



HEALTHPRO
PEDIATRICS

The Ultimate List of Autism Resources for Parents

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The Ultimate List of Autism Resources for Parents

Receiving that official diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) for your child is difficult. Even if you expected it, you'll need a variety of robust autism resources to help you take the next steps in your family's journey. You may be worried about your child's future as you regroup and learn to navigate education, clinical care, and autism resources for insurance coverage. If you take it day by day, one step at a time, you'll find that this diagnosis brings an opportunity for new perspectives on your child, your family, and your idea of joyful learning.

This fact will empower you: you are not alone.



To further empower parents and after doing years of research and helping hundreds of kids learn, grow, and thrive, we've created this guide to autism resources to help you navigate and enjoy your child's journey as much as possible.

1

Autism Resources for Before and Right After the Diagnosis

When your child takes that first step, waves “bye-bye” for the first time, or points to a coveted toy, they’re reaching developmental milestones. In general, most children can do these things at a certain age. But if they don’t, it may be time to pay closer attention and leverage all available autism resources for parents.



Engage in Developmental Monitoring

Developmental monitoring and screening help track a child’s developmental milestones. Parents, grandparents, nannies, or caregivers should be on the lookout for developmental milestones from the day a child is born to the day he or she turns five. This gives you a chance to celebrate your child’s development and discuss progress with healthcare providers who can explain what you should expect by certain ages and identify any concerns as early as possible. There are a number of autism resources that can help you do this. A great way to track these milestones is through a validated screening app.

Healthcare providers, early childhood teachers, and trained specialists should also be screening for these milestones at 9, 18, and 30 months. Diagnosing clinicians – psychologists, pediatric neurologists, and developmental pediatricians – can provide autism-specific screening and resources for children with autism at 18 and 24 months of age; warning signs may not always be obvious to a child’s caretakers.

The symptoms and severity of autism spectrum disorder vary so widely that making a diagnosis can be challenging. There isn’t a specific medical test to determine the condition, but autism resources like the Mayo Clinic recommend that your child’s diagnosing clinician apply the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders to do the following:

- **Observe and ask about changes in your child’s communication skills and social behaviors**
- **Test your child’s hearing, speech, language, and behavioral development**
- **Score your child’s performance on structured social and communication interactions**
- **Collaborate with other specialists and autism resources to arrive at a diagnosis**
- **Recommend genetic testing to check for Rett syndrome or Fragile X syndrome**

Once you've obtained a diagnosis, you'll likely want to learn everything there is to know from autism resources so you can support and communicate with your child as effectively and enjoyably as possible.

Rely on Trusted Autism Resources

Fundamentally, the goal of applied behavior analysis (ABA) is to allow your child to have as many choices in life as possible. To understand how and why ABA works to achieve this goal, read this [Psychology Today article](#) before you jump into action using the following resources.

Autism Resources for Parents

100-Day Tool Kit

Parents who've just heard the news are usually brimming with questions. Why did my child get this autism diagnosis and how does it benefit us? How can we support our child with autism? Their siblings? Ourselves as caretakers? What are our best treatment options? What are the distinct subtypes of ABA for autism spectrum disorders? You'll find answers to these questions in autism resources like the 100 Day Kit produced by Autism Speaks.

MyAutismTeam

For the emotional support you need from other parents and caretakers who can offer practical advice and insights on managing treatment or therapies, you can join and discuss autism resources at MyAutismTeam, the social network for parents of kids with autism where you can befriend people who understand you and relate to your daily ups and downs in a judgment-free place.

Local Autism Support Groups

To find local autism resources where you can join a support group to meet, bond with, and learn from other autism parents in your area, check out the [National Autism Association's](#) support group directory where you'll find tips, toolkits, and events to share and enjoy with your new compassionate friends.

[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#) provides parent centers across the country with family-friendly information, research-based materials, private workspaces, and other autism resources. At local parent centers, you can discuss pressing topics, solve challenges, and exchange autism resources. You can also join a parent training network and subscribe to a bi-monthly e-newsletter with information on new autism resources for parents as well as upcoming family events.

