

Understanding And Treating Autism

# UNDERSTANDING AND TREATING AUTISM

SELECTED TIPS - 41 PAGES!



41 Pages!

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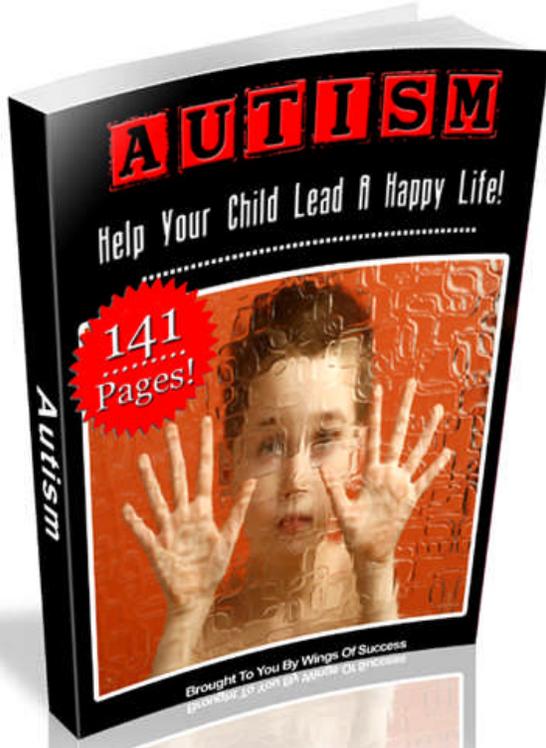
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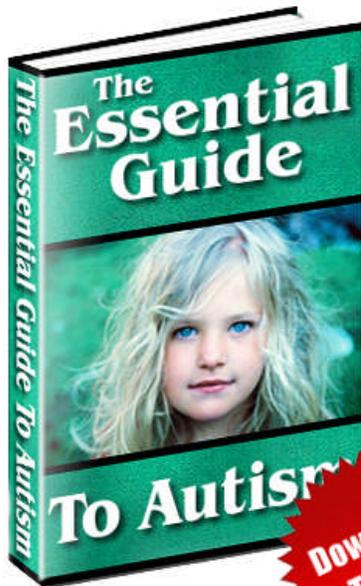
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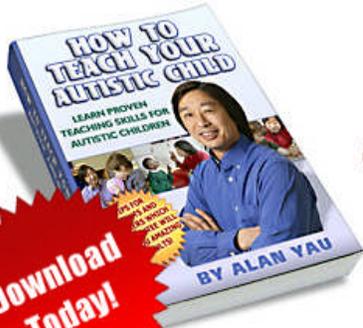
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## Contents

What Causes Autism .....	8
Accepting The Diagnosis Of Autism .....	10
Doctors And Diagnosing Autism.....	12
Signs Of Autism .....	14
Gluten Free Diet .....	16
Medicine Used To Treat Autism .....	18
Alternative Treatments For Autism .....	20
How To Cope As A Parent Of An Autistic Child.....	22
Let Your Autistic Child be a Kid .....	24
Autistic Children Need Schedules .....	26
10 Tips For Celebrating Holidays With Your Autistic Child.....	28
Treatments For Aspergers Syndrome .....	31
What Is Persuasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified .....	33
Signs Of Persuasive Developmental Disorder.....	35
How PDD-NOS Is Diagnosed .....	37

### What Causes Autism

Whenever a doctor informs the parents that their child is suffering with Autism, the first & foremost question that is thrown over him is - How did it happen? How did my child get this disease?

Well, there is no definite answer to what are the exact causes of Autism. Yet, there are various theories that the researchers and doctors are working on. Interestingly, it is found that Autism is rather common in boys than girls.

Earlier, it was believed that Autism occurred due to emotional trauma. Hence, bad parenting was added to its causes. The doctors said that mothers not giving their children enough attention & love were a problem. However, these factors were proved wrong with enough study & research.

The most known theory regarding the causes of Autism is - Genetic. Some researchers feel that individuals are born with the predisposition to be Autistic. Later on some environmental triggers make them Autistic. They say, there are several genes that lead to Autism, but are yet to find them.

Environmental factors are found to make a great impact on Autism. Studies show that there are several cases of Autism in small towns that are exposed to high levels of toxins & chemicals. Usually, towns located near the industrial areas or factories have quite toxic air that triggers Autism among children.

Another interesting theory regarding Autism links it to mercury. They say, as Autism was first diagnosed near about the same time when vaccines were given, Autism was caused due to the mercury content in the vaccines.

Mercury or thimersal in the vaccines in today's date is almost nil or in mere trace amounts. Also there could be several other risks if these vaccines are not given to the child. So, one finds no reason to blindly blame the vaccines and hence avoid them in order to prevent Autism.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

Rather high level of mercury can be met by eating a lot of fish, or being exposed to the industrial emissions. Research says that there might be a certain link amidst the expecting mothers and their children being Autistic. Now, the researchers are testing the pregnant women's exposure to mercury and they would further study the babies at birth. This would help them monitor, if there theory is proved true or not.

