

## **AUTISM**

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.

Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

### **Here are some signs to look for in the children in your life:**

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

Autism Checklist - English

[www.sd-autism.org/docs/AutismChecklistEnglish11.07.pdf](http://www.sd-autism.org/docs/AutismChecklistEnglish11.07.pdf)

Autism Checklist - Spanish

[www.sd-autism.org/docs/AutismChecklistSpanish11.07.pdf](http://www.sd-autism.org/docs/AutismChecklistSpanish11.07.pdf)

*Source: Autism Society of America*

## **EVALUATION, DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT**

If you suspect that your child might be at-risk for developmental delays and/or a developmental disability, or if your child has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other developmental disability, regardless of your income level or insurance status, contact....

### **SAN DIEGO REGIONAL CENTER**

4355 Ruffin Rd., Suite 200□

San Diego, CA, 92123

858.576.2996

[www.sdrc.org](http://www.sdrc.org)

For evaluation and eligibility for services for children ages 0 – 3yrs, contact the San Diego Regional Center Early Start Intake Unit at 858-496-4318. For details on the intake process, visit [www.sdrc.org/c\\_elig\\_intake.php](http://www.sdrc.org/c_elig_intake.php)

For evaluation and eligibility for services for children 3+ years, contact the San Diego Regional Center's Intake Unit at 858-576-2938. For details on the intake process, visit [www.sdrc.org/c\\_elig\\_intake.php](http://www.sdrc.org/c_elig_intake.php)

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT & RESOURCES**

### **Faith and Prayer**

A diagnosis of Autism can be an overwhelming, even devastating event in any parent's life. If you are the parent of a child with autism, you know the agonizing pain of the shock, grief, distress, and even the hopelessness that can grip your soul. If you are a friend or family member of someone with a child with autism, you may well have spent time trying to comfort or bring clarity to a grieving parent. And in the midst of the dark night, one question burns in our spirits: Where is God?

Within that question lies many others we are often left to ponder: Does He have a plan for those afflicted with autism? What is to become of them? What destiny could they possibly have? Can He, will He heal them? And what of the families? Will we ever get our lives back? Will our marriage survive? Will we survive?

As these questions resound within our hearts, God has given us a promise we can hold on to: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

Even as you face one of life’s greatest trials, know that God is there for you. There is hope. There is life. There is restoration. There is a future. But for us to grab a hold of all God has for us, we must first seek Him. We must pray.

If you’d like to find out how, please contact Rebecca at 760-519-1616 or email [rebecca jean75@aol.com](mailto:rebecca jean75@aol.com)

If you’d like to ask for prayer for you and your family, please write Marcia at [mboeche@northcoastchurch.com](mailto:mboeche@northcoastchurch.com)

Source: *Children of Destiny*; [www.childrenofdestiny.org](http://www.childrenofdestiny.org)

## **AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA SAN DIEGO CHAPTER**

The San Diego County Chapter of the Autism Society of America (SDASA), a non-profit organization, originated in 1966 as the National Society of Autistic Children. It served to unite and inform parents on new revelations concerning intervention therapy. Today, the SDASA serves as the voice and resource of the local autism community. SDASA members include parents, relatives, friends, advocates, medical professionals and educators throughout San Diego County and beyond. Our Board of Directors composed primarily of parents of individuals with autism and experts in the field of autism serve the chapter on a volunteer basis.

As a chapter of the national organization, the Autism Society of America, we share in their mission of improving the lives of all affected by autism by promoting meaningful participation and self-determination for individuals with ASD and their families.

4699 Murphy Canyon Rd.

San Diego, CA 92123-5371

858-715-0678

[www.sd-autism.org](http://www.sd-autism.org)

## **EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

The Exceptional Family Resource Center (EFRC) is a community-based collaborative agency, staffed by parents and professionals. It is designed to serve families of individuals with special needs by providing a broad continuum of information, education, and support. Services and supports

Central Office:

9245 Sky Park Court, Ste 130

San Diego, CA 92123

800-281-8252

[www.efrconline.org](http://www.efrconline.org)

## **RESOURCES AND LENDING LIBRARY**

## RESOURCE DIRECTORY

For a full, comprehensive resource directory, visit [www.efrconline.org/efrc.cfm?pid=Resources](http://www.efrconline.org/efrc.cfm?pid=Resources)

## LENDING LIBRARIES / RESOURCE ROOMS

### Exceptional Family Resource Center

9245 Sky Park Court, Ste 130

San Diego, CA 92123

800-281-8252

[www.efrconline.org](http://www.efrconline.org)

