



## First Steps After an Autism Diagnosis

Hearing the words “your child has autism” can bring many emotions at once — relief, fear, confusion, grief, hope, and uncertainty. No matter what you feel, know this: your child is still the same beautiful child they were before the diagnosis. The diagnosis simply gives you a better roadmap to support them.

### 1. Give Yourself Time to Process

You do not have to figure everything out immediately. It is okay to feel overwhelmed. Take a breath and remember:

- Autism is not a parenting failure.
- Your child’s future is not limited.
- You are not alone.

### 2. Learn About Your Child’s Unique Needs

Every autistic child is different. Focus on understanding:

- Communication strengths/challenges
- Sensory sensitivities
- Emotional regulation
- Social interaction
- Routines and transitions
- Special interests and strengths

### 3. Build Your Support Team

Consider speaking with:

- Pediatricians
- Developmental specialists
- Speech therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Behavioral therapists
- School staff
- Parent support groups

### 4. Request School Support

If your child is school-aged:

- Request a formal school evaluation in writing
- Learn about IEPs and 504 Plans
- Keep copies of all documents and communication

- Ask questions during meetings
- Advocate respectfully but confidently

## 5. Focus on Communication

Communication may look different for autistic children. Some children:

- Speak later
- Use visual supports
- Communicate through devices
- Need additional processing time

## 6. Support Sensory Needs

Many autistic children experience sensory differences. Watch for:

- Noise sensitivity
- Clothing discomfort
- Food texture challenges
- Difficulty with transitions
- Seeking movement or pressure

## 7. Celebrate Strengths

Autistic children often have incredible:

- Creativity
- Memory
- Honesty
- Focus
- Passion
- Problem-solving abilities

## 8. Take Care of Yourself Too

Parents matter too. Burnout is real.

- Rest when possible
- Accept help
- Find supportive people
- Pray, journal, or talk openly
- Celebrate small victories

## 9. Avoid Comparison

Your child's timeline may look different — and that is okay. Progress is not always linear. Small steps are still progress.

## 10. Hold Onto Hope

An autism diagnosis is not the end of your child's story. It may actually be the beginning of understanding them more deeply than ever before.

Your child does not need to become someone else to be worthy of love, belonging, support, and success.

**Different minds. Divine design. ❤️**