

Parent Role-Play Handout

Scenario Overview

You love your child deeply and want reassurance about his development. You have noticed some things but are unsure what they mean.

Your Role

Express realistic reactions, questions, and emotions that many families experience when hearing concerns about autism for the first time.

Prompts to Use

Minimizing or Normalizing

- "He's just strong-willed and independent."
- "He just likes to play by himself."
- "He's shy around new people."

Hoping He Will Grow Out of It

- "Kids develop at their own pace."
- "Will he grow out of this?"
- "My dad's brother didn't talk until he was 5 and then he was totally fine."

Worry or Guilt

- "Was it something we did?"
- "Did we miss something?"

Emotional Tone Options

Choose one or mix:

- Worried
- Defensive
- Tearful

- "Is it because we didn't talk to him enough?"

Fear or Uncertainty

- "Are you saying he has autism."
- "That sounds scary."
- "I don't want him labeled."

Desire for Reassurance

- "Are you sure this isn't just a phase."
- "He's still so young."

Asking for a Plan

- "What do we do next."
- "Who do we call."
- "How long will this take."

- Confused
- Relieved someone is finally taking concerns seriously

Background Knowledge for Your Role

You have noticed:

- He doesn't always respond to his name
- He prefers objects over people
- He has some words but uses them repetitively
- You've heard mixed messages from family
- You want reassurance that he will be okay
- You are overwhelmed by the idea of evaluations