

What can I do while waiting for an **autism** assessment?

Community
Paediatrician
Service



What can I do while waiting for an autism assessment?



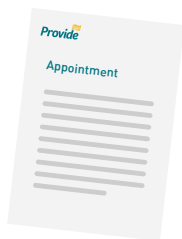
Develop/maintain a **routine** for your child, maintain physical activity, healthy eating, appropriate limits on screen time and good sleep routine. Use primary care services, NHS 111 and hospital services for any physical health problems. Make use of emotional health and mental health services that can offer support.

Keep a **developmental journal**: Using tools like a behaviour chart, sleep and food diary to record the impact on home life.



Develop a **network**: National, local charities and local Parent Carer Forums can put you in touch with other parents who are in the same position as you are.

Look after yourself: You need to look after yourself to be able to advocate for your child.



When you get closer to your assessment, **organise information** from other professionals: Make sure that questionnaires are completed and returned. Chase up any pending information from educational settings that is needed to support the assessment.



ADAPTED FROM: www.autismspeaks.org/blog/five-things-do-while-waiting-autism-evaluation



ASD/ADHD strategies can be helpful for all children, including:

- Maintaining **clear** and **consistent boundaries** so that the child knows what is expected of them and what to expect from you.
- Keeping **instructions simple** and **precise**, break them down if needed.
- Give **instructions calmly** and **slowly**. Some children respond better when given a choice and some control over their environment.
- Allow the child **time** to **process** the information, asking them to repeat back the instruction will allow you to see if they have been able to process it. If they are unable to tell you, repeat the process until they are clear.
- A child will **understand** instructions better if they are **guided** on what to do instead of what they should not be doing. For example, you could say 'Can you speak in a quiet, indoor voice' instead of saying 'stop shouting'.
- **Visual aids** can help, for example a simple list of what is required in written or picture form. Placing a list somewhere where it can be seen clearly and easily by the child or young person.
- Make any **changes clear** to the young person **in advance** so that they can predict what is going to happen next. Visual aids can also help with explaining the change. Give them a chance to ask questions about change. Explain the good things about the change, for example if you are moving to a bigger house or going on holiday.
- Be aware of **anxiety**. Look out for signs of anxiety and support the child to express how they are feeling. You could offer a worry book or box where they can write or draw any concerns they have.
- Break **tasks** into **smaller chunks** with breaks in between to help keep them on task.
- If your child or young person are finding a task **difficult** to do, **acknowledge** this and **recognise** the **effort** that they are showing, for example, 'I can see that this is difficult for you but I can also see how hard you are trying'. Please note that some children do not like to be praised.
- **Rewards** work better than punishment, they reinforce what you would like to see more of, for example, giving extra time for wanted behaviour instead of taking it away for bad behaviour.



ADAPTED FROM: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/06/ASD-Pack-for-Parents-and-Carers-NDC2018.pdf



For further information on what to do while waiting for an autism assessment **Purple Ella** has some suggestions in her YouTube video "**What to do while waiting for an autism assessment**". Scan this QR code to watch >>>





Support at school

Having an open dialog and regular meetings with school where you can share ideas, challenges and successes with each other is also recommended.

If you think you or your child need support at school, you can start getting help before having an assessment.

You can:

- find a local support group using the National Autistic Society services directory
- talk to teachers or special educational needs (SENCO) staff at your child's school
- ask your local council for a needs assessment to see what support they can recommend

www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/assessments/





Further information and guidance

The National Autistic Society

Leading charity for autistic people and their families. Source of information covering a wide range of issues.

Helpline: 📞 0808 800 4104

🌐 www.autism.org.uk

Autism Anglia

Regional charity providing advice, care and support for children, adults and families affected by autism.

📞 01206 577678

🌐 www.autism-anglia.org.uk

Special Needs and Parents (SNAP)

Charity for Essex families with children and young adults (up to 25 years old) who have special needs or disabilities.

📞 01277 211300

🌐 www.snapcharity.org

Families in Focus

Chelmsford based parent-led organisation offering holistic care for families of children with disabilities and special needs. Services include assistance with Disability Allowance applications and independent support on educational issues.

📞 01245 353575

🌐 www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Essex County Council

Latest information about services (education, rehabilitation and social care support) for families and people with autism.

🌐 www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk

Mental Wellbeing

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS)

Available through the NHS for children/young people up to 18 years old (up to 25 years for special educational needs). Referral made via GP, paediatrician or direct request.

📞 0300 300 1600

🕒 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday

Crisis: 📞 0300 555 1201 (out of hours)

Young Minds

National charity dedicated to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health for children and young people including those who may have autism.

Helpline: 📞 0808 802 5544

🌐 www.youngminds.org.uk

Mid and North Essex Mind

Local mental health charity for those finding life difficult.

🌐 www.mnessexmind.org

MindEd

Free online educational resource to improve understanding of mental health problems in children and young people.

🌐 www.minded.org.uk