[Autism and Beyond Research Kit](#)

If you're looking for ways to manage temper tantrums and foster your child's self-control with age-appropriate strategies, leverage Duke University's Autism and Beyond research kit. This robust autism resource will help you understand early childhood development and how to track milestones while providing relatable positive training modules.

[Autism Now](#)

For detailed information about the latest laws, autism resources, and insurance coverage changes, visit Autism Now, the U.S. source for community-based solutions for families of children with autism and other developmental disabilities. You'll find articles about the latest legal and regulatory amendments pending in your state, as well new Medicare and Medicaid legislation being debated in Congress. Peruse this site to discover learning labs, centers for autism resources, and achievement celebrations at Autism Now chapters across the country. You may even learn how insurance could pay for your child's iPad!

[National Autism Association](#)

The National Autism Association has put life-saving, tangible resources into the hands of over 55,000 American families, trains over 1,000 first responders and professionals on autism safety each year, ships free safety toolkits to schools across the country, and hosts free educational webinars on a wide range of topics through our Autism Atrium program.

[National Flutie Foundation](#)

The National Flutie Foundation develops programs and activities to improve the quality of life for people and families affected by autism by providing a path for education and/or employment during the day; opportunities for physical and social activity outside of work/school; and the tools to be safe, supported, and informed at all times.

[Autism Resources for Children](#)

Each autism spectrum disorder diagnosis is different – some come at age 2, others at 12. Some thrive in a protected special education environment, while others learn in typical elementary, middle, or high school classrooms with varying levels of assistance. Some are intellectually disabled, while others have extraordinarily high IQs. All of these factors will influence your timing and your delivery of this information to your family. Refer to the following autism resources for parents in similar situations.



Interactive Autism Community

Interactive Autism Community can help you decide when to break the news with evidence-based recommendations from evidence-based autism resources. If your child is diagnosed at a very young age, you'll have more time to decide – as they will not understand what their diagnostic evaluation is about. An older child will likely be aware of the reason they're going to see a psychiatrist or Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Also, older children may have been bullied or suspended from school after a meltdown or socially disruptive incident that makes them feel “different” and wonder why, desperately needing an explanation as soon as possible. This is a good time to leverage autism resources designed for peers and siblings.

Indiana University Resource Center for Autism Guide

To help children understand and embrace their autism, try presenting them with autism resources like the Indiana University Resource Center for Autism Guide. Many parents are hesitant to label their child as having an ASD for fear their child will feel “broken,” or leverage their labels as an excuse to give up and not try. Indiana University experts have found the opposite to be true. Offering children autism resources with information detailing their differences motivates them to drive through their challenges.

The Autism Community Store

A robust source of sensory toys, calming input, assistive devices, games, and educational tools, as well as nutritional supplements like enzymes, probiotics, vitamins, and minerals can be found at the online Autism Community Store. Or you can visit the store in Denver, Colorado.

Autism Resources for Siblings

The Autism Speaks [100 Day Kit](#) is one of many popular autism resources that has helped thousands of families. It features these invaluable tips for siblings from family therapist Dr. Kathryn Smerling:

- **Remember that you are not alone.** If you look around you'll see all families have challenges and something difficult to overcome together. Seek out autism resources that can connect you with other families who can relate.
- **Be proud of your brother or sister.** Learn to talk about autism and feel comfortable describing the disorder to your friends. If you're comfortable with it, they will be too. If you are embarrassed by your brother or sister, it will be awkward for your friend.
- **Know that it's okay to feel frustrated with siblings sometimes.** Like every other sibling, sometimes you will love your brother or sister and sometimes you may not like him or her. And often, it's easier when you have a professional counselor or autism resources to help you understand them – someone special who is here just for you.