Further Autism is linked with some underlying health issues. It is said that children suffering with diseases like Fragile X Syndrome and Congenital Rubella have higher chances of being Autistic.

Metabolic imbalance is another perception. Researchers say that metabolic imbalance in the child might also lead to Autism.

In order to get through the right cause of Autism, much more study and analysis is required. Hopefully there would be a day when we would be able to prevent and cure the disease. Until then, we must fight back the disease with courage.

## Accepting The Diagnosis Of Autism

When you hear that your child has been diagnosed with autism, the worst thoughts come to your mind. You can feel scared, lonely and overwhelmed. All of these feelings are natural when dealing with a new situation, but it doesn't have to be terrifying. There are many organizations and people to help along the way. During the process of coping with the diagnosis of autism, you may go through a mixture of feelings. Here is what to expect and the stages of dealing with the diagnosis.

**Stage 1 - Denial:** This is common and usually happens immediately after you hear the diagnosis. You could think not my child or the doctors have to be wrong. There is nothing wrong with getting a second opinion but if a second opinion confirms what has been told, don't keep dragging your child from doctor to doctor hoping for something different. It's important to move past this stage of the process because denying the existence of autism isn't going to help anyone, especially the child. The quicker parents accept the diagnosis of autism, the quicker treatment can begin.

**Stage 2 - Anger:** Getting angry is a natural human emotion. There are different ways to go through this anger. You can get mad at yourself, thinking you did something wrong. You can get angry at God, questioning why your child has autism. You may even get mad at other parents with healthy children, wondering why they don't have to deal with autism. The key when dealing with anger is speaking to someone about it. Speak to someone you trust. Your doctor might be able to refer you to a counselor who can help with these issues.

**Stage 3 - Grief:** Grief is a very strong emotion, but a natural one in dealing with bad news. Feeling sad is not a bad thing though, so you should never feel guilty about feeling heartbroken. However, don't let this emotion overwhelm you because you might transfer this onto your child who might blame themselves, thinking they did something wrong. Working past grief is important, but it's also a natural process. If you notice you are sitting in stage three too long or people around you think you have been grieving too long, seek the help of a counselor.

**Stage 4 - Acceptance:** It may have taken some time to get to this stage, but this is the end result in coping with the diagnosis of autism. At this point, you can finally move on with your

## Understanding And Treating Autism

children and get the best care. Your child is different and this isn't a bad thing, nor should you ever feel that way. Once you finally accept an autism diagnosis, you and your child can move on to have a happy life. Having autism doesn't change that.

Autism can be difficult to manage, especially depending on the severity of the case. There are services to help you, so you never have to feel overwhelmed. If you ever spend too long in any one of the first three stages, seek counseling because those specialized in these kind of cases will be able to help you move on. Not only is it important for parents to accept their child has autism for their own sake, but for the child's as well. The only way to really help your child is by accepting the course of their life.

## Doctors And Diagnosing Autism

Hearing your child has autism can be a heart wrenching ordeal. Your first inclination might be to get a second opinion and no one would stop you. However, once your child has been diagnosed with autism, instead of looking for a way out, you should begin treatment. There are signs to look for if you think your child might suffer from autism. If you witness any of problems or abnormal behavior, call your doctor.

Autism is a brain development disorder and is usually diagnosed before a child turns three years old. Here are some **symptoms to look for in your child**.

- If your child is showing speech regression, there might be a reason for concern. Also, if your child is taking a long time to start talking, longer than most children at that age.
- Another problem you might see is the way your child interacts with other children. Perhaps your child refuses to play with other children or doesn't seem to respond well in social settings, you should visit a doctor to get more information.

If a doctor suspects a problem, they will perform a battery of tests. Every child is different, so one test will not show if a child has autism. Every child has different symptoms and responds to the disorder differently. Your family doctor will do a full work up with family history. If your doctor does suspect any problems, your doctor may refer you to a specialist in autism and similar disorders to get a proper diagnosis.

A doctor will start with performing auditory tests. There could be other reasons your child isn't speaking well or not playing well. It could be due to hearing problems. There are two ways to do a hearing test. The first way is done while a child is awake and reacts to the tones he or she hears. The other is done while the child is sedated and a machine measures the brain activity to certain tones.

Blood and urine tests are usually taken as well to analyze DNA. The doctor is probably looking for the Fragile X syndrome, which normally shows up in children with autism. Along with DNA tests, the doctor may perform an MRI or a CAT scan to examine brain functions.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

If your child does get diagnosed with autism, it's important to give your child structure. This is going to start with the doctor. Don't drag your child around to the three or four doctors hoping the diagnosis is going to change. Get one doctor who is going to give your child a uniform treatment. This will help your child in trusting other people if they see the same face all the time.

