

AUTISM RESOURCES AND CONTACT LIST

AUTISM ONLINE RESOURCES

National Resources:

1. Autism Speaks www.autismspeaks.org: Has background information, articles, searchable database of local resources and parent toolkits for initial diagnosis as well as specific focus areas like toileting, challenging behaviors, feeding, sleep and transition. The initial diagnosis toolkit can be found at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/parents-guide-autism>
2. Other Toolkits: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-speaks-tool-kits>
3. Center for Disease Control (CDC) General Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>
4. Autism Society of America <http://www.autism-society.org/> Has general information, also some online training resources for parents <http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/how-the-autism-society-can-help/online-courses-and-tutorials/>
5. Autism Navigator: Uses video footage and web-based tools as resources to families and professionals www.autismnavigator.com
6. ARC Autism Resources: <https://autismnow.org/> Autism Now is an initiative of The Arc and The Administration on Developmental Disabilities. This national autism resource and information center is a central point of resources and information for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities, their families and other key stakeholders.
7. UC Davis MIND Institute: ADEPT – online parent training modules for ABA <https://health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd/adept.html>
8. Boston Medical Center Online Parent ABA training: <https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program/parent-training-everyday-aba>

Texas Resources:

1. Texas Autism Research and Resource Center: <https://tarrc.org/index.html> links to more information about government and private resources.
2. Texas Parent 2 Parent: <https://www.txp2p.org/>
3. Navigate Life Texas: Has a “roadmap” linking to more information about various questions parents may have <https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/road-map>
4. Dfwasd.com
5. FEAT: <https://www.featnt.org/community-training/ongoing-autism-workshops/>

Therapies and Treatments:

1. First Words Project: <https://firstwordsproject.com/>
2. SCERTS Model: <https://www.scerts.com/> focuses on children with challenges in social communication and emotional regulation. This guide helps parents find, understand and evaluate autism research studies.
3. DIR® / DIRFloortime®: <https://www.icdl.com/>. Among its objectives, the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship based (DIR)/Floortime model includes building healthy foundations for social, emotional and intellectual capacities rather than focusing on skills and isolated behaviors.
4. Early Childhood Intervention: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>

Social Language:

1. <http://www.playingwithwords365.com/15-best-games-for-speech-language-social-skills-development/>
2. <https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/preschool-social-skills/>
3. <https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/establishing-joint-attention-therapy-for-children-who-arent-tuned-in/>
4. <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Use--Thinking-and-Feeling-Words%E2%80%9D-to-Build-Your-Chi.aspx>
5. <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Timing-is-everything,-when-it-comes-to-taking-turn.aspx>
6. <https://educationandbehavior.com/fun-social-skills-activities/>
7. Apps for Social Skills: <https://speectimefun.com/pragmatic-skills-series-apps-tha>

At-Home Language Programs:

1. <https://everydayspeech.com/parents-and-families/> (subscription with a 30-day-free trial)
2. Language Delay: <http://www.hanen.org/Programs/For-Parents/It-Takes-Two-to-Talk.aspx>
3. Social Communication Disorders: <http://www.hanen.org/Programs/For-Parents/More-Than-Words.aspx>
4. High Functioning ASD "Talk Ability Guidebook"
<http://www.hanen.org/Guidebooks> - DVDs/Parents/TalkAbility.aspx
5. Late Talkers: <http://www.hanen.org/Programs/For-Parents/Target-Word.aspx>
6. Preschool Literacy: <http://www.hanen.org/Programs/For-Parents/I-m-Ready.aspx>

Parent-Led Teaching Programs (ABA Learning Tools):

1. Videos for parents about using ABA in the home:
<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program/parent-training-everyday-aba>
2. Two training modules to help parents learn how to teach skills to their child with autism:
<https://health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd/adept.html>

PARENT EDUCATION

All parents benefit from skills training and support to expand their repertoire of behavior management techniques. This can be accomplished through parent-training classes, reading books and implementing techniques, and discussing options with a child or behavioral psychologist. Parents may also benefit from educational classes to improve parenting techniques particular to a diagnosis of Autism. Many national and community organizations provide informational talks and literature for parents.

