



What to Do After an Autism Diagnosis:

A Step-by-Step Parent Guide

A simple, practical guide for parents navigating the early days of an autism diagnosis.



Introduction: Take a Breath

Hearing the words “**your child has autism**” can feel overwhelming. For many parents, it raises immediate questions:

- What should I do after an autism diagnosis?
- What therapy does my child need?
- Is it too early or too late to start?
- How do I help my child at home?

Step 1:

Understand the Diagnosis Clearly

An autism diagnosis describes differences in:

- Social communication
- Language development
- Behavioral patterns
- Sensory processing

Autism is a spectrum. Every child presents differently. Some may have strong language skills but struggle socially. Others may have limited communication but strong visual learning abilities.

Immediate Actions

- Review the full diagnostic report.
- Identify both strengths and areas of need.
- Clarify developmental levels and recommended therapies.
- Write down questions for follow-up appointments.

A diagnosis does not define a child's potential. It provides **direction for support**.



Step 2:

Begin Early Intervention Without Delay

One of the most researched findings in developmental science is this: **early intervention for autism significantly improves long-term outcomes.**

If a child is under six years old, this developmental window is especially important.

Common early intervention services include:



ABA therapy for autism



Speech therapy



Occupational therapy



Developmental therapy

Why ABA Therapy?

Applied Behavior Analysis focuses on:

- Increasing communication skills
- Reducing challenging behaviors
- Teaching social interaction
- Building independence

ABA therapy is structured, measurable, and individualized to the child's needs.

Action Plan

- Contact early intervention programs immediately.
- Request an ABA assessment.
- Schedule speech and occupational therapy evaluations.
- Join waiting lists if necessary.

Starting early builds momentum.



Step 3:

Build a Coordinated Support Team

After an autism diagnosis, coordination becomes essential.

A child's team may include:

- ABA therapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Occupational therapist
- Developmental pediatrician
- School support staff (if applicable)

Parents are central members of this team. Consistency between therapy sessions and home routines increases progress.

Organization Tips

-  Keep all evaluations and therapy goals in one folder.
-  Maintain a calendar of appointments.
-  Track progress notes and questions

Clear communication among providers prevents fragmented care.



Step 4:

Create Structure at Home

Children with autism often thrive in predictable environments. A structured routine reduces anxiety and behavioral challenges.

Build a Daily Routine

- ABA therapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Occupational therapist
- Developmental pediatrician
- School support staff (if applicable)

Use Visual Supports

Visual supports are highly effective tools for children with autism.

Examples:

- Visual schedules
- First-Then boards
- Choice boards
- Step-by-step task charts

A daily routine for an autistic child provides clarity and reduces uncertainty, which directly decreases resistance and meltdowns.

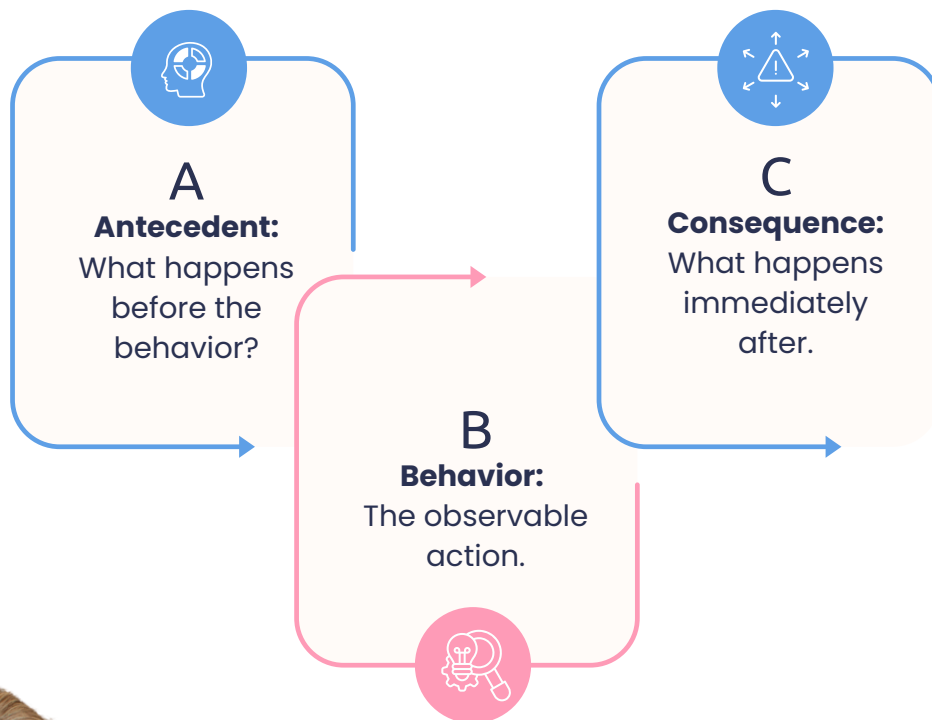


Step 5:

Understand Behavior Through the ABC Model

Many parents search for ways to “stop” challenging behaviors. In ABA, the focus is on understanding behavior first.