- **Remember your anger doesn't change the situation.** While it is okay to be sad that you have a brother or sister affected by autism, it doesn't help to be upset and angry for extended periods of time – it only makes you unhappier.
- **Spend time alone with your parents.** Having a family member with autism can often be very time-consuming and attention-grabbing. You need to feel important, too. Remember, even if your brother or sister didn't have autism, you would still need alone time with Mom and Dad. Find autism resources that can help you enjoy activities with your parents.
- **Find an activity you can do with your brother or sister.** You will find it rewarding to connect. No matter how impaired he or she may be, doing something together bonds you and makes your brother or sister look forward to these activities and greet you with a special smile.

For further support and recommendations, consider these popular autism sources:

Brothers, Sisters, and Autism: A Parent's Guide: addresses common issues – from dealing with perceived fairness discrepancies to enabling positive sibling relationships – and provides autism resources and inspirational testimonials from families with autism.

Life as an Autism Sibling: A Guide for Teens: covers a variety of topics – from explaining autism to friends and peers, to coping with atypical family dynamics – and features testimonials from other teenage siblings who've already learned from experience. It includes helpful autism resources on how to interact with their sibling.

Autism, My Sibling, and Me: colorful cartoon characters help brothers and sisters learn about autism and resolve potentially stressful issues in this fun workbook designed for children from ages 5–10.

A Sibling's Guide To Autism: helps siblings understand a little bit more about autism and provides autism resources that can help them learn what they can do to help their brother or sister take care of themselves and enjoy their family.

Siblings of Autism: distributes scholarships for education, summer camps, vocational training for families, and other autism resources for children on the spectrum.

Autism Resources for Grandparents and Other Loved Ones

Friends and family that may not interact quite as much with your newly diagnosed child may need one of these autism resources to understand what your immediate family is going through:

Grandparents Guide to Autism: helps grandparents discover resources for autism and encouragement to support their grandchild on the spectrum and develop the best relationship possible.



Support Group for Grandparents: for grandparents of children with Asperger profiles, this group provides autism resources that answer many questions about how to establish a relationship with and support the parents of the child, as well as how to tell friends and family about the diagnosis, and how to enjoy family gatherings.

Sharing a Diagnosis With Friends and Family: one of many autism resources for parents that help them explain to loved ones why diagnosis is critical, that autism is a spectrum of behaviors, and that every person with autism has different onset, severity, and symptoms.

2 Types of Treatment and Therapy

For decades, researchers tried to develop autism resources that would provide a valid assessment of the effectiveness of various biomedical and psycho-educational interventions. All that research led to the development of a valuable tool. Bernard Rimland and Stephen M. Edelson of the Autism Research Institute created the evidence-based [Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist \(ATEC\)](#), a one-page form designed for parents, teachers, or caretakers to fill out. This valuable autism resource is broken down into four subtests:



**Speech/Language
Communication**



Sociability



**Sensory/Cognitive
Awareness**



**Health/Physical/
Behavior**

Although ATEC is not a diagnostic tool, it provides subscale scores and a total score that clinicians can use for comparison purposes as therapy progresses (the lower the score, the fewer the challenges). This assessment helps parents and clinicians determine which therapy (or therapies) can benefit a child with autism. Use ATEC to get a general idea of therapies and autism resources that may help your child thrive.

If your child experiences challenges with...

- Communication
- Social Skills
- Academics
- Reading
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Toileting
- Dressing
- Eating
- Personal self-care
- Domestic skills

You may want to learn more about:

ABA therapy, which is designed to improve socially significant behaviors – and is accomplished more effectively with one-on-one intensive ABA in your home, community, and center setting. ABA therapy and all related autism resources are overseen by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and implemented by a behavior technician (BT) or Registered Behavior Technician (RBT).

[Learn more here.](#)



If your child experiences challenges with...

- Speech and language delays
- Language disorder
- Articulation disorder
- Motor speech disorder
- Pragmatic language impairment
- Multiple disabilities

You may want to learn more about:

Speech therapy, which is delivered by certified speech and language pathologists who provide evidence-based speech and language services and autism resources to children of all abilities to promote functional communication. They believe that speech therapy should be fun for children, adolescents, and young adults with many different needs and diagnoses.

