

# SO YOU THINK YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE AUTISTIC?



If you're starting to wonder whether your child might be autistic, you're not alone. Many parents go through a wave of emotions such as fear, confusion, grief, and even guilt. It's completely normal to ask questions like:

- *What does this mean for their future?*
- *Will they have a "normal" life?*
- *What do I do next?*

You might feel lost or unsure about how to support them. **Seeking answers is already an act of care.**

IT'S OKAY TO FEEL OVERWHELMED



## YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID, AND SO IS YOUR INTUITION

Many parents describe the process of coming to terms with a possible autism diagnosis as a kind of emotional rollercoaster. Some even say it feels like grieving the idea of a different future they once imagined.

But here's the truth: your child's life isn't over. It's just unfolding in a way you may not have expected. Autistic lives are full of joy, connection, creativity, and love, *just like anyone else's*.

Trust your gut. If you feel like something is going on, you don't have to wait for others to confirm it before seeking support. Many autistic parents and providers say: **you know your child better than anyone else.**



## THE SCREENING TOOLS AREN'T PERFECT

If you've already talked to a pediatrician or other professional and felt dismissed, you're not alone. It's unfortunately common to hear things like:

- "She seems fine."
- "Let's wait and see."
- "It's too early to tell."

Just because your child doesn't "check all the boxes" on a screener doesn't mean their experience isn't valid. Screeners are not always designed with the full diversity of autistic traits in mind, especially for girls, non-speaking kids, or children of color.

Pediatricians and psychologists are not always trained to recognize autism in its many forms. As one psych NP put it: **"The screener at your pediatrician is not 100%. Psych is not 100%. Trust your intuition."**



# WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW?

1



## Start listening to autistic voices.

Many autistic adults share what they wish their parents had done differently. Seek those stories out. They are powerful guides.

2



## Explore resources beyond the clinic.

Autistic creators on platforms like TikTok and YouTube often speak directly about their childhoods and what helped or harmed them.

3



## Don't rush to fix. Focus on support.

Your child doesn't need to be "fixed." They need to be understood, accepted, and supported.

4



## Consider getting an evaluation,

especially if your child is struggling with sensory issues, communication, routines, or social connections. Look for providers who specialize in neurodiversity-affirming care.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS

It's okay if you're still learning. It's okay if you feel scared. And it's okay to take your time. The most important thing your child needs right now is a caregiver who sees them, listens to them, and believes in their worth, exactly as they are.

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