

Top Tips *after* Diagnosis

- Allow yourself to feel (whatever that feeling is) and process your emotions. Give yourself time to do this.
- Knowledge is power, so start finding out as much as you can about autism from reliable, credible sources (see About Autism).
- Learn from the autistic community; this can give you rich insight into the experiences of autistic people far better than a non-autistic professional a lot of the time.
- Read through the diagnostic report; this will help you to gain a better understanding of you or your child's needs.
- Join an online support group. They often give you the chance to ask questions to other people in a similar situation. NEAS has an online Facebook group called Family Networking, which you may find useful. Search for 'North East Autism Society Family Networking' on Facebook. You need to answer a few short questions to be given access.
- Check out what is available through your council's 'Local Offer.' This is a directory of services in your area and can be found on the internet by typing in (town/city) then "local offer."
- Celebrate achievements, no matter how large or small. Take photographs of these moments and when things get tough take time to look at them.
- Approach 'Doctor Google' with caution. There can be lots of negative and unhelpful information on the internet. Remember that other countries have different approaches to autism driven by different medical models.
- Be cautious of anyone offering 'cures for autism.' Autism is a difference in neurology and cannot be cured.
- Use our Parent Communication Log to keep a track of important appointments and to write up important information from meetings.
- Try to become a behaviour detective. It may be the tiniest of things that's causing a problem. Keep a behaviour diary so you can start to track behaviour to discern whether there is a potential trigger, if it's communicating something or if it's just a reflex response like any of us would have given the right set of circumstances.
- Make yourself familiar with our information resources.
- Arrange a meeting with your child / young person's school. It will be useful to discuss the extra support your child may need if it is not already in place
- You may want to consider contacting your local social services department to ask for an assessment of your child's needs and your needs as a carer. You may be entitled to extra funding and support.
- Look at financial help you may be entitled to.
- Look at sibling support too. Siblings may feel left out because a lot of the attention can get directed towards their brother or sister. Read through our *sibling support* information sheet.