



## Accessing Local Resources

- When there are concerns that a child is not reaching typical developmental milestones or if a child has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder or another disability, it is important to find local resources related to educational programs, legal rights, and disability services in the community. Talk to the child's pediatrician, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and other credible healthcare providers to help identify and access local resources.
- If your child is under the age of thirty-six months and you have concerns about his or her development, contact your local state Early Intervention Program for a needs assessment. Contact information can be found at <http://ectacenter.org/contact/ptccoord.asp>.
- If your child is diagnosed with a disability and is over the age of three, you can coordinate a needs assessment for the child and your family. The evaluation process is guided by special education law requirements specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A case manager can help you to locate and access educational, medical, financial, and other resources based on the child's needs.
- Connect with families and therapists in your area who have or work with children with ASD of different ages. As your child gets older, his or her interests and needs will change. It is helpful to have knowledgeable contacts who have experienced similar issues in your community.
- Revealing the diagnosis of autism to others is a personal decision. It is helpful when others are aware of the child's needs. Others may have similar experiences, needs, or challenges and may be able to share their tips and resources with you. With more awareness, you can better understand what you need, expect, and want from service providers.
- Look at the websites of your town and local school and contact your local library to identify resources for children with special needs in your community. There may be parent support groups, recreation programs, and other helpful resources for your family.
- There are national organizations with websites that map out resources by geographic area (see next page.) You can click on your state or county to find a list of resources surrounding you.
- Always examine the reliability of the source of information. Is the information current? Is the source related to an organization that has reliable knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)? Does the resource claim that the information is applicable to everyone? Are they promoting or selling a product? Does the resource show personal, social, or political bias? Resources should provide reliable information by those with knowledge and experience, but should not claim they can cure or benefit everyone.

