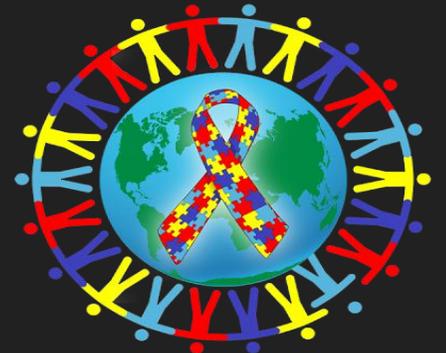


Next Steps: What to do After a New Autism Diagnosis

By Sara Palm-Sons, Lewis County Parent to Parent & Family Support Network



Receiving a Diagnosis...

- It is important to know that every family's journey is different...as hard as it is, try not to compare or be hard on yourself if you are in a different place than others.
- Sometimes, even within the family, parents can have a different way of processing a new diagnosis...try to be understanding and patient with your partner. Be open to listening to and sharing different perspectives.
- Don't forget about the siblings! Siblings' feelings (especially older siblings) can be similar to the parents feelings. They can experience worry, fear, even grief. Make sure to take time with the siblings and answer questions they may have.

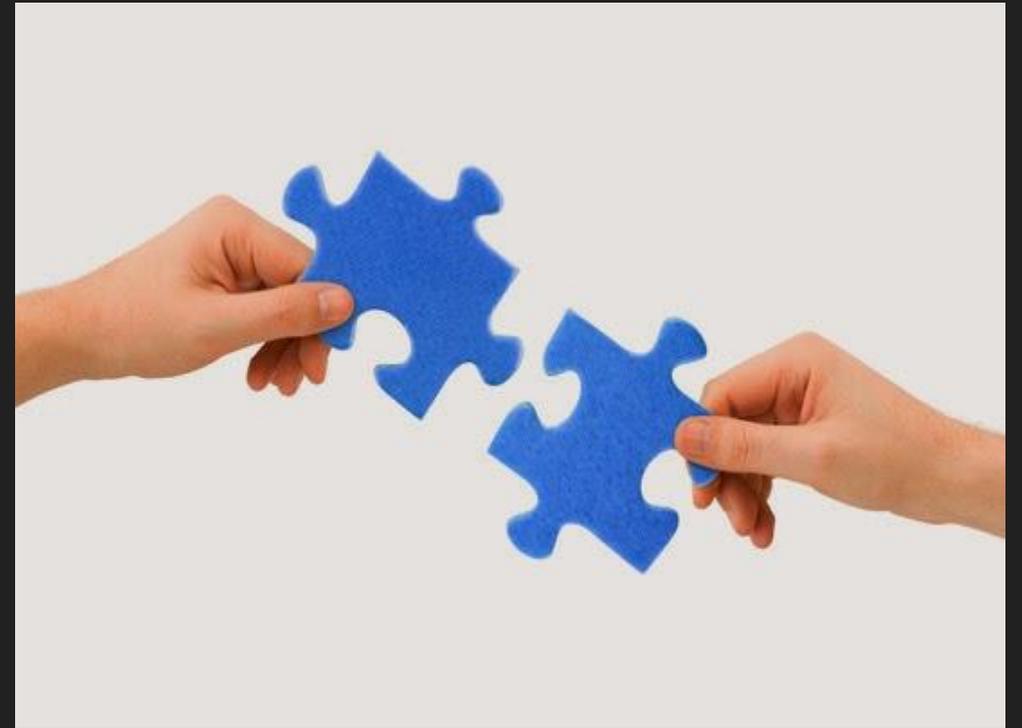
Reach Out...

- Reach out to other parents
- Join a local support group
- Attend inclusive family events
- Find a family counselor



Connect to Formal Supports & Services...

- SSI- Supplemental Security Income
- DDA- Developmental Disabilities Administration
- School Based Services- IEP/504 plan
- Medical & Psychological Supports
- Therapy (Speech, Occupational, Behavioral)



Gathering Information...

- Library
- Websites
- Trainings
- Webinars

Ask yourself: Is it relevant to my child? Is this new information? Is this a reliable source? Is this a theory or is there evidence?



Stay Organized...

- Keep important documents in a safe place
- Request records from Dr.s, school district, and therapists
- Track phone calls/emails and the outcome



Safety...

- Have a plan!
- Detail important information about your loved one on a one-pager that hangs in the house
- Autism-proof your house (locks, alarms, gate)



Take Care of Yourself...

- Invest in yourself!
- Don't beat yourself up
- Use your support system...ask for help when you need it!

