



How can I help my child?

If your child has Autism, once you have sought advice on this, different professionals will be involved who will be able to advise you on specific ways you can help your child. In general, however:

- If you think your child may be showing some signs of Autism but have not yet sought advice on this please don't panic but seek advice from your child's doctor or school as soon as you are able. Early intervention is very important with children and making sure they are getting all the support they need will allow them to make the maximum progress possible. If it is Autism, they will not grow out of it so giving them extra time is not going to make any difference and may, in fact, delay them accessing services that are going to make help them.

If your child has already received a diagnosis of Autism, you can help them by:

- Regularly giving them your time and undivided attention. Try to make sure you have even just a little time each day where you can play with, read with or sing with your child, just you and them without other distractions. Just as important, is to make time for your other children as well. Give them one-to-one time each day and reassure them that you have time for them too.
- Trying to follow advice / suggestions given to you by experts and professionals. Ask if you do not fully understand how to put something into practice or be honest if you think a specific approach may not work for your family or if you do not have time or resources to put what has been recommended into practice.



- If your child is starting at a new nursery, club or school it can be useful for them to have an 'All About Me' book to take with them. This is a book about your child, written from their point of view. It helps tell people important things about your child which they are unable to tell themselves. It may include topics such as my family; how I communicate; my likes/dislikes; my medical needs; things I can do for myself; things to discourage me from doing; you can help me by...; and other any key things you think someone new to your child should know
- Accepting support offered, you should not ever feel like you are alone. This includes support from professionals as well as support being offered by family and friends. There are a list of further websites included here which may include additional information.
- Celebrating their strengths and achievements. Try to focus on what they are good at rather than the things they need support with and remember....

Whether your child has Autism or not, they are still your precious child and any diagnosis is never going to change that. For all children, a strong-parent child relationship is essential as all children need to feel secure and loved to help them be the best they can be. If they do have Autism, they will need you more than ever to support and advocate for them and their best interests. You will, of course, go through emotions of worry for them, yourself and your family (as well as many different emotions of anger, blame, guilt along the journey) but children



with Autism, like all children, will bring you great joy and pride. Of course there will be challenges along the way, as there will be with all children and there may be additional challenges but there are many professionals and support networks out there to help you and your child so you can be optimistic about your child's future.

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