



Maryland, Virginia, and DC Resources for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

This simplified guide helps parents navigate the process of accessing resources for children showing signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). If your child exhibits symptoms of ASD, a thorough psychological evaluation can be beneficial.

Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Difficulty in conversations, sharing interests, emotions, and appropriate facial expressions.
- Trouble initiating social interactions.
- Problems using verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Difficulty understanding nonverbal cues.
- Challenges adjusting behavior to different social situations.
- Limited interest in others.
- Repetitive behaviors or strict routines.
- Sensory sensitivities.
- Unusual focus on sensory aspects of surroundings.

What Causes Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Current research suggests that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) results from a combination of genetic and environmental factors. In some cases, ASD may be linked to underlying genetic conditions. However, for most individuals, the exact cause remains unknown. Importantly, there is no evidence that ASD is caused by anything parents did or did not do before or during pregnancy, or while caring for their infant or toddler.

Do Vaccines Cause Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Extensive scientific research has shown that vaccines are not associated with ASD. Despite public concerns and media attention, multiple studies confirm no link between vaccines and ASD. It is important to vaccinate children to prevent serious health risks. For more information, visit [CDC Autism Spectrum Disorder](https://www.cdc.gov/autism) and consult your healthcare provider with any questions.

How Common Is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

ASD is the fastest-growing developmental disability diagnosis. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 36 children in the United States is diagnosed with ASD, with boys being more frequently affected than girls. For more information, visit [CDC Autism Spectrum Facts](#).

How Is Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosed?

ASD is diagnosed based on a child's behaviors, as there is no medical test like a blood test, x-ray, or MRI that can diagnose it. Doctors may conduct genetic testing to identify potential genetic causes and recommend other tests to check for related conditions such as seizures.

For additional details or support, please contact your healthcare provider or visit the provided CDC links.

ASD Diagnosis Process

- **Initial Appointment:**
 - Review concerns and conduct an in-depth interview with parents/caregivers.
 - Complete a symptom-based checklist and the Autism Diagnostic Observation System-2 (ADOS-2).
 - Conduct psychological and educational testing.
 - Distribute behavior rating scales for parents/guardians and teachers.
 - Collect school records.
- **Second Appointment:**
 - Review evaluation results and intervention recommendations in a summary conference.
 - Encourage sharing the evaluation report with school officials.

Key Resources

Maryland Diagnostic Evaluation

1. [Kennedy Krieger Institute](#)
 - Autism Services and Support
 - Phone: 443-923-7630, Option 2
2. [Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital](#)
 - Autism Spectrum Center
 - Phone: 410-367-2222

Virginia Diagnostic Evaluation

1. **Virginia Autism Resource Center**

- Support for autism evaluations and resources
- 2. [Inova](#)
 - Behavioral Health Services
 - Phone: 703-218-8500

Autism Organizations

The Arc of Northern Virginia: 703-532-3214.

Autism Society of America, National Office: 301-657-0881.

Autism Society of Northern Virginia: 703-495-8444, info@asnv.org.

Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia: 703-391-2251, Concerns@POAC-NoVA.org.

DC Diagnostic Evaluation

1. **MedStar Georgetown University Hospital**
 - [Autism and Communications Disorders Clinic](#)
 - Phone: 202-444-2722
 - [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program \(up to age 8\)](#)
 - Phone: 202-944-5400
2. **[Children's National Hospital](#)**
 - Various Autism Clinics
3. **[Advocates for Justice & Education](#)**
 - Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) and Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F) for the District of Columbia
4. **[DC Special Education Hub](#)**
 - Helps families understand special education in DC with tools, information, and 1:1 support.

General Resources

- **[DC Autism Parents \(DCAP\)](#)**
 - Resources, video series, and newsletters for parents of autistic children.
- **Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI)**
 - Each state has a PTI to help families with children with disabilities.
- **Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2F)**
 - Staffed by family members with experience, offering support for health care needs.

Parent Training Programs

1. **[ADEPT \(Autism Distance Education Parent Training\)](#)**
 - Online learning modules for teaching children with autism.

2. [Caregiver Skills Training \(Autism Speaks and WHO\)](#)
 - Free online training for caregivers of children ages 2-9 with autism.
 - [Free virtual training for Caregivers of Children ages 2-9 with autism by the Ethiopian Eritrean Special needs Community](#)
3. [Help is in Your Hands](#)
 - Video modules for parents to help support their children with autism.
4. **Association for Science in Autism Treatment - Learn More About Specific Treatments:** A comprehensive resource for parents of children with autism, offering evidence-based information on a wide range of autism treatments. It aims to empower families with knowledge to make informed decisions regarding therapeutic options, emphasizing the importance of scientifically validated methods for improving the lives of individuals with autism.

Tips for Accessing Autism Evaluations

- **Start Early:** Waitlists can be long (3 months-2 years), so begin as soon as possible.
 - **Call Multiple Clinics:** Increase your chances of getting an appointment sooner.
 - **Gather Information:** Keep all medical and educational records ready.
 - **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to seek clarification on anything you don't understand.
 - **Coordinate:** Work with your medical provider to arrange further evaluations if needed.
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General Resources

- **DC Autism Parents (DCAP)**
 - Resources, video series, and newsletters
- **Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI)**
 - State-specific support for families with children with disabilities
- **Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2F)**
 - Staffed by experienced family members
- **Parent Training Programs**
 - ADEPT: Online modules for teaching children with autism
 - Caregiver Skills Training (Autism Speaks and WHO): Free online training for caregivers of children ages 2-9
 - Help is in Your Hands: Video modules for parent support

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This simplified guide helps parents navigate the process of managing finances and accessing resources after an educational classification of autism, with specific information for Maryland, Virginia, and DC.