[Learn more here.](#)

If your child experiences challenges with...

- Dressing
- Self-feeding
- Handwriting
- Playing on the playground with peers

You may want to learn more about:

Occupational therapy, which is designed to help children and young adults acquire or regain the skills needed to perform life's daily activities or "occupations". Effective occupational therapists craft care plans that are fun, play-based and individually tailored to improve the "building block" skills like fine motor skills, gross motor coordination, bilateral integration, motor planning, sensory processing, body and spatial awareness, visual-perceptual skills, postural control and stability, as well as self-regulation.

[Learn more here.](#)



If your child experiences challenges with...

- Language
- Peer interactions
- Socially appropriate responses
- Listening and sharing during play time

You may want to learn more about:

Social skills training, which includes language-based social groups (including AAC social groups), ABA-based social groups, ABA-based fitness groups, ABA-based after-school functional living skills groups, parent education groups, supported community outings, sibling support groups, as well as educational autism resources for parents and caregivers.

[Learn more here.](#)

If your child experiences challenges with...

You may want to learn more about:

- Pre-K or Kindergarten Preparedness

Pre-K and Kindergarten readiness programs, which prepare two- to five-year-olds for a successful transition to a preschool or kindergarten setting. It requires individualized programs and one-on-one intensive ABA therapy within a small group that circles around classroom-modeled activities. Children work together to build necessary prerequisite skills via circle-time, snack groups, social skills groups, and a lunch to mimic a school day.

[Learn more here.](#)

3 ABA Therapy Insurance Coverage

The time and energy required to learn whether prescribed autism treatments are covered by insurance can make an already stressful time even more trying for families faced with a diagnosis of autism. These proven autism resources for parents can help:



Autism Speaks Insurance Guide

To help make the sometimes overwhelming task of seeking health insurance a bit less complicated, refer to thoroughly researched autism resources like the [Autism Speaks Insurance Guide](#).

Over the last decade, the advocacy team that created this guide has worked to improve health insurance coverage for medically necessary treatments like Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Over 200 million people now have health insurance coverage for ABA thanks to their efforts. Their online staff and autism resources can help you determine whether your health benefit plan provides meaningful ABA therapy coverage and can assist you in effectively implementing the benefits you're entitled to.

National Conference of State Legislatures List of State Statutes

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) estimate that an average of one in 68 children has an autism spectrum disorder; it costs an estimated \$17,000 more per year to care for these children compared to those without autism. That's why autism resources for parents are critical. As of June 8, 2017, 46 states and the District of Columbia have laws that require insurance coverage for autism services. For more information, review the autism resources for parents in this [National Conference of State Legislatures List of State Statutes](#).

Autism Insurance Resource Center

A program of The Shriver Center, a division of The University of Massachusetts Medical School, the [Autism Insurance Resource Center](#) provides autism resources for parents, providers, clinicians, employers, and educators on issues related to medical insurance for autism treatment in Massachusetts. As one happy user puts it: *"Their ability to de-mystify insurance coverages, clarify options and rectify related problems at both the commercial and government-subsidized levels has contributed significantly to the implementation of patients services that might not otherwise have."*

4 Autism Resources for Safety



Like people with dementia or Alzheimer's, children with autism are prone to wandering away from safe environments where they have a responsible person's care and handy autism resources. Whether it's running away from a school or community center playground, leaving a classroom without permission, or slipping out of the house when the family isn't looking – according to [Autism Speaks](#), 49% of kids with autism wander. Because they have challenges with social and communication skills and safety awareness, wandering is potentially even more dangerous for kids who have autism than it is for those who don't have autism and can communicate about their predicament. Make sure to leverage these autism resources:

AWARE Collaboration

The National Autism Association has created the [AWARE Collaboration](#) where you can download three digital safety autism resources: The Caregiver Toolkit, The First Responder Toolkit, and The Teacher Toolkit. These can help keep your child safe and anyone who may find them informed.

