

Autism Diagnosis: Now What?

As a mother of a child with special needs, Dr. Nisha Kakodkar, a pediatrician at Advocate Dreyer in Aurora, IL, has intimately experienced the fear and concern that comes from a new diagnosis. For parents who are newly-grappling with an autism diagnosis, Dr. Kakodkar recommends the following:

Find and call upon your support system. Call upon friends and family who can be there for you, whether it's to lend a sympathetic ear, cook dinner or help care for siblings. Find a support group of parents who are going through similar experiences.

Accept your own feelings surrounding the diagnosis. From a mother of a child with autism: "It is important to remember that your child is the same child that you loved and adored yesterday, before their diagnosis. Autism is just a piece of who they are – it doesn't define them."

Ask about and look for other health issues. Children with autism may also experience a variety of other conditions such as ADHD, anxiety, sensory processing disorder, motor delays and intellectual disability.

Partner with your local school (age 3 and over) or early intervention program (under age 3) so that they can better care for him or her and augment services and support if needed.

Act quickly. Studies show that the earlier parents initiate therapy and school-based interventions, the better their autistic children do in the long-run.

Be kind to yourself. There is no known cause of autism, and your child's diagnosis is not anyone's fault. As mentioned above, it is important to get your child support through school and/or private therapy, but don't try to do everything all at once. That may overwhelm you and your child.

Enjoy your child. Take time to remember and celebrate your child for his or her own unique qualities. For a brief moment each day – make a conscious effort to leave all of the stress behind and reconnect with your child

Wishing you joy and good health,
Mary Bohlen RN
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Blood pressure readings have resumed. See us in the Infant & Toddler Room in the rear of church on the 1st and 3rd full weekends of every month September – May. The service is free of charge and currently is limited to those Masses that have a volunteer to perform readings. If you are trained in taking blood pressures and would like to offer your services, please contact Mary Bohlen using the e-mail address listed above - we'd love to have you on the team!