
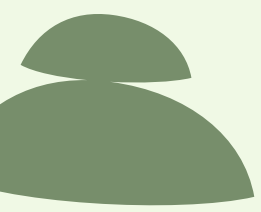




Suspecting Autism?
Pursuing a diagnosis?
Just got a diagnosis?




Autism Resources

WA state



June 2024



Sara Haines
SLP-A

Dear Parent,

Whether you are considering pursuing a diagnosis, or have already received a diagnosis, these resources are here to help you increase your understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and your child's inner world.

As a parent, receiving an ASD diagnosis can be an overwhelming process. Please understand that even with a diagnosis, your child will remain the same individual kid with precious passions, fears, and beautiful moments. Please take the time to paint a little picture of your child in your head and hold it close as you learn more about this world of ASD. As a clinician, I hope you keep in mind three things:

You are doing a great job. An Autism diagnosis does not make you a bad parent. You are doing all the right things in trying to understand your child's world and help them to navigate it.

Not everything will make sense right now and that's ok. You are not alone. Learning more from the stories of people with ASD will help you understand more of your child's inner world. There are a variety of resources for you to connect with other parents and communities of people with ASD.

Once you've met one person with Autism, you've met one person with Autism. Autism presents so uniquely in each person. Not every therapy or idea that someone else tries with their kid will work for your kid, even the most well-meaning suggestion by another parent or family member.

Most sincerely,

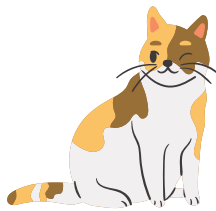

Sara Haines

Speech Language Therapy Assistant
Speech for Success LLC

Strengths

Each of our kids with ASD have wonderful gifts, passions and strengths. Take a moment to paint a picture of your child in your mind.

What are their loves? Passions? Fears? Are they more organized? Creative? Cautious? Risk-takers?



Smart



Creative



Joyful



Empathetic



Sweet



Passionate



Tough



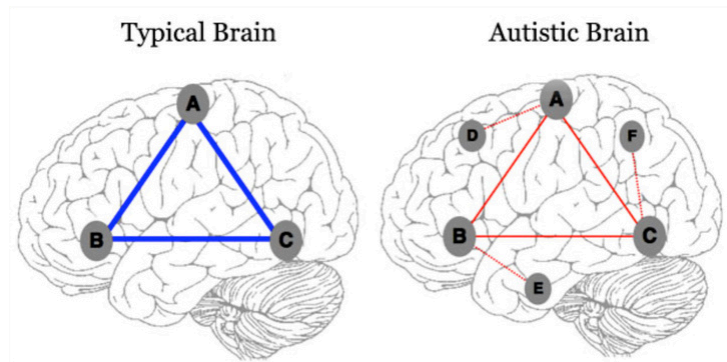
Strong



What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder, commonly known as ASD, is a **difference in how the brain develops**. Though scans can't diagnose anyone, you can see the differences on a brain scan. Paths that light up for processing information will be different than a typical person. How this impacts someone's daily life varies widely by person. You may have heard phrases like these from family and friends:

“Lost in their own world”
“Why is he doing that?”
“Bad behavior”
“So much movie talk!”
“She just stopped talking”



A person with Autism may experience...

Difficulties with communicating or social interaction
Special interests or fixations
Repetitive movements, known as stimming
Difficulties with sounds, lights, textures, motion and coordination



We may suspect Autism in our clinic when some of the following are noted:

- No eye contact or response to name, low engagement
- Speech delay or language is mostly repeated phrases from adults, songs, or TV
- Lining toys up one by one, upset when line is broken, transition difficulty
- Sensory behavior: mouthiness, running against the walls, covering eyes or ears, spinning, flapping, rocking, fixations on objects or textures, difficulties with foods, etc.

Let's take a moment.

Call to mind the picture you painted of your precious child.

Your child will develop at their own pace.
There are reasons for the behaviors.
There are resources available for you!



What can I do right now with these behaviors?

Consult an OT for services to help with stimming and sensory regulation. Consult a speech therapist to help with language.

Stimming: swinging, rocking, mouthing, pushing, hand motions.

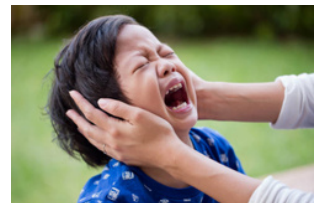


1. DON'T stop the movement. Stimming is a way to calm yourself down when the brain doesn't process sensation typically. It's like putting in earplugs for a screeching siren.
2. Provide your child with ways to get the sensation out. If they are mouthy, buy a "chewy tube" or other chew toy. If they don't stop moving, try a yoga ball, swing or rocking chair.