Alert Me Bands

You may also want to invest in [Alert Me Bands](#) – one-size-fits-all adjustable bands that communicate critical information when you're not around to do so. Whether your child goes missing, gets hurt, or becomes disoriented at a drop-off birthday party, this wristband can communicate who to call when your child can't do it themselves (whether they are too young, too scared, too shy, unable, or simply won't). They make it easier for first responders, bystanders, classmates, or moms who might find a child who has been separated from their parents and from their autism resources.

Project Lifesaver International

[Project Lifesaver International](#) is a robust international search and rescue program designed for “at-risk” wandering-prone individuals and operated collaboratively by various public safety agencies. The organization's mission is to provide timely responses to reduce potential injury or save the lives of adults and children with cognitive conditions. Project Lifesaver provides first responders with a basic understanding of cognitive conditions, giving them the necessary tools and autism resources needed to respond to an elopement and to assess and effectively manage the safe and comfortable return of an eloped client.

Safety Net Tracking Systems

Proven [Safety Net Tracking Systems](#) technology helps public safety professionals quickly find and bring your child home. Currently available in 18 states, it has assisted public safety with many successful rescues since its inception. When you enroll your child, you both become members of a community that's dedicated to providing autism resources to enable the safety and recovery of wanderers with cognitive impairments.

5 Assistive Devices

Under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act, assistive technology (AT) was defined as any item that “is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” This includes a wide range of autism resources that can be helpful or even life-changing for children with autism.



According to [Very Well Health](#), assistive technology devices are popular autism resources that fall into three categories:

Low-Tech AT

Low-tech AT includes anything that needs no electricity, like:

Stress Balls

These are a great resource for maintaining equilibrium. The most common stress or fidget toys used for children with autism make squishy noises or require physical manipulation to move. They have been shown to be the most desirable solution for autism during treatment because they are a needed source of distraction that reduces anxiety levels in children.

Weighted Vests

This wearable garment includes pockets that hold small half-pound or quarter-pound weights to deliver compression. The vest provides proprioceptive input via deep pressure to the muscles and joints, which sends signals to the brain to help a child feel calm and focused. It's one of the most comfortable autism resources as it resembles a firm hug. It helps decrease anxiety, promote a sense of calm, and increase attention, focus and concentration.



Cuisenaire Rods

These tools help introduce, investigate, and reinforce key math concepts like addition and subtraction, fractions, geometry, measurement, multiplication, and division. Children with autism can learn while playing and some find that these rods soothe anxiety.

Alphabet Blocks

Colorful, fun blocks can help children learn letters and short words. These autism resources come in many shapes, sizes, and colors to make learning fun and rewarding.

Cards and Games

Cards and board games are two autism resources that help children with autism spectrum disorder develop skills they may otherwise find difficult to master. Different games address different aspects or challenges that some children with autism may be struggling with – while they enjoy having fun.

Picture Exchange Communication Systems

This teaching protocol is one of the autism resources that's based on broad-spectrum applied behavior analysis. Specific prompting and reinforcement strategies that will lead to independent communication are used throughout the protocol, which includes systematic error correction procedures to promote learning gently if an error occurs.


Mid-Tech AT

These devices and tools are autism resources that are relatively inexpensive and easy to operate, like:

Battery-Operated Sensory Toys

Sensory integration (SI) is the brain's organization of information received from all the senses: including sight, smell, sound, taste, touch, body awareness, movement, and gravitational pull. Many kids with autism are slower to develop SI, which can lead to learning, behavioral, or developmental challenges.

Sensory toys – like toys talking stuffed animals, activity gyms, rainbow light aqua domes, and electronic guitars – feature contrasting colors, produce sounds or inspire touching to stimulate multiple senses and capture a child's attention. They may be used as rewards during ABA therapy, or serve as fidget toys that improve concentration and focus. These resources for children with autism promote mental exploration that can help their brains process and respond to sensory information by:

- 
- Building nerve connections in the brain's pathways
 - Promote the development of language, cognition, and motor skills
 - Enhance social interaction and problem-solving skills
 - Relieve frustration or anxiety
 - Help teach sensory attributes like dry, wet, cold, hot, and stick

Visual Timers

Timers help kids smoothly transition from one activity to another – one of the most critical autism resources they'll need once they begin school and must transition from class to class in a timely manner.

