

skills should be targeted for effective intervention. A diagnosis is often required to access autism-specific services through early intervention programs or your local school district.

How is Autism Diagnosed?

Presently, we don't have a medical test that can diagnose autism. As the symptoms of autism vary, so do the routes to obtaining a diagnosis. You may have raised questions with your pediatrician. Some children are identified as having developmental delays before obtaining a diagnosis of autism and may already receive some **Early Intervention** or **Special Education** services. Unfortunately, parents' concerns are sometimes not taken seriously by their doctor and as a result, a diagnosis is delayed. Autism Speaks and other autism-related organizations are working hard to educate parents and physicians, so that children with autism are identified as early as possible.

Your child may have been diagnosed by a **developmental pediatrician**, a **neurologist**, a **psychiatrist** or a **psychologist**. In some cases, a team of specialists may have evaluated your child and provided recommendations for treatment. The team may have included an **audiologist** to rule out hearing loss, a **speech & language therapist** to determine language skills and needs and an **occupational therapist** to evaluate physical and motor skills. A multi-disciplinary evaluation is important for diagnosing autism and other challenges that often accompany autism, such as delays in motor skills. If your child has not been evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team, you will want to make sure further evaluations are conducted so that you can learn as much as possible about your child's individual strengths and needs.



For more information, visit the Autism Speaks Autism Treatment Network at autismspeaks.org/atn.

Once you have received a formal diagnosis, it is important to make sure that you ask for a comprehensive report that includes the diagnosis in writing, as well as recommendations for treatment. The doctor may not be able to provide this for you at the appointment, as it may take some time to compile, but be sure to follow up and pick up this helpful necessary report as soon as it's available.