

My child was just diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

What do I do now?

RWJBarnabas
HEALTH

Children's
Specialized
Hospital



There's so much information around us that can be overwhelming and stressful. Here are some tips that may help.

Start with
Recommendations
from Health Care
Professionals

Autism presents differently in each person and any therapies or supports need to be individualized.

Ask for recommendations from your child's medical team who made the diagnosis. Multiple evaluations and medical tests may be needed to determine which therapies or services will be helpful your child.

Give Yourself
Time to Adjust

Take as much time as you need to process the diagnosis. Having this new information about your child will empower you to get the supports you need, and guide your parenting approach.

You and your child may need to work to understand each other and connect. Learn what might cause discomfort and ways to support and accommodate your child's needs and preferences.

Your relationship may look different than it does with other family members and it's equally as special. It is important to realize that many of the challenges you and your child may face can be due to lack of understanding or different ways of processing, not necessarily the autism diagnosis.

Find Support from Fellow Parents AND the Autistic Community

Connect with other parents who have autistic children. It can be comforting to talk with other parents who understand the unique aspects that come with parenting a child with autism. Children with autism think and process information differently. Learning to recognize and understand these differences may take time and practice. It can be helpful to learn from autistic adults who can share their perspectives, experiences, and supports which helped them. These tips may help you to help your child live their best life.

Build a Team of Experts

Gathering your team who care about improving the quality of your child's life is so very important. Your team may include therapists, doctors, teachers, and family members. With this in place, you will know who to go to when you have questions or concerns. Check the Children's Specialized Hospital website to find out more about services, workshops, and our ongoing support groups.

Presume Competence

When we presume competence, it means that we assume a person is capable. Some people may need more supports and systems to help them succeed. Presuming competence isn't about overlooking a person's challenges. Empower your child by giving opportunities to learn new skills. With time and practice, your child will learn unique ways to accomplish many tasks. It may be difficult to see children struggle, but they will find ways that work best for them!

