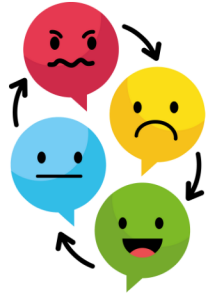




# What Now?

## What to Do After an Autism Diagnosis

The actions below are intended to assist parents and caregivers with understanding, processing, and accepting an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis. Actions are listed in sequential order, however parents and caregivers may revisit actions as often as necessary.



### Process Emotions

Take time to absorb the diagnosis. Cry if you need to. Let your emotions be your emotions and don't hold back how you feel. When you are ready to do so, talk to a trusted family member or friend about what you are experiencing. To aid in the processing of your thoughts and emotions, consider keeping a journal, seeking support from an autism professional, or joining an in person or virtual community of parents or caregivers with a loved one with ASD.



### Do the Research

Explore the world of autism, what it is, and how it affects the personality. Take time to familiarize yourself with the type of autism your child has. Learn what developmental milestones are and take note of what children without a diagnosis are capable of performing by a specific age. Work with your child to reach those milestones at a pace appropriate for them based on their individual capabilities.



### Be Attentive

Relearn your child. Recall who you imagined your child to be before the diagnosis. Focus on the good qualities they possess from their physical appearance to their personality. Take note of what developmental milestones your child has met, where they are advanced, and where they are delayed. Be attentive to their likes and dislikes including sights, sounds, tastes, textures, etc. Challenge yourself to expand your child's positive attributes and capabilities by maintaining a constant awareness of their strengths.



### Choose Positivity & Be Proactive

Fine tune your mindset. Choose to focus on what *is* possible and surround yourself with individuals who are just as optimistic about your child's future. *Never* say your child can't do something. Encourage them to push beyond boundaries the same as you would a child without an autism diagnosis and take time to celebrate every win. Explore resources available to caregivers by asking your doctor, daycare, school, or friends. Connect to mental health organizations and associations such as the Autism Society and Behavioral Health in your city or county.