

Are local teams really the best option?

Often parents think they have to go to a large regional health center or a children's hospital in order to receive accurate care and a thoughtful diagnosis, which is certainly an option, but you also have an option in your own backyard. Your local assessment team can do everything a larger regional health center or children's hospital can do, often in less time and with less waiting between appointments. These teams, including their medical partner, receive ongoing training and frequently see children suspected to have ASD. They know what to look for and know how best to respond.

Additional advantages to this local process include:

- Less wait time for appointments, leading to an earlier diagnosis, sometimes as early as 18 months
- Faster access to early intervention
- Comprehensive and standardized tests, ensuring accuracy and consistency
- No need for a "wait and see" approach
- Multi-disciplinary team



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County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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The Autism Diagnosis Education Project is coordinated and funded collaboratively between the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), Family Child Learning Center and Akron Children's Hospital. The goal of the project is to lower the age of diagnosis and decrease the gap between when parents first suspect and when they receive a diagnosis for ASD. For additional details, please visit www.ocali.org/adep.

Autism Diagnosis Education Project

Answers to Autism in Your Own Community

Autism is a buzzword in many schools and communities across the nation, leaving some parents with the question, “Does my child have autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?” It helps to know what to look for and then how to act if you do suspect. Your local community provides a process to help you answer those very questions through a process called the Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP).

What are some warning signs I should be aware of if my child is less than 30 months?

- Little to no eye contact
- Rarely looks to others’ faces
- Absent facial expression
- Delayed babbling
- Lack of imitation
- Inability to follow a pointed finger

These are but a few examples, but they may be early indicators.

If I suspect my child might have ASD, whom should I contact in my local area?

Your local community has a highly trained and knowledgeable evaluation team. By contacting Ohio Early Intervention at 800-755-GROW, this team will reach out to you and help walk you through the process. It can be scary, we know, but Ohio Early Intervention staff will be with you each step of the way.

How does the evaluation process work?

When you first contact Help Me Grow, you will work with an Early Intervention Service Coordinator to determine an initial visit. From there, the team will evaluate your child using a series of tests in order to help them decide the next steps. They will then refer to their local ADEP medical partner who works closely with the team in order to either rule out ASD or not. Whether your child receives a diagnosis of ASD or not, the Ohio Early Intervention team will support and work with you through the process.

What tests will my child undergo?

Each team uses several types of evaluations each of which give valuable insight and clues into your child and how he or she is developing. One such test may be the Routines-Based Interview, which is a series of questions, asking you about your family’s routines and activities throughout the day. Other evaluations may include the ADOS-2, which is considered the gold standard in assisting physicians in diagnosing an individual with ASD. All of these tests are a means of observing your child and sharing information that will help the partner physician determine a diagnosis and help the evaluation team decide how to provide intervention, if necessary. By using these standardized screening and evaluation tools, we can help provide an earlier and more reliable diagnosis for your child.

Who is part of the team?

Teams are comprised of a variety of providers and specialists:

- Occupational Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Physical Therapist
- Social Worker
- Nurse
- Developmental Specialist
- Early Intervention Specialist
- Service Coordinator
- Medical Doctor

Your local team may not have all of these providers available, but they will certainly have some combination of at least a few of these. All of these people have a strong working knowledge of their respective fields and can help decipher the assessments. By working together on a multi-disciplinary team, they can provide the most comprehensive support for you and your child.

Why does a diagnosis matter?

Research indicates that the earlier a child is diagnosed and receives appropriate intervention, the better the child’s outcomes. A diagnosis can help you formulate a plan, along with the team’s guidance, to help your child pursue a quality and meaningful life.