The **ABC model in ABA** explains behavior patterns:



Behavior serves a function. Common functions include:

- Escape (avoiding tasks)
- Attention
- Access to items
- Sensory stimulation

Practical Application

If a child screams when asked to clean up and the task is removed, the behavior is reinforced. The child learns that screaming works.

Instead of only reducing behavior, teach a replacement skill:



Understanding function is the foundation of effective behavior management at home.



Step 6:

Prioritize Communication Development

Communication challenges are often at the root of behavioral difficulties. Whether a child is verbal or nonverbal, communication can be strengthened.

Strategies for Home

- Model short, clear phrases.
- Offer structured choices.
- Reinforce all communication attempts.
- Use picture exchange systems if needed.

When children can express needs, frustration decreases. Improved communication often leads to a natural reduction in tantrums and aggression.



Step 7:

Address Sensory Needs Early

Autism sensory issues are common and frequently misunderstood.

Children may:

- Avoid loud noises
- Resist certain clothing textures
- Seek intense movement
- Become overwhelmed in crowded spaces

Sensory overload can look like defiance, but it is often neurological.

Support Strategies

- Create a calm, quiet space at home.
- Provide movement breaks.
- Prepare children before transitions.
- Reduce environmental triggers when possible.

A regulated nervous system supports learning and behavior regulation.

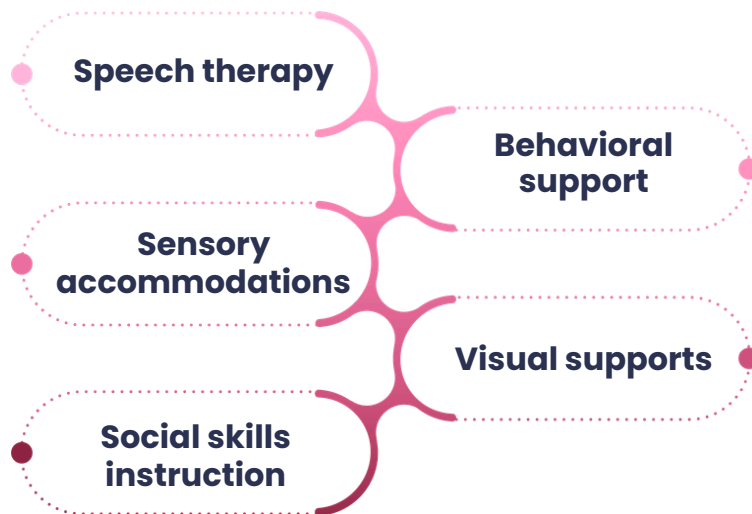


Step 8:

Secure Educational Support

If the child is school-aged, request an evaluation for an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**.

An IEP may include:



Early educational advocacy ensures access to appropriate resources and accommodations.





Step 9:

Protect Parental Well-Being

An autism diagnosis affects the entire family. Many parents experience stress, grief, or exhaustion during the adjustment period.

Sustainable support requires emotional balance.

Support Strategies



Join autism parent support groups.



Limit excessive online research.



Seek professional counseling if needed.



Schedule regular breaks.

Strong parental mental health improves consistency and long-term outcomes.

Step 10:

Focus on Short-Term Wins

It is natural to think long-term. However, effective intervention focuses on small, measurable goals.

Examples of short-term goals:

- Increasing eye contact during requests
- Using a visual schedule independently
- Reducing one specific daily meltdown
- Sitting for structured activities for five minutes

Progress in autism is built gradually through consistent reinforcement and structured teaching.



30-Day Action Checklist

Week 1

- Review diagnostic report.
- Contact early intervention services.
- Schedule therapy evaluations.

Week 2

- Establish a daily routine.
- Introduce visual supports.
- Begin behavior tracking using the ABC model.

Week 3

- Begin therapy if available.
- Practice structured communication daily.
- Identify sensory triggers.

Week 4

- Evaluate progress.
- Adjust strategies as needed.
- Connect with parent support resources.



Why Choose StarRise ABA?

Choosing the right ABA therapy provider for your child is an important decision. At **StarRise ABA**, we are committed to delivering high-quality, personalized care that meets the unique needs of each child and family.



Personalized Approach

Our therapy programs are designed around your child's goals and strengths, ensuring compassionate and effective care.



Comprehensive Care

We combine one-on-one therapy, social skills training, parent support, and school consultation to create lasting growth.



Convenience and Comfort

We bring professional, in-home ABA therapy to help your child practice skills in familiar environments.



Our team of experienced therapists believes in gentle guidance, practical tools, and partnership with parents.

Together, we help children thrive

in their own way and at their own pace.



Monday – Friday, 7 AM – 5 PM

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