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*Tips for Planning
Your Child's Autism
Therapies*

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Three Tips For Planning Your Child's Autism Therapies

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Know the Treatment Options

Autism is a complex neurodevelopment condition, and a diagnosis does not lead to a single treatment course or pathway.

In a recent nationwide survey of children aged 3-17 years, the most common autism therapies are speech therapy, occupational therapy, & behavioral therapies. Others include developmental therapies, psychological therapies such as CBT and parent/caregiver training.

Access to these therapies vary by region, with long wait lists as a common barrier to starting treatment.

The *best place to start* is by reading your child's diagnostic evaluation, which gives specific treatment recommendations based on their unique profile of strengths & needs. Next, search for what is available in your local community and begin to contact those providers.



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Understand the Benefits & Risks

Autism requires multi-disciplinary care, and each therapy carries its own set of benefits & risks that should be discussed with you.

One of the most common therapies, behavioral therapy or ABA, has decades of research demonstrating its effectiveness in improving outcomes such as communication, social, adaptive and behavioral skills. Recently, it has come under scrutiny for its use of certain procedures such as timeouts & use of rewards and the number of hours recommended for young children (e.g., 25-40 hours per week). As ABA therapies evolve to address these concerns, it continues to be recommended by the US Surgeon General, American Psychological Association and American Academy of Pediatrics.

Across all therapies, you have the right to *ask questions before giving consent* and *actively participate in decision-making* about your child's treatment goals and plans.



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Reflect on Your Family Priorities & Values

Parents are respected as experts about their child. Professionals and parents work together through assessment, planning, and implementation practices that reflect the family's concerns and priorities.

Treatment plans should also include opportunities that strengthen parenting knowledge & skills in ways that are flexible and tailored to the family's preferences and values.

You will find yourself in a sea of questions (and questionnaires!) but remember to take time for reflection. Ask yourself: *What type of parent do I want to be? What are the qualities I want my child to possess when they grow up? What tools, as a parent, help me in a consistent way?*

Self-reflection will allow you to step back from the day-to-day challenges to make intentional choices for your child and family.



Help is Here!

I hope you found these tips as a thoughtful starting point for planning your child's autism therapies. Connect with me on Instagram for additional guidance. I'd love to hear your questions!

If you'd like to learn more about treatment options & ways YOU can support your child's development, subscribe to my free newsletter and upcoming online parent course, ***While You Wait: A Guide to Planning & Presence for Your Child with Autism.***

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