Check out Ella Wu's OT blog: [OTEllaBella](#) for info on stimming.

Covering ears or eyes, avoiding textures, tantrums, etc.

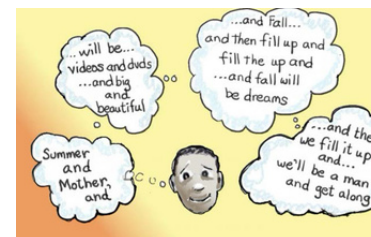
1. Provide a picture schedule with expectations. EX: we are going to the store, it will be loud with bright lights.
2. For loud noises, consider ear muffs. For bright lights, provide hoods or soft comforting objects.



Check out Ella Wu's OT blog: [OTEllaBella](#) for info on sensory avoiding.

Repeating (echolalia, gestalt language processing)

1. Recognize that your child is attempting to communicate.
2. Repeat language back to them to show you are listening.
3. Model phrases from their perspective that begin with words like "let's" "gotta" DON'T make them repeat you or "say ___".
4. Narrate from your child's perspective "I want a candy please" "I'm feeling mad. I wanna play. Let's go!"



Check out [Speech For Success LLC](#) and the [Communication Development Center](#) for more info on repeating, known as echolalia.

Interviews and Stories from People with Autism

This is Not About Me - Movie by Jordyn Zimmerman

Her journey from an unrecognized nonspeaking autistic person in a broken special education system to becoming a teacher herself (USA).



YouTube SBSK - Special Books by Special Kids



Playlist> Meet an Autistic Person

A YouTube channel that interviews people with a wide range of disabilities across a variety of cultures (USA). Kids, teens and adults.

The-Art-of-Autism.com/ActuallyAutistic-Bloggers-List/

A large online collection of personal blogs written by Autistic individuals.

UnderCoverAutism.org

A highly informative blog written by an Autistic adult about what a sensory processing difference is and how it feels (United Kingdom).



NationalAutisticSociety.org



Can you make it to the end?
National Autistic Society
1.1M views · 4 years ago

YouTube Playlist>Too Much Information

A Website with resources and information about Autism/Autistic community.
YouTube videos showing the perspective of people with sensory differences.



The Reason I Jump - Book, Film based on the book



A book written by Naogi Higashida, a 13 year old with Autism, nonspeaking and growing up in Japan.



A movie that follows three families of children with Autism around the world (England, India, Sierra Leone), with narration from the book.

Services you May be Recommended

Occupational Therapy



An occupational therapist (OT) can help your child with...

- Stimming, sensory behavior
- Avoiding sensation
- Tantrums, autistic meltdown
- Coordination, “floppiness”
- Social skills, emotions
- Lifeskills like dressing, utensils, toileting
- Feeding, pickiness with food
- Posture
- Handwriting

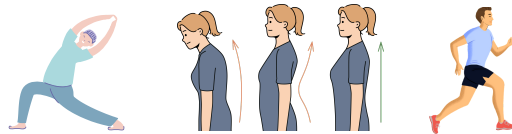
Speech Therapy



A Speech Therapist (SLP) can help your child with....

- Understand language, express wants and needs via speech, a speech-generating device (AAC), sign language, picture boards, etc.
- Social skills
- Echolalia intervention via Gestalt Language Processing - Natural Language Acquisition
- Help with making specific speech sounds if appropriate.

Physical Therapy



It's common for kids with Autism to have low muscle tone or to appear “floppy”.

A Physical therapist (PT) can help your child develop muscle tone and coordination for skills like walking, running, and sitting.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Use caution!



An applied Behavior therapist (BCBA) can help your child manage problem behavior (such as self harm) and develop positive strategies and life skills. ABA is controversial in methods used to elicit communication. Make sure to research the BCBA and type of ABA done to see what will work best for your child. Consult an SLP and OT for strategies for communication and sensory processing.

Other Therapies

It is common for children with Autism to have other concerns related to the digestive system, sleep and other neurological conditions. Consult with your pediatrician to find out what other specialist you may be interested in seeing.



Fear vs Fact



My child is too old to start early intervention. It's too late.

Children will progress at their own pace with support at any age.

Will my child ever be able to talk?
Will they ever talk normally?

Some kids develop speech and some are nonspeaking. Speech therapy and support will help them communicate safely and effectively in their own way.

Will my child ever become independent and reach life milestones like getting a job and getting married?