Sound-Blocking Headphones

Headphones block out disturbing sounds for children who get overstimulated and distracted easily.

Social Skills Videos

[These videos](#) break down and review skills step-by-step using storyboards and pictures of scenes kids can relate to.

Games That Teach Social Skills

[Social skills games](#) help kids understand perspectives, expand attention, create stronger social relationships, improve social competence, find a career path, and learn independent life skills.

Communication Apps


Apps like [Proloquo2Go](#) by Assistiveware, which features over 10,000 words customized for physical or cognitive needs, and [TouchChat HD](#) by Prentke Romich Company, which allows the user to choose a voice in either English or Spanish, help a child communicate their needs and desires.

High-Tech AT

Higher-tech tools tend to be more expensive, but can be very useful.

Augmentative Communication Technology

For non-verbal children, devices like [NovaChat](#) – a sophisticated communication device similar to tablet computers with touch screens – help a child navigate through pages of icons that represent different things and will communicate different messages when pushed. These range from very easy to use for the child (one button on the screen) up to very complex.



Robots Designed To Improve Social Skills

Machine learning models use audio and video data like dialogue and eye contact from childrens' interactions with a robot to detect whether they are engaged in a training activity. If not, the robot re-engages them to focus on therapeutic activities for longer stretches of time.

6 Play Time for Children With Autism

Children need to play – it helps them develop physical coordination, emotional maturity, social skills, and the self-confidence to try new experiences and explore new environments. Toys, games, and activities are some of the most popular autism resources designed to foster critical play skills and help children with developmental disabilities increase the complexity of their language, imagination, and creativity.



Learning appropriate play skills also provides opportunities for observational learning, increased social interactions, and aid in decreasing self-stimulatory behavior. One way to counteract these challenges is by selecting toys and activities recommended by [Autism Parenting Magazine](#) that reflect the academic skills needed for kindergarten readiness. From fidget toys that provide calming and repetitive movements to relieve anxiety to piggy banks that teach counting, toys can be extremely helpful autism resources.



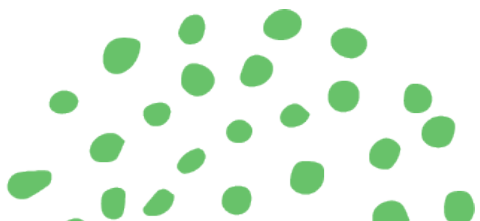
Autism Organizations



The Federation for Children With Special Needs

[The Federation for Children with Special Needs](#) was founded on the premise that “differences in people are a natural part of life, and that disabilities provide children and adults with unique perspectives, insights, and abilities which contribute to the overall well-being of society.”

The Federation provides information, support, and assistance to the parents, professional partners, and communities of children with disabilities to promote their participation in shaping, implementing, and evaluating public policy that affects them. Its peer support model promotes parents helping parents with all aspects of autism care.



8

Autism Resources for Feeding Assistance



One of the most difficult challenges for families navigating autism is getting their child to eat a healthy diet. According to [Indiana University Resource Center for Autism](#), 46% to 89% of children with autism have some level of food selectivity or sensitivity. Many parents of children on the autism spectrum struggle with their child's severe eating problems because there are so few eating and feeding disorder specialists to consult. These autism resources for parents may be more difficult to find, so begin searching as early as possible.

Feeding Toolkit

One of the more challenging resources for parents to use is the feeding toolkit. Usually, a doctor and a nurse are accompanied by an occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, as well as a nutritionist or dietician to do a thorough feeding assessment. The team will check for medical issues (teeth, gums, or oral motor dysfunctions), behavioral issues (attention and learning deficits), and environmental issues (sensory difficulties). When you have a better idea of what may be contributing to the problems, you are on your way to creating a plan to make things better. For help with this often confusing issue, you can consult the [Feeding Toolkit from Autism Speaks](#).

