



Accessing Local Resources

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.

It’s really important for families to be able to find credible reliable resources for themselves and their children and one of the best ways to start doing that is to talk to your pediatrician. Talk to your developmental pediatrician. If you have outside occupational therapy, speech therapy, PT, you can talk to those people too and have them help you. They know your children, you know your children so they can help you find programs out there, whether it’s recreation, whether it’s a dentist, it doesn’t matter. They can help you access that local resources because what’s great about them is they’re in your community. They probably have had contact with other local places and they’ve probably worked with other families with children maybe not identical to yours, but similar enough where they know programs that work and don’t work and then you can go and look at those programs and talk to the people in those programs and find out if you really think that program will work for your child.

I do have to warn families though, be careful. Make sure you are really looking at the source you are getting it for. Make sure that you’re thinking about “what are they offering, how much are they charging.” That type of stuff, because there are people out there that will claim this will help your child, this will be the most wonderful thing in the world, and it just might not.

If you have a child under the age of three, early intervention services are available in every state and they’ll provide in home therapy for families of children that need it. They’ll come in and do a needs assessment, see what your child needs and they’ll provide you that therapy. The best way to access those resources is talk to your pediatrician. You can even go on the internet and search early intervention in the state you’re in and the contact number will pop up on the screen.

The department of health and social services, every state has some form of that agency, and what they’re really good at is they kind of house the early intervention program for kids under the age of three, but in addition once a child turns over the age of three they have some sort of case management for those children and basically what they will do is again they will come in and do a needs assessment on the child and the family as a whole and they can help the family apply for aid, help them with educational, medical, kind of as a case manager to help direct them. So they’re another really great resource to go in get a case manager, when you’re over the age of three and they can help you find resources in your area.

Parents can also go look on their school's town website, so access their schools websites through the computer, and through there you can kind of see what the school district offers once they become eligible for school services at the age of three. They might offer a parent group, a support group for parents of kids with special needs and that way you can go to those groups. Typically they might meet once a month and through there you can meet other parents of kids that have special needs whether it's autism or something else and especially helpful is for parents of younger kids because you have parents of older kids at these meetings that have been kind of doing this for a while so they would probably be a really great resources for things within the area.

The internet is a really great resource to access local resources for your family so you can use the search engines to put in autism services and find out what's local. There's a lot of really great organizations that will have already compiled resources for families. For example, Autism Speaks. They have a website available. You can click on the state you live in, click on the resources and they'll all be displayed for you for the specific thing you're looking for, from a dentist to a soccer program in your town. They'll have resources available to you within your geographic area. There's also Children's Specialized Hospital has a great website that has access to a lot of different resources within that website, but then also they give you links for things outside of the hospital and great resources to get more information as well as programs.

Finding resources for your child can be really time consuming and it changes every year. Every year your child could need something new and something different, so I really just recommend families to make connections, to make connections to other parents, to stay connected to therapists and teachers even if they are not your child's therapists and teachers anymore, they still are connected to that community and I am sure they would be able to help you in the future if something came up that you were struggling with and didn't know where to go, they could at least point you in the right direction."



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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