### Signs Of Autism

As the parents are gradually getting cautious about Autism, one must understand the symptoms of this disease. As the doctors explain, as early the disease is diagnosed the more are the chances of cure. Following below is a list of symptoms of Autism. In case you find any of these in your child, you're advised to consult your child's doctor immediately. A simple evaluation & check up can save your child in time.

#### **1. The child does not meet the development stages on time.**

While some children start crawling at a tender age of 4 months, some do not reach this achievement until several months. Both ways, it is fine. Similarly, there are many stages that a child reaches in his growth process. Though there is no fixed time span for all these stages, if the child is showing a delayed response in every step, you must check with the doctor.

#### **2. Your child is not able to talk.**

As children get aware of the environment around them they show responses in several ways. They start blurting a few words at a very young age and suddenly some day you realize that they are able to speak full sentences. The usual age when the child starts babbling some words is 16 months. In case your child does not react with words even after 16 months, it can surely be a matter of concern. The doctor might call for some evaluation tests that are necessary.

#### **3. Your child does not make any eye contact.**

Babies & children usually look at you while you talk to them. Children suffering with Autism avoid all sorts of eye contact. They seem to be lost elsewhere rather than looking at you. Try pointing out an object to them and they would look past the object, reacting nothing to what you tell them.

#### **4. Your does not emote.**

Children suffering with Autism do not emote at all. They do not smile back to some one passing them a smile. Normally children start crying if they see another kid crying. An Autistic child

## Understanding And Treating Autism

won't react to any such situation. Unlike the normal kids, an Autistic child does not like to be cuddled or held in the arms. They would not approach their parents to be hugged or cuddled.

### **5. Your child likes to be alone.**

Children suffering with Autism normally do not play with the kids around them. They rather like to be left alone and play all by themselves. They make very few friends or may be none. They can not differentiate jokes. As a result, they would follow each and every word told to them literally.

### **6. The child keeps forgetting anything taught to him.**

You taught him to make the bed today and just 4 days later he behaves as if he never knew anything about it. Autistic children can not retain anything you teach them. They need to be told about the very basic chores & skills time & again.

These are very few symptoms of Autism. Also we must understand that all children suffering with Autism won't show all the signs together. They might show one or some of them. If you note any of these in your child consult your doctor and get the essential evaluations done within time. Remember, the earlier you diagnose the ailment, the sooner you can initiate the treatment. You might find that there was nothing wrong with the child, but its always safer to re-assure in case of any doubts.

### Gluten Free Diet

Gluten is a special type of protein that is commonly found in our day-to-day food items. While it is an essential element of our diet, the body of an Autistic child reacts differently than a normal child. Hence, it is essential for the parents to plan gluten free diet for your child suffering with Autism.

Initially, one must understand that gluten free diet is not a cure of Autism. It primarily lessens the symptoms of Autism in the child. Further, one must hold on to this diet for several months rather than a few weeks. While the gluten free diet the child intakes does its job well, it takes a long time to remove the gluten that is already consumed. In certain cases however, people do find immediate results.

It needs a lot of planning to follow gluten free diet. The regularly used cereals like rye, wheat, and barley contain high content of gluten. Therefore, it is also found in most types of bread. Yet, grains such as wild rice, corn, buckwheat, millet, amaranth, quinoa, teff, oats, soybeans, and sunflower seeds contain are surely gluten free.

Certain vinegars and sauces also contain gluten. The artificial flavorings and many other snacks & cookies available in the markets also contain gluten.

To your surprise, gluten can be present in foods that you would never have expected such as the spices. So while following the gluten free diet, be sure to read the labels on each and every food pack.

Gluten free diet can be quite expensive to follow as these items are sold mostly at the specialty or health stores. While this might get too heavy for your pocket, nowadays major grocery stores also deal in these products. Gluten free flour, pancake mix, waffles, cookies, snacks, and many other foods are also now readily available.

Hence, it is advisable that parents make a group and shop in bulk for these products. This makes the costs relatively cheaper and later the families can share the food items.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

Planning economically, it is also convenient to cook gluten free food at home. The recipes are available at many common resources like the internet & cook books. A whole lot of information in this regard can also be gathered from the book shop or the library near by.

Children suffering with Autism can consume meat, fruits, fish, vegetables, eggs, nuts, etc. as these are all gluten free. To make this diet interesting for the child, one might plan children's beloved snacks made out of gluten free ingredients like muffins & cookies made of gluten free flour. Once this practice gets into the system of the household, it gets easier.

The dairy products contain casein that the autistic children are commonly allergic to. So while following this diet, many people minimize or stop the dairy products as well. Yet, it is advised that you should get done your child's allergy testing. Your doctor can guide you more on the same.

### Medicine Used To Treat Autism

When starting a treatment plan for an autistic person, doctors will usually look at different medicines that can help out. Because an autistic person can display different symptoms, the medication plan is going to be different for every person. There is no medicine that is going to cure autism, but medication is used to lessen the symptoms to help people live full, functional lives.

