

About Autism

Why Was My Child Diagnosed with Autism? And What Does It Mean?

Your child has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and you have asked for help. This is an important turning point in a long journey. For some families, it may be the point when, after a long search for answers, you now have a name for something you didn't know what to call, but you knew existed. Perhaps you suspected autism, but held out hope that an evaluation would prove otherwise. Many families report mixed feelings of sadness and relief when their child is diagnosed. You may feel completely overwhelmed. You may also feel relieved to know that the concerns you have had for your child are valid. Whatever it is you feel, know that thousands of parents share this journey. You are not alone. There is reason to hope. There is help. Now that you have the diagnosis, the question is, where do you go from here? The **Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit** was created to help you make the best possible use of the next 100 days in the life of your child. It contains information and advice collected from trusted and respected experts on autism and parents like you.

Why Does My Child Need a Diagnosis of Autism?

Parents are usually the first to notice the early signs of autism. You probably noticed that your child was developing differently from his or her peers. The differences may have existed from birth or may have become more noticeable later. Sometimes, the differences are severe and obvious to everyone. In other cases, they are more subtle and are first recognized by a daycare provider or preschool teacher. Those differences, the symptoms of autism, have led



thousands of parents like you to seek answers that have resulted in a diagnosis of autism. You may wonder: *Why does my child need a diagnosis of autism?* That's a fair question to ask - especially when right now, no one is able to offer you a cure. Autism Speaks is dedicated to funding global biomedical research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a possible cure for autism. Great strides have been made and the current state of progress is a far cry from the time when parents were given no hope for their children. Some of the most brilliant minds of our time have turned their attention toward this disorder.

It is important to remember that your child is the same unique, lovable, wonderful person he or she was before the diagnosis.

There are, however, several reasons why having a diagnosis is important for your child. A thorough and detailed diagnosis provides important information about your child's behavior and development. It can help create a roadmap for treatment by identifying your child's specific strengths and challenges and providing useful information about which needs and