In order to help the child with ASD be able to sit at the mealtime table, parents and caregivers should develop a consistent schedule. When children snack throughout the day, they are often not hungry at mealtime. Structured meals help to establish a hunger cycle and increase the likelihood that your child will be more interested in exploring and trying new foods.

Kohl's Autism Awareness

It may be that your child wants to eat the exact same foods, in the exact same way, every day. To diversify their diet, families are encouraged to present foods in different cups, plates, and utensils until one is accepted. It may take up to twenty presentations of a new food before they eat it, so allowing them to play with, touch, and explore the sensory properties of foods can encourage them. Including friends and family can make mealtime fun. [Kohl's Autism Awareness](#) has produced a valuable guide full of autism resources to help you support your child's healthy eating habits – and make mealtime a pleasurable experience.

9

Autism Resources for Sensory Issues

Many children with autism have difficulties processing sensory information: smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch, and sense of movement or balance. They may be over-sensitive to certain sensations and get overstimulated easily, causing them to withdraw. For example, a child who is over-sensitive to sound may cover his ears in a noisy auditorium or crowded park.



Others may be under-sensitive to a certain sensation and seek out more of it in order to feel satiated. For example, a child who is under-sensitive to sounds may enjoy turning up the volume on the radio to full blast. Some children with autism may experience a combination of over-sensitivities and under-sensitivities and may need a more extensive collection of autism resources.

The Hanen Center

[The Hanen Center](#) is committed to enabling parents and professionals to transform interactions with children with autism to develop lifelong social, language, and literacy skills. Ayala Hanen Manolson, a speech-language pathologist, developed a group program for parents whose children had significant language delays, teaching them to assume a primary role in helping their children develop improved communication skills.

The Hanen program teaches that once you understand your child's sensory preferences, you'll better understand certain behaviors and avoidances and help your child manage difficult situations. For example, choosing clothing that is more comfortable for children who are over-sensitive to touch can free them up to concentrate on other things. Occupational therapists provide adaptation programs and activities to help with your child's sensory needs and use your child's sensory preferences to create "people games" that you can play to not only satisfy your child's sensory needs but create opportunities for communication and interaction.

Carmen B. Pingtree Autism Center of Learning

It's also a good idea to invest in the sensory toys recommended by the [Carmen B. Pingtree Autism Center of Learning](#). These autism resources help children with autism relax, focus, and calm down during a stressful or confusing event. These toys can enable them to grasp objects without dread or anxiety, ultimately allowing them to play naturally while developing social skills like sharing, negotiating, and planning.

10 Autism Resources for Sensory Issues



Understood

In order to secure special education services for your child in school, you'll need to get an assessment for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan. This requires working with your school district counselors to do assessments and gather medical records – typically a long, drawn-out, bureaucratic process. You can learn to navigate it, step by step, on [Understood](#) with the help of other parents on their autism journey. Their articles were reviewed by medical experts like Melody Musgrove, EdD, who served as director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education.

These autism resources will help you understand who gets an IEP and the difference between an IEP and a 504 plan. Understanding these subtleties can help you decide which plan to pursue for your child and empower you to advocate confidently. The process can be confusing, so it's important to know what happens – and when.

IEP

Your child's special education program is one of the more complex autism resources for parents. It kicks off with a specialist team meeting. The school counselor, psychologist, or social worker will collaborate on the evaluation process and recommend services and curriculum adjustments to support your child.

The resources you'll find on Understood will help you learn how the school makes that decision and what to do if the team decides your child isn't eligible. You know your child best — learn how to make that clear and give feedback or request personalized care. After the evaluation, the team will decide whether your child is eligible for an IEP or a 504 plan. Learn what your options are if you disagree with their conclusions and how to get your school to consider the results of a private evaluation.