The free "First 100-days" kit from Autism Speaks can help you learn about your child's autism diagnosis and treatment options: www.autismspeaks.org/newly-diagnosed

Many resources in the DFW area can be found at this link: <https://dfwasd.com/>

Books to Help Parents Understand Autism Spectrum Disorder:

- *Autism Spectrum Disorder: What Every Parent Needs to Know* by Alan Rosenblatt, MD, FAAP and Paul Carbone, MD, FAAP is a book published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- *Differently Wired: Raising an Exceptional Child in a Conventional World* by Deborah Reber
- *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism* by Barry M. Prizant, PhD
- *Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew* by Ellen Notbohm
- *Parenting Girls on the Autism Spectrum: Overcoming the Challenges and Celebrating the Gifts* by Eileen Riley-Hall
- *What Every Autistic Girl Wishes Her Parents Knew* by Inc. Autism Women's Network

- *Women and Girls with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Understanding Life Expectations from Early Childhood to Old Age* by Sarah Hendrix and Judith Gould

Organizations:

- Autism Society of America: www.autism-society.org
- Autism Speaks: www.autismspeaks.org
- Autism Community: www.autism-community.com
- Texas Autism Society: www.texasautismsociety.org
- National Autism Association of North Texas: www.naa-nt.org
- Families for Effective Autism Treatment-North Texas: www.feantnt.org
- The Autism Community in Action – Texas: www.tacanow.org/local-chapters/midwest/texas/

Parent Support: Parents may consider participating in psychotherapy, a support group, or a special needs parenting group to gain emotional support in parenting a child with autism. Supportive psychotherapy can be initiated with a licensed therapist, counselor, social worker or psychologist. Support groups can be found with local organizations, community centers and religious centers.

- *The Oxygen Mask Rule:* <https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/self-care-oxygen-mask-rule/>
- Recommended book: *It Takes a Village: How to Build a Support System for Your Exceptional Needs Family* by Amy Nielsen

Parenting Techniques: For children diagnosed with ASD, research suggests that structured behaviorally based programs tailored to the child’s developmental level are most effective. Parents should implement such a program to promote appropriate behavior and facilitate cognitive and emotional development. Most behavioral programs include:

- **Clear instructions to the child:** Children with ASD need to be told and shown the expectation. Use modeling, pictures and hand over hand to direct the child clearly while providing verbal directions.
- **Visual schedules:** Children with ASD often interpret visual information better than auditory. A visual schedule can help ease transitions and improve flexibility.
- **Prompting to perform specific behaviors:** Children with ASD often need a visual, verbal or tactile prompt to complete a learned behavior initially.
- **Immediate praise and rewards for performing those behaviors:** Because children with ASD are generally less internally motivated and rewarded by social interactions and pleasing others, they often require an external motivator which is a preferred item or activity.
- **A gradual increase in the complexity of reinforced behaviors:** Oftentimes, tasks must be broken down into very small, distinct steps and each step taught before moving to the next.
- **Definite distinctions of when and when not to perform the learned behavior:** Children with ASD usually have difficulties with both generalizing a learned behavior to a new situation and recognizing a learned behavior changes in different settings.
- **Raising the bar:** Focus on task completion or independence rather than sticking to a routine or schedule. Children with ASD may quickly learn that if they resist a task, people will complete it and the demand will be removed.
- **Consistency:** The best learning occurs when everyone on the child’s support team is implementing compatible teaching strategies across settings. Consistency across settings and caretakers may promote generalization of skills learned.

Books With Parenting Strategies for Children with Autism:

- *A Treasure Chest of Behavior Strategies for Individuals with Autism* by Beth Fouse, PhD, and Maria Wheeler, Med
- *An Early Start for Your Child with Autism: Using Everyday Activities to Help Kids Connect, Communicate, and Learn* by Sally J. Rogers, PhD, Geraldine Dawson, PhD, and Laurie A. Vismara, PhD
- *Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism* edited by Catherine Maurice, co edited by

Gina Green, PhD, and Stephen C. Luce, PhD

- *Turn Autism Around: An Action Guide for Parents of Young Children with Early Signs of Autism* by May Lynch Barbera, PhD and Temple Grandin, PhD
- *The Self-Help Guide for Special Kids and Their Parents* by Joan Matthews and James Williams
- *Steps to Independence: Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs, 4th edition* by Bruce L. Baker and Alan J. Brightman

ASD RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES - TYPES OF THERAPIES

The following recommendations and resources are to provide guidelines of treatment options available, which may be beneficial to your child and the family. It is important to examine each option and choose those which match your child's personality, needs, and priorities.

Parent Training: All therapy options should have a parent-training component. The provider should give parents training and exercises to practice skills between therapy sessions.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI): Children under age 3 can receive evaluations, therapies and support for developmental concerns. This therapy is state funded. Find the local ECI service office by city, county, or zip code: <https://citysearch.hhsc.state.tx.us/>

Pathways: Some of the ECI providers offer a parent-child therapy program for toddlers at-risk for or diagnosed with autism, called Pathways.