Parents may not want to start their children on medication right away when there is diagnosis of autism. This is understandable because some people don't want to have their children go through a lifestyle of taking pills daily. There are other options to consider. Alternative treatments have been in the works that includes changing a child's diet or offering them natural treatments. Another aspect that is extremely important is the child's education. Teachers and educators have to be willing to teach lessons based on your autistic child's need. This may mean revising lesson plans or integrating certain aspects into the lessons.

Unfortunately, there is no single treatment that is going to help people with autism. Usually, treatment plans involve multiple facets including self-education, diet plans, positive reinforcement and medication.

**Here is a look at the types of medication a person with autism might have to take:**

**Antipsychotic:** These types of medications are used for behavioral problems. This can include a variety of problems such as aggression, tantrums or insomnia. This medication should not be the first option for the child. Behavioral therapy should be sought out and tried before resorting to these types of pills.

**Anticonvulsant:** This is to help control seizures if an autistic person suffers from them.

**Anti-anxiety and Depression:** Autistic children have a hard time controlling their feelings. Sometimes they laugh and cry without being prompted. These medications are used to control those feelings and random outbursts. However, these medications have some serious side effects. If your child does take these, watch for odd behavioral changes, ones that weren't present before the medication began.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

**Sedative:** If your autistic child suffers from insomnia or other sleeping disorders, a doctor may prescribe a sedative to help the child sleep better. There are natural alternatives that you may want to seek out before trying sedatives.

**Stimulant:** Some children who suffer from autism are hyperactive and these medications are used to help children focus better. This is often used when a child becomes school-aged to help them to pay attention and help with their education. This medication is useful for those children who can't seem to stay focused on any certain areas.

Medicine should be a last resort for parents when treating their children. You don't want the children to become dependent on the medication. Another problem with medicines is that it may control the issue, but have side effects that cause new problems. You also want to discuss long-term side effects with the doctor.

If you notice the medication is not helping, talk to the doctor. Your doctor may prescribe an alternative medication or try a different course of action. It's important to keep the lines of communication open with your child's doctor because this will help in getting the best treatment plan for your child.

## Alternative Treatments For Autism

As more research is done on autism, a brain development disorder, doctors and researchers are finding alternative ways to treat it. Medication used to be the only recourse and can have nasty side effects. Parents are looking for different, natural ways to treat their autistic children.

There have been some alternative methods in treating autism that are more common than others. Some work alone while others are used in combination. There is no telling which method will work best for your child. Speak with your doctor to learn about alternative treatments for autistic children.

**1. Music Therapy:** Autistic children have been found to respond to music in a number of ways. Sometimes the music makes them happy and they want to move around, helping with their motor skills. Other times children sing along to the words of the song, helping with speech therapy. This has been seen in children who do not even talk. Music therapy is a natural way to help autistic children.

**2. Sensory Integration:** Everyone, autistic or not, has a certain smell that reminds them of something happy. Or the touch of a certain cloth will invoke specific feelings. This holds true for some autistic children as well. Researchers have been using sensory skills to get autistic children to react. The autistic children rely more on their hearing, touch, taste and smell to understand and communicate. This is also used to calm autistic children down by using specific odors or textures.

**3. Nutritional:** An autistic child's diet can have an effect on the way they react. There have many different diets that doctors have been using. Some of the popular diets are gluten-free, which is no wheat products, or removing dairy from the diet. Certain ingredients in foods make autistic act out or have bad reactions. Learn what they are and eliminate them from your child's diet.

**4. Omega 3:** Omega 3 is a fatty acid that has been found to have health benefits, which includes better sleep patterns, better social skills and better general health. All of these are positive attributes to a child with autism. While you can buy Omega 3 at many nutritional stores, discuss with your doctor the benefits of trying Omega 3 in your autistic child's diet. Omega 3 and

## Understanding And Treating Autism

other essential fatty acids are needed in a child's normal growth pattern. However, no major studies have been done on the benefits of fish oil for autistic children.

**5. Play Therapy:** Play therapy works well because it doesn't feel like work. Autistic children are in a more relax atmosphere and have a chance to react naturally. When a therapist begins playing with the autistic child, this will give the therapist and the child a chance to bond. The child will learn to trust the therapist through playing and make the sessions easier. By helping to create bonds through playing, autistic children can learn to play well other children their own age.

Good treatment plans may use some of these alternatives along with medication or you can try them out before resorting to medication. Every child is different, so some of the alternatives therapies could work well for one autistic patient while not work for another. Don't get discouraged if it doesn't work for your child. Just look for ways to keep your child happy while giving your child the best care.

## How To Cope As A Parent Of An Autistic Child

Parenting an Autistic child indeed calls for a lot of courage, patience and optimism. While it is some times rewarding when the schedules follow on unperturbed, some times you wish to rush away from the stress and vent out all your frustrations. One thing we must understand is that your frustrations, stress and depression can severely harm your child. In order to be a successful parent one must be a happy & contented individual because you further pass on this happiness to your child. Given below are a few ways that would help you through your journey with your Autistic child.