The IEP journey continues well after your child's plan is approved and implemented. You'll play a key role in making sure the plan is working and your child is making progress. But what does that involve? What should you be looking for or asking about? Understood will help you find answers. Both the IEP and 504 plan will change over time — as will your role — along with your child's needs. You'll also be involved in developing the plan for transitioning out of an IEP during the last year of high school. These autism resources will help you be your child's number-one advocate throughout their school years and beyond.

11 Autism Resources for Sensory Issues

Many parents come to us prepared to learn and partner, but aren't aware of extremely valuable resources in their state. That's why we've gathered a list of resources specific to the three states in which HealthPRO Pediatrics is currently operating:



Colorado

Autism Society Colorado: strives to improve the lives of all people touched by autism: families, providers, educators, and members of the community while working to advocate, inform, and share the journey with thousands of Coloradans.

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition: advocates for social justice for people with all types of disabilities and works with individuals, service providers, businesses, and government agencies to ensure that people with cross-disability have equal rights and equal access.

Early Intervention Colorado: provides support and services to children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families from birth until the child's third birthday and helps promote child development in everyday routines and activities.

Ability Connection Colorado: provides critical early childhood education, innovative pathways to employment, and parent-driven family support services for people with special needs and other life challenges.

Colorado Insurance Requirements for ASD: this information is reviewed on an annual basis, as laws, regulations, and policies may change at any time, so always check with your state for the most up-to-date information. **Note:** *Certain insurance plans are exempt from state mandates. Please contact your plan administrator to see if your plan includes state-mandated autism spectrum disorder benefits.*

Florida

Florida's Assistive Technology Program: provides user education, demos, as well as funding assistance and loans for assistive technology.

Children's Medical Services/Florida's Early Steps System: Florida's early intervention system offers services to eligible infants and toddlers (birth to thirty-six months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay.

Bureau of Exceptional Student Education: administers programs for students with disabilities, coordinates student services, and participates in multiple inter-agency efforts designed to strengthen the quality of special needs services.

University of Central Florida Center for Autism and Related Disabilities: provides individualized, direct consultative assistance to individuals with autism and related disabilities in Central Florida and their families (including technical assistance, training, and public education).

Insurance Requirements: this information is reviewed on an annual basis, as laws, regulations, and policies may change at any time, so always check with your state for the most up-to-date information. **Note:** *Certain insurance plans are exempt from state mandates. Please contact your plan administrator to see if your plan includes state-mandated autism spectrum disorder benefits.*

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Advocates For Children: a nonprofit children's advocacy organization in downtown Boston that provides autism resources for students, families, communities, and at the policy level to remove barriers to education for children across Massachusetts.

Mass Health Guidelines for Medical Necessity for AAC Devices: determines the medical necessity for coverage of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) or speech devices. Guidelines are based on accepted standards of practice, review of the medical literature, and federal and state policies and laws applicable to Medicaid programs.

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Support Centers: provides funding for autism resources – including information, assistance, and supportive services – to families with children and adults with disabilities who are living at home.

Massachusetts Autism Commission Report: envisions a Commonwealth in which all individuals with autism have full access, throughout their lifetimes, to all the supports and services they require to be contributing, productive, and fulfilled community members.

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access Website: helps both providers and individuals locate openings in mental health and substance use disorder services. We welcome everyone to search for services that they can access directly from their community.

Massachusetts Autism Insurance Resource Center: provides resources for consumers, providers, clinicians, employers, and educators on issues related to medical insurance for autism treatment – including an ABA provider list and training modules.

Massachusetts Insurance Requirements: this information is reviewed on an annual basis, as laws, regulations, and policies may change at any time, so always check with your state for the most up-to-date information. **Note:** *Certain insurance plans are exempt from state mandates. Please contact your plan administrator to see if your plan includes state-mandated autism spectrum disorder benefits.*

Ready To Explore Endless Possibilities?

We realize you've just read through a huge amount of information – which is not always easy to process – but we hope it's given you hope and vision for your child's and your family's future. Now you need clinical expertise to help you bring that vision to life. You never know what possibilities lie ahead for your child until you get started!