

My child has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): What do I do?

CARE TRAJECTORY



Diagnostic centers

We conduct tests and conversations to see if your child has ASD.



Doctors

We examine which medical care your child with ASD needs.



Health insurance funds

We help you with the application for support for your child. Contact the social services (DMW) for more information.



School and CLB

We help you to find which type of education suits your child most and which approach is needed to help your child at school.



At-home assistance

A personal Assistant will come to your house and look for solutions, give information about ASD, accompany you to appointments with schools or doctors,...



Support groups

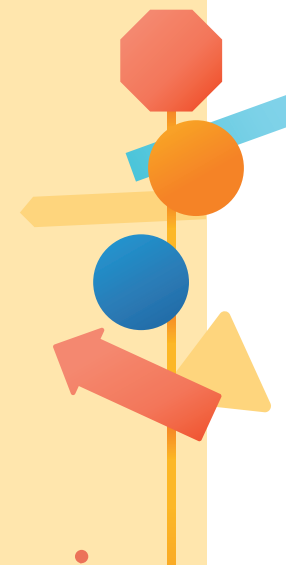
We listen to your story and get you in touch with other parents having a child with ASD.

Did you know?

- A diagnosis is needed to have access to some types of aid? For a diagnosis, you can make an appointment at a 'Reference Center Autism' (RCA) or 'Center for Developmental Disorders' (COS). They can test whether your child has ASD.
- There are waiting lists to receive care? You will mostly have to wait some weeks or months before you can start your care trajectory.
- Caregivers often ask documents through e-mail? Save a copy of all your documents or a picture in a file or app.

Who can help me?

- Call the Autism Phone (078 152 252) if you want to talk to someone about ASD.
- Go to www.participate-autisme.be for correct information about ASD.
- Go to www.magentaproject.be for info sessions for parents.
- Go to www.sensitievezorg.be for culturally sensitive support.



Help! A difficult conversation!

Hi, mom or dad! As a parent of a child with ASD you will talk to many people. It's important to prepare a conversation with a school or service provider well. Our support sheet will help you to do this.



Preparation for an appointment with a school or service provider



What are my concerns as a parent?



Tips

- Don't go to a difficult conversation on your own. Take someone along you can trust, and agree on some things to make the conversation go well. For example, who will lead the conversation? Which support do you expect from him/her?
- A school or care provider can arrange an interpreter for you. Ask them whether this is free or not.
- Are you having a conversation with multiple persons, and does it make you feel stressed? Ask for an appointment with one of them separately, to prepare the group conversation together.
- Take your written preparation to the conversation. Ask the caregivers not to interrupt you, so you can read out and discuss your questions calmly.
- Don't let anyone put pressure on you during a conversation with a school, doctor, psychologist,...:
 - Ask for a couple of minutes break to leave the room.
 - Ask some days of time to make a decision.
 - Ask for a copy of the report and read it at home.

BEST CASE

WORST CASE

Reflect: what is the worst that can happen during the conversation?

Reflect: what is the best that can happen during the conversation?

FOLLOW UP

Take care of yourself

Finding the right care for your child takes a lot of energy. Searching information, following up on administration, making choices on schools or medication,... All of this can make you feel stressed. It's important to take a break from time to time, and be aware of your emotions.

Clearing your mind after the appointment

Note down all the negative and positive thoughts and emotions in your mind. Some examples:

I'm tired of all these conversations about ASD. I want some REST.

I was nervous before the conversation with the school, but I still went. I did great!

Today, I'm grateful for...

Recharging your batteries:



Prayer/meditation



Coffee or tea break



Daily break



Me-time



Conscious breathing



Exercise



Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Tips by other parents of children with ASD:

- Don't see ASD as a punishment. Think of your child as a gift.
- Don't feel guilty: ASD is not because of you or because of a bad parenting.
- Look at the positive side of your child and keep track of what does go well.
- Don't get lost in the diagnosis of ASD: your child is more than ASD.
- Take the time to get to know your child: playing together for one hour a day helps.
- Don't compare your child with others. Every child is unique and beautiful.