### **Support Groups**

The local support groups are a collection of parents going through the similar scenario. It gives you a chance to talk & discuss your problems with people who can relate to the same. They might help you with suggestions & some unexpected solutions for the daily routines and other activities for the child. Also, it is an opportunity to meet various people and listen to their experiences and learn from the same. It allows you a break from the therapists & doctors as well.

### **Writing Journals**

Penning down your feelings, thoughts & expressions is often a great mechanism to emotional relaxation. One could keep this journal private enough. This stress buster allows you to be friends with your self and chalks out some individual moments for you. This might also help you chart your child's behavior on a day-to-day basis.

### **Getting Away**

All of us crave for a break some times, where we just want to be alone or with our spouse. There are several activities that cannot be taken up with the kids whether Autistic or not. Look for a qualified baby sitter for your child and go out on a night date with your spouse. Carry on with the activities you always wanted to do but were never able to make time for - for instance, catch on your favorite film, go ahead with some interesting sports & games and just a mere long

## Understanding And Treating Autism

drive to your choicest food joint. In case you cannot make plans outside home, enjoy a relaxed hot water bath after the child is off to sleep. Pamper yourself some times and follow your heart. This would relax your tensions and help you become a better parent and so would help your child.

### **Ask for Help**

All of us want to give the best to our children all by ourselves. In our trial to be a super mom, we often tend to forget that our frustration & anger always affects the child. We must understand that there is no harm in seeking help. Until and unless we communicate our problems, no one can help as people cannot be mind readers. Parenting an Autistic child surely requires help. In case you are trying a treatment which is not effective enough talk to someone and seek guidance on the same. Convincing an Autistic child for certain tasks gets very tough. In such times having someone for the simple tasks makes the situation easier to tackle. Seeking help from your spouse and talking out your problems with him/her makes a lot of difference.

Managing your life with an Autistic child might get very difficult, so you must handle each & every step with care. Keep your calm and with simple ways & means try to be stress-free in order to be a successful parent for your child.

## **Let Your Autistic Child be a Kid**

Parenting an Autistic child, we often forget that your child's life needs some thing more than the doctors & therapists. We become so protective and concerned about every little movement in his life, that we allow them no time to be kids. It is indeed important & helpful to allow them a little time in the day to let them do what they like. Here is a list of a few things that would surely pamper the kid within your child.

- 1.** Let your Autistic child choose his activity or game at a certain time in each day. May it be playing with his favorite toy or game or following a hobby like drawing or painting. This brings in a break from doctors & therapies for the child.
- 2.** Plan activities out for your Autistic child. For instance, a dinner at the food joint he relishes the most, or a picnic at a near by park. Such activities can be planned once a week. At times the child prefers spending time with their grandparents as well.
- 3.** If you keep your child too protected and do not let him mingle with the other kids, he might develop a sort of phobia. Let him run, jump and yell like the other children. Kids love to get dirty and they have real fun in it. Allow your child to get dirty as it won't harm him as you think. A bath can wash away the mud but he shall have his share of fun.
- 4.** Being autistic doesn't mean that your child can not lead a normal life. You must teach him to have courage and achieve whatever he aspires to do. Their condition should not become a hurdle in their path any which ways.
- 5.** At this tender age, kids often hold on to all possible excuses to get a special treatment. Don't let Autism become a reason or excuse for your child. Punish him for his mistakes and make him face the consequences. This would help him become a strong individual in a longer run.
- 6.** Give simple tasks to the child that are part of the daily chores like making the bed or packing the bag for school. Make sure the child is able to do them and reward him for the same. This would enhance his confidence and give him a sense of accomplishment.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

7. Inspire your child to do his best in all aspects of life and show him that you have expectations from him. If your child is not made to use his full potential he shall never come to know his real strength.

Playing in mud, getting dirty, slipping down and yet smiling, fiddling with your favorite toy, yelling around cheerfully - that defines fun for kids. Do not be a guard over your child, be a guide and let him free some times. Even though he has special needs, he would be much happier being a free kid choosing his activities at a free will.

## Autistic Children Need Schedules

Children at all ages whether 3 or 13, often complain of boredom. Making them do what you want but they don't is indeed cracking a hard nut. Especially dealing with special needs like that of an Autistic child, making schedule is a great help. There are several agendas in a day that we need to manage as an efficient parent like the child's school, his therapy, doctor's appointment, homework & studies, the daily chores, etc., and the driving force behind all the above - your child's health and growth.

Scheduling creates a pre-defined structure for the child where he knows what to expect next, what would he do tomorrow and where would he be placed at a given point of time. Often the children suffering with Autism have certain anxiety issues. Whenever they are left free to think wide without any guidance, they might shift to such depressing thoughts. A well designed schedule leaves less or no extra time unguided and hence the anxiety level drops to a great extent. This avoids any breakdowns in the necessary daily chores and the medical procedures.