Physical Therapy: Treat issues related to gross motor skills, coordination and reflexes. This article explains more about how PT can help people with ASD:
<https://www.choosept.com/symptomsconditionsdetail/physical-therapy-guide-to-autism-spectrum-disorder>

Occupational Therapy: Treat difficulties with sensory processing, possible fine-motor delays and limitations in the acquisition of age-appropriate self-care skills.

Learn more about OT as a part of autism treatment here:
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/occupational-therapy-ot-o>

Speech Therapy: The ability to engage in social interactions and convey emotions in an age appropriate manner can be negatively impacted by delays and deficits in communication.

Speech therapy not only works on speech, but all communication including following directions, the use of gestures, sharing emotions, social skills and play skills. Some children with speech delays may benefit from alternative communication methods.

Explanation of alternative communication methods:
<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/giving-voice-non-verbal-children-autism-aac-autism/>

Feeding Therapy: A speech pathologist or occupational therapist trained in feeding disorders can evaluate for Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) - being a selective eater primarily due to sensory issues around food. They also evaluate and treat other motor eating difficulties, including increased gag reflex, drooling, tongue protrusion, difficulties with chewing, a tendency to stuff the mouth and pocketing food.

Feeding Challenges in ASD: This guide, published by Autism Speaks provides information about the feeding challenges associated with ASD, next steps and parent-friendly recommendations for use in the home:
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/atnair-p-guide-exploring-feeding-behavior-autism>

County Services: Families may obtain some services within their county under Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD). IDD provides many services for people of all ages with IDD, including crisis services, respite care, service coordination, community support, employment assistance, nursing, behavioral supports, specialized therapies, day habilitation and vocational training.

Contact the local agency in your county to find out about services available.

<https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us/where-can-i-find-services>

Download a file explaining IDD services and care here:

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/long-term-care/lidda/iddserviceseng.pdf>

Waiver Waiting Lists: The agencies who serve the IDD population maintain the Medicaid Waiver waiting lists for care and services for children and adults with specific special needs. Some of the waiting lists are years long and it is important to get on these lists early. Contact your local IDD office to sign up.

You can find out more about the seven waiver programs here:

<https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/insurance-financial-help/texas-medicaid-waiver-programs-for-children-with-disabilities>

Social Security Disability Income: Children with disabilities and their families may qualify for additional financial support through Social Security Income.

You can find out more about this process at: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/apply-child.html>

ASD AND OTHER DISABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

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<https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us/where-can-i-find-services>

Download a file explaining IDD services and care here:

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/long-term-care/lidda/iddserviceseng.pdf>

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MORE ABOUT ABA THERAPY

ABA Therapy: Your child may benefit from specialized intensive behavioral therapy – Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) to improve his/her behavioral, social, daily living and communication skills. This type of therapy involves the use of reinforcement strategies to teach targeted skills (i.e. communication, play, social, adaptive) and reduce challenging behaviors (i.e. tantrums, self-injury, aggression, elopement). This type of therapy can be provided by a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and associated Registered Behavioral Therapist (RBT). Research has demonstrated that this therapy shows the most gains when provided 20-40 hours per week for several years. An evaluation by a BCBA can determine the recommended hours for treatment and targeted goals.

Finding a Quality ABA Therapy Provider: There are many therapeutic ABA programs with various approaches. It is important for families to choose a program to fit their child and their learning style. Articles about finding a quality ABA therapy provider:

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/choosing-aba-provider/>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/getting-started-aba-asking-right-questions>

Two Parent Guides to ABA Therapy Services Which Further Explains ABA Therapy:

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/atnair-p-parents-guide-applied-behavior-analysis>

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/aba-therapy-for-autism/>

A good book to explain how ABA therapy can be integrated at home is *The Verbal Behavior Approach* by Tracy Rasmussen.

Therapy Program Options:

Easterseals North Texas Child Development Preschool:

<https://www.easterseals.com/northtexas/our-programs/childrens-services/child-development-preschool.html>

Brent Woodall Foundation for Exceptional Children: <http://woodallkids.org/>

Texas ABA & Child Development Services, First-Steps preschool program, private pay:

<https://www.texasabacds.com/>

List of providers who accept Medicaid for ABA services in Texas:

<https://www.texasautismsociety.org/medicaid-coverage-for-aba-begins-2-1-22/>