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bringing hope home

Answers to the 7 Most Common Questions About Autism

Here are answers to some of the most common questions parents have after their child has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

1. WHAT DOES AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS MEAN?

Autism is a developmental disorder with symptoms that typically appear within the first three years of life. The word "spectrum" is important because it means that autism appears in different forms with varying levels of severity. It also means that each individual with autism has their own unique strengths, symptoms, and challenges.

Today, 1 in 36 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). You aren't alone and there is hope for your child to live a fulfilling life because of the many resources and highly effective treatment programs available today. And the earlier you start, the better off your child will be, which is why screening and early detection is so critical.

2. CAN AUTISM BE TREATED?

The answer is a resounding yes! The professional who diagnosed your child may suggest certain treatments like ABA behavioral therapy, speech therapy, or occupational therapy, and may refer you to a trusted therapy provider. It is very important that you find a therapy provider who you and your child are comfortable with and who will develop a personalized therapy plan for your child's needs.

3. WHAT TYPE OF TREATMENT IS MOST EFFECTIVE?

While there are many types of treatments available, the most prevalent type of treatment is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. ABA is a proven scientific model that looks at how behaviors affect and are affected by specific environments, reinforces positive behaviors, and redirects away from negative behaviors. ABA therapy has the most positive impact when it is provided 25-35 hours per week for children under age 6.

4. WHEN SHOULD I START TREATMENT?

The answer is as soon as possible. In a recent survey 98% of medical professionals said they encourage "early intervention" therapies in children as early as eighteen months old. For most children diagnosed with autism, therapy is most effective when initiated before age 5, lasts at least two to three years, and is specialized to meet the child's specific needs and goals. Research has shown that children diagnosed with autism who receive early intervention ABA therapy have a much greater chance of building critical developmental skills such as communication, spoken language, and social skills.

5. DO I HAVE TO DRIVE MY CHILD TO THERAPY EVERY DAY?

Therapy can be delivered in the comfort of your own home or in a clinic setting. The place of care should be carefully considered when choosing a therapy provider, and important factors like the age of your child and how you feel about the environment in which your child receives care should be evaluated.

Many parents feel more comfortable having therapy occur in the home for preschool age children because changing environments every day can be difficult for their child. When therapy is delivered in the natural environment of the home setting, skills like brushing teeth and getting dressed that lead to greater independence can also be developed.

6. DOES INSURANCE COVER THERAPY FOR AUTISM?

The good news is that there are resources available that can cover part of, or all of, your autism therapy needs. Most major health plans cover autism therapy. Check with your insurance provider to see which therapies are covered and find out which therapy service providers are in network. If your health plan does not cover autism therapy, state Medicaid or county level resources may be able to assist.

7. WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

There are many resources available to you when it comes to learning about autism spectrum disorder. Parent groups can be a great source of information about local resources. Large national organizations provide a wealth of information on their websites and are worth checking out, including Autism Speaks, the Autism Society of America, and the National Autism Association.

You can also visit www.opyacare.com where you will find resources to help your journey, such as:

- 8 Questions to Ask an Autism Therapy Provider
- What to Do Now that Your Child has Been Diagnosed with ASD
- What to Expect When You Work with Opya

Need more info or ready to schedule an assessment?
Call 888.300.OPYA (6792) | Email info@opyacare.com | Visit www.opyacare.com

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Discover Opya

Opya specializes in personalized, in-home early intervention autism therapy services including ABA, speech, and occupational therapies for newly diagnosed children under 6-years old. Our connected care model results in a high level of communication and collaboration between parents and clinicians that makes parents' lives easier and empowers our therapists to provide more effective care.

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