Making them do something essential but undesirable to them like completing the homework becomes easier with a schedule. You make them shift to 'the task of studies or homework' after completing the prior 'task' and target to accomplish the same in order to move to another welcomed 'activity' like 'drawing' or 'outdoor games.'

With numerous check-ups, therapies and medical needs, managing your child's time table can sometimes be quite cumbersome, for instance overlapping of the therapist's and the doctor's appointment. A schedule helps you keep a track of each appointment without fail.

Once you have made a schedule for your child, draft it in the form of an attractive chart in his personal space or room. Let him follow the steps one after another on his own, of course with your able guidance. This would enhance his self confidence and his decision making skills.

At times the Autistic child has problem reading the words. Here comes the system of a 'Visual Schedule,' where in every task or activity is allotted a symbol - a garden for outdoor games, a stack of books for studies, and a stethoscope for the doctor's appointment and a handshake for his therapy hours.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

In case of any change in the schedule, explain your child in detail in time. As the child would be planning things according to the schedule only, even a slight change could upset him. So involve him in the change & the henceforth decision, as this would allow him to feel more independent and confident.

In our day-to-day lives, there could be many hassles in sticking up to the set time table, but try to do so as much as possible. For instance, if your child is used to wake up at 7 in the morning, continue the same on the weekends as well. Similarly, try not to divert his bed timings too much, as proper sleep would keep your child healthier.

### **A demo schedule is shown below:**

7 AM Wake up, Brush your teeth, Bathe, Wear the uniform, Pack your bag  
8 AM Breakfast  
8:15 AM Board the School Bus  
2 PM Coming home Wash your hands, Change your dress  
2:30 PM Lunch  
3 PM Nap Time  
4 PM Have milk, Study Time  
5:30 PM Leisure  
6 PM Outdoor Games  
7 PM Watch Cartoons  
8 PM Bathing  
8:30 PM Dinner  
9 PM Bed Time

As a parent, as the experts say, you are sure to find improvement in your child with the defined schedules. While there would always be something planned for him, it would make his and your life far more easy and smoothly managed.

## **10 Tips For Celebrating Holidays With Your Autistic Child**

Holidays mean a lot of excitement, celebration, festivities and spending time with the family. It might sound very exciting and gala for us, but can be very tedious & overwhelming for an Autistic child. Does that mean that parenting a child suffering with Autism means no holidays at all - Certainly Not!

With a few precautions and tips you can spent a wonderful vacation with your family and the Autistic child. Here are a few points to be remembered:

### **1. Keep the time span shorter.**

Lesser time limit means no over tiring schedules for the child. A lot of emotions & excitement can be a major problem trigger for the Autistic child. Short time span would help him balance himself as it won't be as overwhelming for the child.

### **2. Let him pick the activities of his choice.**

In case the child is not willing, do not force him to join any activities. For instance, when the whole family is having dinner at the table, your child might not want to join them and rather sit at a calm place to have food. Let him do so, as it would comfort him the most.

### **3. Stick to your daily schedule as much as possible.**

If your child is used to sleeping at 8 in the night, do not keep him awake forcibly for longer hours. In case it is yet unavoidable, try giving him a nap in the healthy nap in the afternoon. Even your family would not like to meet an irritated kid full of laziness. Also, handling a sleepy child would also be a tough job for you as a parent.

### **4. Distribute the activities over a few days.**

It is not necessary to visit all the relatives in a single day. You must take care that an Autistic child can not handle a lot of new acquaintances together. Give him time and break so that he

## Understanding And Treating Autism

enjoys the meeting and family atmosphere rather than getting stressed. Even the family would love to meet your child when he is in the right mood and mind frame.

### **5. Do not drag your child in to long hours of shopping.**

Christmas rush in the malls and markets are often pissing off to the adults as well, then how do you imagine your child to tackle it so easily. All the more, a child suffering with Autism would naturally feel uneasy. So, look out for a good qualified care taker and let your child be at home while you are shopping. Else, leave the child with your spouse, or other responsible family member. Even as a parent, it would be tough for you to handle your child in such scenarios.

### **6. Do not open all the presents at one go.**

Kids are naturally attracted to presents and gifts. Their excitement is worth seeing to open the wrapper and unfurl the surprise. These emotions could be too overwhelming for the child and could act as triggers in Autism. Opening a few presents at a time would help your child bare the excitement and enjoy the festivity of Christmas in a better way. Let him relish the few pieces and after a few days open the rest.

### **7. Do not disturb your child's diet for the sake of fun.**

In case your child is following a special diet plan be firm and re-assure that none of the family members share the restricted food with the child. Some people might be of the opinion that your diet plans are not beneficial or are not worthy enough. You must stick to your decision and follow your beliefs for the benefit of your child.

### **8. Be with you Autistic child and let him feel the vacations.**

Holidays at the core are all about having fun with the family. Do not alienate your child from the group. Include him in the fun and enjoyment along with the rest of the people and let him feel the vacation mood. Be optimistic and thank god for everything in life and make it a point to pass on this optimism to your child.