- \* Books and Videos
- \* Article Archive
- \* Disability Specific Information
- \* Information and Resource Packets

### San Diego Regional Center

4355 Ruffin Rd., Suite 200

San Diego, CA, 92123

858.576.2996

[www.sdrc.org](http://www.sdrc.org)

The San Diego Regional Center resource rooms offer families, consumers, vendors and other community members a place where they can receive information, find out about educational workshops, and support groups and access a multimedia library

- \* A quiet, relaxing atmosphere
- \* Books, Informational materials and videos
- \* Staff assisted Internet Access
- \* A play area for children while parents use the resource library. (Supervision not provided)
- \* Pamphlets, brochures and articles on a variety of topics
- \* Information on local, state and national resources

## **ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS**

[www.sd-autism.org/discussionForums.html](http://www.sd-autism.org/discussionForums.html)

## **PARENT-TO-PARENT PHONE SUPPORT**

If your child has recently been diagnosed with ASD and you'd like someone to talk to who has gone through similar experiences, please call 760-519-1616 or email [rebeccajean75@aol.com](mailto:rebeccajean75@aol.com)

## **SUPPORT GROUPS**

### AUTISM SUPPORT GROUPS

Group	Where	When	Contact	Info / Notes
-------	-------	------	---------	--------------

Exceptional Family Resource Center Autism Parent Support Group	SOUTH BAY Greg Rogers Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room 510 E Naples Street Chula Vista 91911	Call / write for schedule	800.281.8252 msebastyn@sdcoe.net	For parents of young children on the Autism spectrum. Supervised play is available only by advanced reservation
Autism Society of America Support & Informational Meeting	CENTRAL SAN DIEGO United Way Building 4699 Murphy Canyon San Diego 92123	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month 6:30-8:30pm	858.715.0678	This group is open to parents, professionals and members of the community interested in learning more about special topic areas. The format includes an opportunity to choose either Q&A with the guest speaker(s) or small group parent support for the second half of each meeting
Autism Society of America Coffee Talk	NORTH COUNTY Locations vary; Please call	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month 9:00am	858.715.0678	Calling all parents who would like to sit and chat with other parents of children with ASD. Meet and join others over a relaxing cup of coffee
SPAYA (Supporting the Parents of Young Adults with Autism) Parent / Friend Support Group	Call for locations	Call / write for schedule	858.560.0555 spaya@san.rr.com	For parents and friends of young adults with autism
TACA (Talk About Curing Autism) Parent Support Group	NORTH COUNTY Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church 17010 Pomerado Road Rooms 22A & B San Diego 92128	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month 6:30-9:00pm	Becky Estep becky@tacanow.com	Focused on support, biomedical intervention, and information on the GFCF Diet and ABA therapy. Childcare available with reservations
Children's Hospital Parent Support Group	Call for locations	Call for schedule	Bonnie Corbin 858.966.7453	Parent support groups, child social groups and other services
Children's Hospital "Gear Up" Parent Resource & Information Meetings	Call for locations	Call for schedule	Meghan Lukasik 858.966.5416	Parent support for children newly diagnosed with Autism and/or PDD
Family Autism Mentoring	SOUTH BAY Scripps Well	Call for schedule	619.887.1475 or	

Program	Being Center 311 Del Mar Avenue Chula Vista 91910		Carmel Wilson 619.409.5800	
Autism Society of America Grupo de Apoyo en Español / Spanish Support Group	SOUTH BAY Scripps Mercy Well Being Center 237 Church Avenue Chula Vista 91910	Segundo lunes de cada mes 6:00-8:00pm	858.715.0678	Para familias de niños y adolescentes con autismo. Un foro abierto para información, liderazgo, recursos en la comunidad, abogacía, y compañerismo. Los esperamos / lo sentimos, no contamos con cuidado de niños

ASPERGER'S AND HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM (HFA) SUPPORT GROUPS

