

What to Do After a New Diagnosis

A Tip Sheet for Parents & Caregivers

Learning that your child has a diagnosis like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, ADHD, or another developmental condition, can bring up a lot of feelings. You may feel overwhelmed, confused, sad, relieved, or even hopeful. All of these feelings are normal.



This tip sheet offers simple steps to help you move forward with support, care, and confidence.

1 Take a Breath

You don't have to figure everything out today. It's okay to take some time to process the news. You're still the same loving parent, and your child is still the same amazing kid.

Tip: Take a quiet moment. Go for a walk. Talk to someone you trust.

2 Learn About the Diagnosis

Understanding what the diagnosis means can help you support your child. Try to get your information from trusted sources like your care team or reputable websites.

Helpful places to start:

- Holland Bloorview's AboutKidsHealth.ca
- Autism Ontario
- Cerebral Palsy Canada
- Your JMCC team

Tip: Write down any words you don't understand and ask your care team to explain.

3 Focus on Your Child's Strengths

A diagnosis doesn't define your child. Focus on what they love, what they're good at, and how they connect with others.

Tip: Make a list of your child's strengths, favourite activities, and things that bring them joy.

4 Ask About Next Steps

Each child is different. Your next steps might include:

- Being referred to a Children's Treatment Centre (like JMCC)
- Starting therapy (e.g., OT, PT, SLP, or ABA)
- Connecting with school supports or an IEP
- Applying for funding or assistive devices

Ask your care team:

- What services can help right now?
- What should I apply for?
- Who do I call next?

5 Build Your Team

You don't have to do this alone. There are people ready to help, including therapists, doctors, social workers, and other families.

Tips:

- Join a parent group or online forum
- Reach out to a JMCC Social Worker for help navigating services
- Talk to your child's school team

6 Take Care of Yourself Too

Caring for a child with extra needs takes strength - and rest. You matter too.

Ideas for caregiver self-care:

- Make time for sleep and meals
- Ask for help from family or friends
- Take breaks when you can
- Talk to someone (a friend, counselor, or support worker)
- Look at the materials available to you in the Parenting & Caregiver Supports section of the JMCC Digital Resource Library

Need Help Getting Started? Contact JMCC:

www.jmccentre.ca | 519-252-7281

We can help with referrals, therapy, funding, and family support.