

Autism Team Evaluation: WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING MY VISIT?

Questions Often Asked By Our Families



Q: Why are we having an Autism Team evaluation?

A: Your pediatrician or another healthcare, educational or early intervention professional may have referred your child for an Autism Team Evaluation because there is concern about your child's language, social skills, and/or behavior. Parent may self-refer as well.

Q: Who are the members of the Autism Team that will be present during the evaluation?

A: The Team consists of a Developmental /Behavioral Pediatrician, Speech Language Pathologist, an Occupational Therapist and a Child Psychologist. They will work closely with you and your family to understand your concerns for your child, and partner with you to develop goals and a treatment plan to accomplish those goals.

- **Developmental /Behavioral Pediatrician** - reviews child's developmental and medical history, abilities, habits and challenges, with a focus on learning, development and behavior. (If child was referred by a Children's Specialized doctor or nurse practitioner, they will not be part of the team evaluation)
- **Speech Language Pathologist** - evaluates your child's ability to talk, understand language, follow directions and understand how they communicate with others.
- **Occupational Therapist** – gathers information about your child's ability to perform self-care, fine and gross motor skills and the impact of sensory processing on these areas.
- **Psychologist** - evaluates your child's cognitive skills and signs and symptoms of autism. The Psychologist will also gather information from you about your child's past and current communication, social skills, behavior and interests.

Q: Will a medical doctor be involved in the evaluation?

A: A nurse will record your child's height, weight and blood pressure. The Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician is a medical doctor, and has the ability to determine if underlying medical issues are a concern. (If child was referred by a Children's Specialized doctor or nurse practitioner, a doctor will not be part of the team evaluation)

Q: What will happen before the team evaluation?

A: Before the team evaluation, there are two separate visits. The first visit will be with the parents or guardians and the Child Psychologist. Your child does not come to this first visit. At this visit, the Child Psychologist will gather information about past and current communication, socialization and behavior using the Autism Diagnostic Interview (ADI-R). The second visit will be with your child and the Child Psychologist to conduct cognitive testing. The first visit is typically 1 ½- 2 hours. The cognitive testing usually takes one hour for young children and can take up to two hours for older children.



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Q: What will happen during the team evaluation?

A: The Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician will meet with you and your child, the Child Psychologist will conduct a structured play assessment (the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule- ADOS 2) while the Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist observe. Then the Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist will evaluate your child together. All of these evaluations provide information for the team to accurately assess and diagnose autism spectrum disorders across ages, developmental levels and language skills. The team will also discuss other diagnoses that your child may exhibit.

Q: What is the family's role during the evaluation?

A: Family involvement during the evaluation is very important and varies for each individual child. Your report of your child's history, typical behaviors and skills helps guide the team. During the team evaluation visit, the team will want to observe your child's usual behaviors. Depending on your child's age and response to testing, you may be asked to sit with your child during the evaluation or to observe your child's interaction with the members of the Autism team from behind a one-way mirror. Please let the team know how to address your child (e.g. nickname) and what languages are spoken at home.

Q: How long will the team evaluation take?

A: The team visit can run up to four hours including a summary meeting with the team.

Q: Will there be time to discuss the findings? If therapy is recommended, how long will my child need services?

A: At the end of the team visit, the team members will meet with you to review their findings and recommendations. Together, you will discuss the strategies for home, the plan of care and therapy goals.

Q: When will I get a report?

A: You will be given a team summary report at the end of the team

Q: What do I need to bring?

A: Please bring:

- A current photo ID (license)
- Insurance card
- Referral if needed
- A current list of your child's medications
- Prescriptions for evaluation
- School reports (IEP, 504 plan, IFSP if the child is in Early Intervention)



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- Prior evaluations
- Names/addresses of individuals you might want the report sent to
- Equipment your child may use (glasses, hearing aid, etc.)
- Guardian papers (if joint, or sole custody)
- A list of questions to ask the team

Q: What should my child wear?

A: Please have your child wear loose comfortable clothing, socks and shoes/sneakers.

Q: Can I bring my other children?

A: If possible, it is recommended that siblings stay home so that families can give their undivided attention during the evaluation. Understanding that child care is sometimes difficult, when bringing siblings, it may be helpful to bring another adult and activities to occupy the siblings during the evaluation.

Q: What if therapy is recommended, will my insurance pay for it?

A: Medical coverage will vary, but many health insurance plans cover our services. Please contact your insurance company to verify if your plan offers a benefit for services and if the diagnosis you were given is covered under your policy. Insurance Verification and Authorization Department will obtain authorization for treatment. You may be able to speak to our scheduling staff to schedule a start date for treatment.. If not, scheduling will be calling you to get information regarding your availability. Once the treatment is approved, you will receive a phone call from our scheduling department to schedule an appointment for treatment. There may be a waitlist for therapy times which need to be scheduled in the late afternoon, after school times.