San Diego Unified School District Asperger's / HFA Parent Support Group	CENTRAL SAN DIEGO B26 on the Del Sol campus 3401 Clairemont Drive San Diego 92117	9:30-11:00am Call / write for schedule or <a href="#">View flyer</a>	858.490.8520 ebaisley@sandi.net bkohrt@sandi.net	
Autism Society of America Asperger's / HFA Parent Support Group	EAST COUNTY Java Mamas Café 8250 La Mesa Blvd La Mesa 91941	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month 6:30-8:00pm	858.715.0678	This support group is for parents of children with Asperger's and high functioning autism of all ages. Speakers will be provided throughout the year to offer insights on a variety of topics
Autism Society of America Asperger's / HFA Parent Support Group	NORTH COUNTY Carlsbad Senior Center 799 Pine Ave Carlsbad 92008	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of the month 7:00-8:30pm	858.715.0678	This support group is for parents of children with Asperger's and high functioning autism of all ages. Speakers will be provided throughout the year to offer insights on a variety of topics. A lending library is available at the site for families to check out ASD-

				related books
Asperger's Syndrome Parent Support Group	EAST COUNTY Foothills Church Classroom #3 315 W. Bradley El Cajon 92020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month 6:00pm	619.442.7728 supportgroupHFA@aol.com	
Asperger's Syndrome Parent Support Group	NORTH COUNTY North County Child Study Center 6949 El Camino Real Suite 201 Carlsbad 92009	Call for schedule	Robin Wonenberg 760.603.7770 wonenbergrl@tmc.com	The Asperger's education group is a 2-session group designed to help parents whose children have been newly diagnosed. The first session will provide an overview of Asperger's Disorder (symptomatology, co-morbid disorders, and treatment) and management principles and techniques. School behaviors and interventions (requisite services and how to obtain these) will be the focus of the second session

## **TREATMENT AND SERVICES**

### **Faith and Prayer**

A diagnosis of Autism can be an overwhelming, even devastating event in any parent's life. If you are the parent of a child with autism, you know the agonizing pain of the shock, grief, distress, and even the hopelessness that can grip your soul. If you are a friend or family member of someone with a child with autism, you may well have spent time trying to comfort or bring clarity to a grieving parent. And in the midst of the dark night, one question burns in our spirits: Where is God?

Within that question lies many others we are often left to ponder: Does He have a plan for those afflicted with autism? What is to become of them? What destiny could they possibly have? Can He, will He heal them? And what of the families? Will we ever get our lives back? Will our marriage survive? Will we survive?

As these questions resound within our hearts, God has given us a promise we can hold on to: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13, NIV).

Even as you face one of life's greatest trials, know that God is there for you. There is hope. There is life. There is restoration. There is a future. But for us to grab a hold of all God has for us, we must first seek Him. We must pray.

If you'd like to find out how, please contact Rebecca at 760-519-1616 or email [rebeccajean75@aol.com](mailto:rebeccajean75@aol.com)

If you'd like to ask for prayer for you and your family, please write Marcia at [mboeche@northcoastchurch.com](mailto:mboeche@northcoastchurch.com)

Source: *Children of Destiny*; [www.childrenofdestiny.org](http://www.childrenofdestiny.org)

## **Behavioral and Educational Interventions**

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, educational interventions thought to help children with ASDs are those that provide structure, direction, and organization for the child. These interventions must be individualized to the child and take into account his or her overall developmental status and specific strengths and needs. To learn more about these treatments and interventions, including specific strategies used by physicians to treat ASDs, refer to the [American Academy of Pediatrics' report on diagnosing and managing ASDs.](#)

The National Institute of Mental Health says that psychosocial and behavioral interventions are key parts of comprehensive treatment programs for children with autism. Some of the most common interventions include:

- Applied behavior analysis (ABA)
- Discrete trial training (DTT)
- Early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI)
- Incidental teaching
- Pivotal response training (PRT)
- Verbal behavior intervention (VBI)
- Developmental, individual differences, relationship-based approach (DIR also called Floortime)
- Relationship development intervention (RDI)
- Treatment and education of autistic and communication- related handicapped children (TEAACH)

Therapies often used with those listed previously:

- Occupational therapy
- Sensory integration therapy
- Speech therapy
- The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Go to [Autism Speaks](#), one of CDC's partners, to read more about these therapies.

For more information:

[Educating Children with Autism](#) by the National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 2001.

[Preschool Education Programs for Children with Autism](#) (2nd edition). Edited by J.S. Handleman and S. Harris. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed; 2000.

## **Complementary and Alternative Medicine** □

There is no known cure for autism. To relieve the symptoms of autism, some parents and providers may use treatments that are outside of what is typically recommended by their pediatrician. These types of treatments are known as complementary and alternative treatments or CAM. They may include special diets, chelation (a treatment to remove heavy metals like lead from the body), biologicals (e.g., secretin), or body-based systems (like deep pressure).[1]

NIH's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) defines CAM as a group of different medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not part of conventional medicine.[2] NCCAM divides complementary and alternative treatments into five categories:

- Alternative medical systems (e.g., homeopathy or Chinese medicine)
- Mind-body interventions (e.g., meditation, dance therapy, auditory integration)

Biologically based therapies (e.g., using herbs, foods, and vitamins)  
Manipulative and body-based methods (e.g., deep pressure, craniosacral therapy)  
Energy therapies (e.g., reiki, electromagnetic fields, etc.)