### **9. Reward your child for his good behavior during the outings.**

## Understanding And Treating Autism

Children love to take challenges and win prizes. Reward your child for being good and behaving well while being with the family. This would give him a sense of achievement and drive him to behave better and avoid all sorts of mischievous behavior.

### **10. Be patient when your child gets stressed out or shows anxiety.**

Being a parent, it might call for a lot of planning and patience to go out on vacations with your child suffering with Autism. Yet, during holidays, try to forget the problems of daily schedules and have a wonderful time with your kid. Your stress and agitation would surely add to his anxiety and stress. Count on all the good things in life and relax your mind & heart.

## Treatments For Aspergers Syndrome

Asperger Syndrome is one of several autism spectrum disorders. It is characterized with problems in social interaction, although bad motor skills are also a common condition of Asperger Syndrome. Treatment for Asperger Syndrome varies with each child. There is no medication to treat a child with Asperger Syndrome, but there are treatments to help with the symptoms of the condition.

The treatments can vary because different things will work for different children. Just because one treatment works for one child that has Asperger Syndrome doesn't mean it will work for another. Here is a look at the different treatments a child with Asperger Syndrome can have:

**Social Skills Training:** Children suffering from Asperger Syndrome have a hard time distinguishing facial expressions and voice tone. They don't understand the different meanings and will take everything said literally. These children will be taught the differences between facial expressions and voice tone and will help them understand jokes and sarcasm. Children with Asperger Syndrome usually have a difficult time making eye contact. Giving them training in social skills will help them interact with other people and other children better, making the social setting a lot easier for them.

**Cognitive Behavior Therapy:** This type of therapy helps children recognize a bad situation before it happens. Many children with Asperger Syndrome usually have high anxiety and this type of therapy will teach them how to reduce stress. Normally, the child will have a meltdown or throw a temper tantrum when something doesn't go their way. This type of therapy helps children to cope and handle situations better, reducing the number of outbursts.

**Parental Education:** Children aren't the only ones who can go through training. Parents can also take training classes to learn how to deal with their children who have Asperger Syndrome. Some of the tips that parents are taught are to use a reward system with your child. The reward system shows the child that by remaining calm will have its benefits. However, this training also shows parents how to handle children when they have outbursts.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

**Medication:** There isn't a specific medicine that will treat Asperger Syndrome, but there are prescriptions to treat symptoms. Children can take anxiety or depression medication. Unfortunately, these pills may have side effects and you have to monitor your children closely. Check to see how they are responding and if their behavior is more unusual. Some children may also have a difficult time sleeping. Children with Asperger Syndrome can be given sleeping pills or some type of sedative to help them at night.

**Positive Reinforcement:** Children with Asperger Syndrome can do well with the parents and other authority figures giving positive reinforcement. By showing them what they need to do and support them through their endeavors, children with Asperger Syndrome can maintain independent lifestyles.

Children with Asperger Syndrome don't have to be left behind. They can have normal lives and with proper treatments children with Asperger Syndrome don't have to suffer. There are no magic pills or treatments that are going to cure Asperger Syndrome, but there are ways to help reduce the symptoms. Talk to your doctor about the different treatment options to help your child in social settings.

## What Is Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified

Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) is a diagnosis given to a child who has some signs of autism, but not all. PDD-NOS is usually diagnosed in toddlers, but can be seen earlier. Children with developmental delays will be checked out to see if they have autism, but can be diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, which is milder than autism.

Children with PDD-NOS will show different symptoms. All children grow at a different rate so the symptoms vary with every child. Children with PDD-NOS could have problems with social interaction and issues communicating with parents and peers. These are two of the problems children with PDD-NOS can show.

When a child has delays in social skills, they can show it at a very early age. Babies won't make eye contact or cuddle. This is hard for parent's to deal with so you should talk to your child's doctor if you notice any of these problems. As the children get older they might enjoy playing by themselves and have no problems not interacting with children their own age. They will have no problem separating from their parents and no problem talking to strangers.

Children with a milder form of PDD-NOS can have different forms of social problems. Some children want friends, but don't know how to make them because of their social problems. As the children get older, they usually become closer to their parents and others that are around often, but don't know how to make new friends and interact with new people.

Speaking and communicating is a problem with some children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. Unfortunately, this isn't something that is noticed until the child starts getting older. As babies, they may not babble and parents might find this a blessing not dealing with a noisy baby. However, as they get older they won't speak. On occasion a baby will pick up one word and just repeat it. This will be the only word they say and won't learn anything new.

There are more problems than just learning how to speak. Children with PDD-NOS can have a tough time learning new words, but they will also have a difficult time picking up facial

## Understanding And Treating Autism

expressions and tone of voice. They won't understand when someone is joking or being sarcastic. They take words literally. Children with PDD-NOS have to learn the distinction between these issues.

