can’t do it. It’s not about not doing something because of autism. We just have to figure out how to make it happen. With every activity you do, you’re going to have to put some thought into it and some planning, but the more you do the better it sets your child up and then the more you go out and try activities, the easier it gets for your child and for your family and then you’re able to enjoy more.

Connecting with like-minded parents that have similar experiences to me has been a huge outlet and I found that it’s just a complete necessity and you want to find support that is going to lift you up. It’s going to help you feel better. You don’t want to be around people who are complaining and bringing you down. You want it to be a very positive experience.

Another thing that’s so important is to be kind to yourself. I find that we’re always encouraging our children and telling them what a good job they’re doing. We need to do the same for ourselves. You are doing a good job and you need to tell yourself that throughout the day. Give of yourself, not give up yourself, and I think it’s so important for parents and caregivers to remember that.

Hospitals like ours have parents on staff that have kids with special needs and they’re there to help. That’s what we do. We want to be there. We’ve walked the walk and we want to give back and help make the journey a little bit easier for others. So seek them out. They’re out there and they want to help.



Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares, Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.



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