



Guilt

Many individuals feel guilt. They wonder if they may have caused their child's ASD, or if they could have done something to prevent it. Even though the causes of ASDs are not completely known, we do know that they are nothing a person could have controlled. Research suggests that ASD is genetically linked and that changes in brain development happen very early. ASD rates are similar across ethnic and racial groups around the world, so it is widely accepted that it is not caused by specific environmental or medical factors.

Anger

It is very hard to watch your child struggle with things that come naturally to other children. Sometimes you might feel angry at others, your spouse, yourself, or anger that is not directed at anyone in particular. This is a natural part of the process. Even years from now, there will be times when things seem so unfair it will make you angry. Many times others do not understand that you are hurting or that you may need support. It can be very helpful to talk to other individuals and parents who have similar experiences.

Loneliness

This can often come and go for individuals and for parents whose child has a disability. It may seem that no one can understand or that others don't have to go through the same struggles. Others who do not experience a disability or have a child with a disability may find it hard to grasp what you are going through. It may be up to you to tell them what it is like so they can support you.

Acceptance

Periods of acceptance may mean that you can appreciate the reality of living with ASD, and are also ready to advocate for what you or your family needs. Acceptance is an ongoing process, not an end stage.



A photograph of two young children playing on a light-colored carpeted floor. In the foreground, a boy with short brown hair is lying on his back, smiling broadly at the camera while holding a light-colored wooden block with both hands. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. In the background, another child with light brown hair is sitting cross-legged, focused on playing with a yellow toy. The background is softly blurred, showing a green blanket and a colorful toy structure. A blue text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Autism Speaks
(www.autismspeaks.org)
created a number of free
downloadable toolkits
for family members
about topics like sleep,
supporting siblings,
managing tantrums,
and more.