



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER MIGHT HAVE AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



*Stories about Autism are often in the news and on TV, but knowing where and how to get a correct diagnosis can be unclear. This flyer provides information and options to help parents make decisions.*

### ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR PEDIATRICIAN

If you are concerned that your child might have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), your family doctor may be able to provide some guidance. Family doctors and pediatricians often ask parents about their child's developmental milestones or behaviors and some doctors even screen for ASD using simple interview questions. In some cases, your doctor may tell you that the pattern of concerns is an autism spectrum disorder. ***It is more likely, however, than an extensive visit with skilled team members who can actually work with your son or daughter and ask very in-depth questions may be needed.***

### FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS OLD

If your child is younger than three years of age and you are concerned about behaviors, speech, or social delays, contact **Early ACCESS at 1-888-425-4371** or [www.earlyaccessiowa.org](http://www.earlyaccessiowa.org). A special assessment called the *Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers* helps assess speech skills and can also tell you if your child needs a medical diagnosis. Early ACCESS teams may provide early intervention services with professionals like speech therapists, occupational therapists or home intervention providers. Family support services, training, and resources may also be available. ***There is no charge for this assessment or services and the earlier services begin, the greater the chance for improvements in speech, learning, and social development.***

### GET A MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS

If you suspect your child may have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), you can seek a medical diagnosis. One place to get a medical diagnosis is the **University of Iowa Children's Hospital Autism Center**. ***For an appointment call 1-855-842-8847.*** During your appointment, a team of highly trained people will talk with you and test your child to see if there are learning, language, or social problems like ASD. Team members may include doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, educators, or social workers.

### FOR CHILDREN 3 YEARS AND OLDER

If your child is three years of age or older, contact **Compass at 1-888-425-4371, or your local school district**. Using a team approach, they will do a complete assessment with your son or daughter. This team will include a speech clinician, educators, an occupational therapist, psychologist, and other professionals.

### EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Even after you have a medical diagnosis, your local Early ACCESS provider or the preschool team may have to do additional testing to see if your son or daughter meets eligibility to receive educational services. In other words, ***a medical diagnosis does not mean that a child is eligible for special educational services.***

## ABOUT AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are referred to as a spectrum to make it clear that while children share common behaviors, ***no two children on the spectrum are the same***. Each child will show different behaviors and the circumstances that arouse these behaviors will also differ.

Some children show hints of future problems within the first few months of life, while others may not show these behaviors until two years of age or even later. Some children with an ASD seem to develop typically until 18 to 24 months of age and then stop gaining new skills or lose the skills they once had.

For example, a child with an ASD might:

- ◆ Not respond to their name by 12 months
- ◆ Have delayed speech and language skills
- ◆ Repeat words or phrases over and over
- ◆ Give unrelated answers to questions
- ◆ Flap their hands, rock their body, or spin in circles

For more information about behaviors and normal developmental milestones, see the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>.

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