Another problem in people with PDD-NOS is dwelling on a certain subject. They will keep talking about the thing they are into and not talk about anything else.

Emotions may be difficult for children with PDD-NOS to show. They tend to be indifferent, but when they do show emotions it's usually to the extreme. These children have outbursts and throw temper tantrums. However, this is also pronounced with sadness, happiness and fear. Any emotion will be pronounced.

These are two of the main symptoms children will show if they have Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. Talk to a doctor if you notice any these conditions to get further tests.

## Signs Of Pervasive Developmental Disorder

Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) is milder than autism. It's a label children are given when they don't meet all the criteria of autism, but have some developmental delays. Children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified will show different symptoms than others because every child's problem will be different. Children grow and develop at their own rate and children with PDD-NOS are no exception.

One of the **symptoms a child** might show is unusual behavior. Not every child is going to display this, some will. Let's look closer into this symptom.

- Unusual behaviors in children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified can be a number of things. There are several behaviors that fall under this category. Your child may have repetitive actions. They want to do the same thing all the time, eat the same meal or just continue to do the same action over and over. This can include continually clapping their hands or twiddling their fingers.

- Along the same lines, children with PDD-NOS like routine. They want to do the same thing at the same time everyday. They don't like when their schedule goes off track. If it happens, they could have an outburst or a temper tantrum that isn't a normal reaction to the situation. Children with PDD-NOS might set up their room in a certain way and if things are moved could get very angry.

- Some children will become obsessed with a certain object or subject. If they like airplanes, they may learn everything they can. They will have pictures of them and stare at them in the sky. These obsessive behaviors usually only happen with one thing and the child won't care for much of anything else.

- Learning a new skill is hard for children with PDD-NOS. Their developmental skills challenge them, but they also don't like change. This can include a number of things such as potty training, brushing their teeth or combing their hair. Because they are so into routine and doing the same thing, having to learn something new will change their lifestyle.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

- Some children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified have sensory issues. They may become attached to a certain cloth beyond the extent of just a blanket. This piece of clothing, or even a smell, could have an unusual calming effect on the child. They will carry this with them and never want to part with it. Many times, they will like something of the same texture and smell as well.

- Sounds, however, have an opposite effect. Children with PDD-NOS don't like high-pitched sounds. When they hear some thing that is loud, they could have an outburst or a meltdown.

- Your child may not want to cuddle. They may not want to be touched unless they are playing around. This is unusual in children and should be checked out if that is the case.

These behaviors can be caused by other problems in your child. If any of these behaviors are witnessed, speak to your doctor. Unusual behaviors are also just one symptom of PDD-NOS. There may be other symptoms your child will show if they have Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.

## How PDD-NOS Is Diagnosed

Your child may show symptoms of autism, but has been diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). This is milder than autism and will not have all of the symptoms of autism, but a developmental problem.

A doctor will go through a list of criteria to determine if your child has PDD-NOS. Assessments will be done in a number of areas.

**Medical Assessment:** If there are any health problems your child is showing a doctor will do a physical to see if there are any other medical conditions present. A doctor will run a number of tests including hearing, blood and urine tests.

**Educational Assessment:** Your doctor will check out your child's educational level based on where they are supposed to be. There are many different areas the doctor will check such as dressing, bathing, social interaction and other social skills. This can be assessed by interviewing parents, teachers and others who are with the child often. You can also keep a journal of everything your child does and how the child interacts to give to the doctor.

**Psychological Assessment:** A psychologist will be on hand to interview the child to see if there are any mental disorders. Some of the symptoms your child is having could be from other conditions and your doctor will want to rule anything out.

**Behavior Observation Assessment:** A doctor may want to observe your child in his or her natural setting. By watching the child, a doctor will be able to gauge what is going on. They will see firsthand how the child acts around other children their age and in the home environment.

**Communication Assessment:** A doctor will test a child's communication skills because this is an important piece of information to see if a child has autism or PDD-NOS. This doesn't have to be just through words. The doctor will test body language, facial expressions and other forms of communication.

## Understanding And Treating Autism

**Occupational Assessment:** Your child's motor skills are an important way to determine if your child has autism or PDD-NOS. This will consist of tests that check the function of the child's motor skills and the child's senses. A child might dislike a certain texture or smell. This is important when figuring out what is wrong with the child.

Many of these assessments are done while interviewing the parents, teachers or anyone else that is close to the child. A child might exhibit different symptoms at different moments. That's why it's imperative to get as many people as you can to give information to the doctor or anyone else involved in the patient's care. These people will have plenty of knowledge to give the doctors. Don't be shy in finding anyone who can help.

After the assessments are complete your doctor or pediatrician will meet with other doctors to diagnose the problem. Here the doctors will decide if the child has autism or Pervasive **Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified**. Once a child is diagnosed with PDD-NOS, a treatment plan will be given to help your child. This will help your child to have a normal life and communicate with people better. Getting a diagnosis is the first step in helping your child has a better life.

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