There have been efforts to develop a protocol for biomedical interventions for ASD. There are anecdotal reports of success with individual children; however, before this approach can be recommended as a standard treatment, more research is needed on the safety and effectiveness of the various treatments for a variety of people with ASD.

To learn more about CAM therapies, go to the NCCAM [Get the Facts](#) webpage.

These types of treatments are very controversial. Current research shows that as many as one third of children with autism may have tried complementary or alternative medicine treatments, and up to 10% may be using a potentially dangerous treatment.[3] Before starting such a treatment, check it out carefully, and talk to your child's health care professional.

### **Dietary Changes**

If you are thinking about changing your child's diet, talk to his or her health care professional first. Or talk with a nutritionist to be sure your child is getting the essential nutrients he or she needs.

Many biomedical interventions call for changes in diet. Such changes include removing certain types of foods from a child's diet and using vitamin or mineral supplements. Dietary treatments are based on the idea that food allergies cause symptoms of autism or that the lack of a specific vitamin or mineral may cause some autistic symptoms. Some parents feel that changes in their child's diet may make a difference in how the child feels or acts.

The National Institute of Mental Health, part of NIH, does [studies](#) to test how well various biomedical interventions work.

### **Medications**

No medication can cure ASDs or treat the core symptoms that make up the disorder—that is, communication, social, and repetitive or unusual behaviors. But medications can help with some of the symptoms of autism in some people. For instance, medication might help with a person's high energy levels, inability to focus, depression, or seizures. Also, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of risperidone (an antipsychotic drug) to treat 5- to 16-year-old children with ASDs who have severe tantrums, aggression, and self-injurious behavior.

Medications may not affect a person with an ASD in the same way they would affect another person. So, it is important to work with a health care professional who has experience treating people with ASDs. Also, parents must watch their child's progress and reactions while he or she is taking a medication to be sure that the side effects of the treatment do not outweigh the benefits.

Find out more about medications and ASDs on the [National Institute of Mental Health autism website](#).

For information on choosing a treatment program, check out the "Treatment Options" section of the [National Institute of Mental Health's autism website](#). For information on choosing a treatment program, check out the "Treatment Options" section of the National Institute of Mental Health's autism website.

### **Additional Treatment Resources**

[The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders](#) has a website to help individuals with autism who have communication needs.

[The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research](#) has a website to help professionals with the oral health care needs of patients with autism.

[ClinicalTrials.gov](#) lists federally funded studies that are looking for participants. If you or someone you know would like to take part

in an autism study, go to the website and search “autism.”

The [Autism Treatment Network](#) (ATN) seeks to create standards of medical treatment that will be made broadly available to physicians, researchers, parents, policy makers, and others who want to improve the care of individuals with autism. ATN is also developing a shared national medical database to record the results of treatments and studies at any of their five established regional treatment centers.

SOURCE: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/treatment.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/treatment.htm)

## **ADDITIONAL HEALTH SERVICES**

<a href="#">California Children’s Services</a> .....	619-528-4000 or 858-560-3400
California Children’s Services - Nutrition Services .....	619-528-4012
Child Health and Disability Prevention .....	619-692-8808
Children’s Dental Health Initiative/Share the Care .....	619-692-8858
<a href="#">Children’s Hospital &amp; Health Center San Diego</a> .....	858-576-1700 / 877-823-5437
Autism Intervention Clinic .....	858-966-7453
Pediatric Dental Clinic .....	858-966-4094
Speech and Hearing Clinic .....	858-966-5838
Developmental Evaluation Clinic .....	858-966-5817
Denti-Cal .....	800-322-6384
<a href="#">Healthy Families</a> (low cost insurance for children) .....	888-747-1222
HealthLine YMCACRS Developmental & Hearing Screening, Parent Ed, Behavior.....	800-908-8883
Health Rights Hotline .....	888-354-4474
San Diego County Dental Society .....	619-275-0244

Source: Exceptional Family Resource Center [www.efrconline.org/efrc.cfm?pid=Resources](http://www.efrconline.org/efrc.cfm?pid=Resources)