Independence will depend on a host of factors. For right now, your child will develop at their own pace to become happy and healthy.

Will my child eventually act "not autistic?"

Attempting to act "not autistic," known as masking, is distressing for people with ASD. Check out interviews of Adults talking about the effects of masking on the Interview page

My child doesn't respond. Does my child understand anything I'm saying?

Though kids may not respond how we expect, they hear everything that adults say about them and take it to heart. Take a moment to give an encouraging word to your child.

Will my child be treated differently with an Autism diagnosis?

Diagnosis will open doors for more services and support.

Will my child make friends?

Children with Autism often face challenges with social interaction and understanding other people. It is important to get involved with ASD communities and consider an ASD social group with speech or occupational therapy. Model and review social skills, but don't force your child to make eye contact or touch others.

Will my family accept my child?

A Word from our Parents here at Speech for Success

We asked our parents to write what they wished someone had told them when they were getting an ASD diagnosis for their child. Here's what they said.

“It’s going to be ok, you’re going to see your strength, how wonderful your child is, how Autism shouldn’t be a fear.” -Shae

“Take everything one step at a time. Get connected with resources that are right for your child. Find what your child loves and embrace that.” - Alicia Littlemore

“There is nothing typical, and learning happens at their pace.”
- Anonymous

“As a parent this can feel really lonely and isolating at times. A strong network of friends and family can help.” - Anonymous

“Solid routines and habits make things loads easier “
- Anonymous

“A diagnosis is actually really helpful in starting to get the best services to help your child. Become comfortable speaking up and advocating for your child’s needs and rights.” -Anonymous

[Autismwellbeing.org.uk/resources](https://autismwellbeing.org.uk/resources)

Self-Care

A Guide for Caregivers

Advice from our Parents here at Speech for Success

We asked our parents to write what advice they wished someone had given them when they were getting an ASD diagnosis for their child. Here's what they said.

“Have courage.

It will not be an easy path. But acknowledgement/acceptance of the situation will help. Find resources. Your child will continue to love you unconditionally.” - Anonymous

“You’re not alone.

People are out there who will help you and guide. It’s ok to be scared and sad.” - Shae

“Find time for yourself

...and things that make you happy. Your child deserves the best version of you and that includes your physical and mental health. It’s not selfish.” - Anonymous

“Don’t hold back.

Share all the strengths and stressors, even if it seems “normal”. You’re not alone and you can get through it. Either way, the results will help you learn more about your amazing child.” - Anonymous

“Listen to your instincts.

You know your child best, and if any of the supports don’t feel like a good fit, it’s ok to find something different. Also, we have found that adding as many supports as possible has been great! Speech/OT/ Therapy.” -Anonymous

“Be present.

Appreciate all milestones no matter how small.” -Anonymous

First Steps Programs in WA State

*Note: UW and Seattle Children's currently have long waitlists for evaluations. Check resource lists like the Washington Autism Alliance to find other evaluating psychiatrists near you

UW Autism Center

Offers evaluations, education, and a variety of therapies.



UW AUTISM CENTER
INSTITUTE ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & DISABILITY
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

ECEAP or HeadStart

FREE Developmental Preschools
Age 3-4



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Respite Care

In-home daycare for your child. Many parents of children with ASD need breaks and services designed for kids with special needs. It's ok to take a break. Taking a break will allow you to strengthen relationships and recharge.



[AutismWellBeing.org.uk/resources](https://www.AutismWellBeing.org.uk/resources)

Free printable resources for topics like self-care in caregiving. Testimonials from caregiving parents for a child with Autism. Positive caregiving material.

Parent Recommended Resources Western WA, United States



learningtoplayllc.com

Small, parent-led play groups by age



WA Autism Facebook groups

Get connected to other parents and families



Arc of Snohomish County

***Most recommended by parents!**

A wealth of life planning resources



Washington Autism Alliance

A directory of resources available in WA state

Activities

- Sensory experiences at MOPOP
- Seattle Science Center
- Activities through The Arc



Parent Requested Resources - June 2024

Near Mukilteo, Everett, or Marysville

The following are frequently requested resources that do not yet exist in our area. If you are willing, please consider starting your own group for these activities.

Moms and toddlers park play group

Spanish Speaking parents of kids with Autism group

Spanish-speaking Autism social group for teens

Autism Social group for teens-young adults

Learning to Swim group for Autism - all ages

Elementary Autism play group meetup

- Speech for Success is NOT PERMITTED to give out personal contact information to connect parents. If you are willing to start a group, you can share the group name in the lobby for others to join.
- If a group has been created, please let us know!