

AUTISM ACTION PLAN

By: Leigh Ann Chapman, N.D.

www.chapmanND.com

Has someone told you that your child may have a developmental delay or disorder such as autism or Asperger Syndrome? Do you have concerns about your child's development?

Here are some steps to get you going in the right direction...

Validate your concerns:

If you have concerns about your child's motor, social/ emotional, cognitive or communication development, investigate them with the following tools:

www.firstsigns.org

www.asqoregon.com

Get an Evaluation:

The sooner you get an evaluation, the sooner you can get services from schools, programs and specialists.

In Oregon, you can get an educational diagnosis through early intervention specialists that work through your county. This diagnosis will be enough to qualify your child for educational and therapeutic resources provided for free through the state. Contact your county's Early Intervention/ Special Education office. Phone numbers, by county, are available at www.oregon.gov

If the educational diagnosis alone is not meeting your child's needs, pursue a medical diagnosis from an experienced psychologist or developmental pediatrician.

Get Organized:

Manage medical records, assessments, laboratory values and other important data in a binder and have it organized and ready to go for appointments. A "Child's Life Care Notebook" is available from the [Swindell's Center in Portland, Oregon](#).

Get Resources:

The [Autism Society of Oregon](#) provides many wonderful resources for families in Oregon. These resources include support groups, social groups, conferences and the "Take a break on ASO" program.

Get an IEP (Individualized Education Program):

[The RISE Center](#) helps parents with the IEP process - for free! They run free seminars throughout Oregon, have a free Special Ed helpline, and - on request - provide volunteer Parent Partners to attend IEP meetings with the parents. The website is <http://www.oregonrisecenter.org/>

Other helpful links and info can be found at:

www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/forms/iep/

www.tacanow.com/iepcheck.htm

If your child is under the age of 5, an IFSP (Individual Family Support Plan) is available as well as Early Intervention preschool and specific therapies provided by the state.

The Complete IEP Guide by Attorney Lawrence M. Siegel.

This book clearly illustrates your rights and will define what is possible for your child to receive.

Obtain early therapeutic intervention:

Organize a team of therapists, under the guidance of your primary care provider, pediatrician or an autism consultant. A good therapist will be able to identify your child's strengths and weaknesses and provide detailed recommendations for your child. Early intervention leads to success!

Types of professionals to consider:

Speech pathologist

Occupational therapist

Behavioral therapist

Find A doctor who is experienced in biomedical treatment of patients with autism:

It is crucial for individuals with autism maintain optimal physical health so that the brain and nervous system can function properly. Symptoms of physical illness appear differently in patients who struggle with language and sensory issues. Many individuals with autism have unique medical issues that, left untreated, can make communication, cognition and regulation more difficult. There are many safe and effective biomedical therapies that can be helpful for individuals with autism.

Websites:

Autism Treatment Institute (www.autism.com)

TACA (www.tacanow.org)

Books:

[*Changing the Course of Autism*](#)- Bryan Jepson, M.D.

[*Healing the New Childhood Epidemics: Autism, ADHD, Asthma and Allergies*](#)- Kenneth Bock, M.D.

The Autism Revolution: Whole-Body Strategies for Making Life All It Can Be- Martha Herbert, M.D.

Address your child's diet:

The foods we eat directly affect the ability of our brain and body to develop and function properly. Remove artificial preservatives & dyes from all foods. Give up added sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Go organic if you can and eat as many whole, fresh foods as possible. Get some good recipes and experiment with vegetables! Your child will only eat them if he sees you eating (and enjoying) them, so get creative and have fun!

Cookbooks:

[*Nourishing Traditions*](#) by: Sally Fallon

[*The Sneaky Chef Cookbook*](#): Missy Chase LePine

[*The Petit Appetit Cookbook: Easy, Organic Recipes to Nurture Your Baby and Toddler*](#) by: Lisa Barnes

[*The Family Nutrition Book*](#): William Sears MD

Many patients have found a Gluten free/ Casein free (GF/CF) diet helpful.

[*Nourishing Hope*](#) by Julie Matthews

www.gfcfdiet.com

[*The Kid-Friendly ADHD and Autism Cookbook*](#): by [Pamela Compart](#) & [Dana Laake](#)

Attend support group meetings:

Autism Society of Oregon: www.oregonautism.com Call: 1-888-AUTISM-1 or email at: info@oregonautism.com

Autism society of Washington: www.autismsocietyofwa.org Call: 1-888-279-4968

Autism medical support group: kathyh@arroautism.org Call: 503-284-0350

Find Balance:

Keep in mind that advocating for your child is quite like running a marathon. You need to pace yourself and think both short term and long term about every decision you make. Balance in your life will benefit both you and your child. Remember to cherish your spouse and other children. Also, remember to take time for yourself! Keep seeking out the fun and love that comes with being a family. Keep participating in activities that help control stress and lift you up. Encourage your child every day and emphasize all of his or her wonderful STRENGTHS!