



My Child Was Just Diagnosed with Autism — What Do I Do Next?

A Free Guide for Families

Practical steps, honest answers, and real support for families navigating an autism diagnosis.

Provided Free by Match Care ABA

Currently serving New York, New Jersey & North Carolina — and working to help families wherever you are.
matchcareaba.com

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You Are Not Alone

Hearing that your child has been diagnosed with autism can feel overwhelming. You may be flooded with questions, fears, and emotions — all at the same time. **That is completely normal, and you are not alone.**

More than 1 in 36 children in the United States is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Hundreds of thousands of families have walked this path before you and have found the support, the therapies, and the community they needed. You will too.

What you might be feeling right now — and why it's okay:

- **Shock or disbelief** — An official diagnosis can feel sudden even when you've had concerns for a while.
- **Grief** — You may grieve the future you had imagined for your child. This is a natural part of the process.
- **Relief** — Many parents feel relieved that they finally have answers. That is equally valid.
- **Determination** — The drive to do everything you can for your child. That's exactly why you're reading this guide.

An autism diagnosis is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a new chapter with more information, more support, and more direction than you had before. Early intervention — starting therapy as soon as possible — is one of the most powerful tools available to your child. **This guide will walk you through exactly what to do next.**

A Note from Match Care ABA

We built Match Care ABA because we believe every family deserves access to quality ABA therapy — regardless of income, insurance, or zip code. Our free matching service currently serves New York, New Jersey & North Carolina — and is working to help families wherever you are — connecting you with licensed, vetted ABA providers at no cost to you.

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What Is ABA Therapy?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy is the most evidence-based, widely used, and insurance-covered treatment for autism spectrum disorder. It has been studied for over 50 years and is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.S. Surgeon General, and the CDC.

ABA therapy focuses on understanding how behavior works and using that knowledge to increase helpful, meaningful behaviors while reducing behaviors that may be harmful or interfere with learning and daily life.

What ABA Teaches

<p>Communication & Language Skills</p> <p>Learning to request needs, use words or AAC devices, follow directions.</p>	<p>Social Skills</p> <p>Taking turns, making eye contact, playing with peers, understanding emotions.</p>	<p>Daily Living & Self-Care</p> <p>Getting dressed, toileting, eating, routines, and independence.</p>
<p>Attention & Academic Readiness</p> <p>Sitting, focusing, following classroom instructions, pre-academic skills.</p>	<p>Reducing Challenging Behaviors</p> <p>Understanding the "why" behind meltdowns, tantrums, or self-injurious behavior.</p>	<p>Emotional Regulation</p> <p>Coping strategies, calming techniques, and managing frustration.</p>

What ABA Therapy Looks Like Day-to-Day

ABA therapy is delivered by a **Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**, who designs your child's individualized treatment plan, and **Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs)**, who implement sessions directly with your child.

Sessions typically happen in your home, at a clinic, or in school settings. Therapy hours vary by your child's needs — most young children receive between 10 and 40 hours per week, and insurance usually covers the full recommended amount.

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How to Get Started — Step by Step

The path from diagnosis to starting ABA therapy can feel confusing. Here is a clear, step-by-step roadmap to follow:

- 1 Get the Written Diagnosis Report**

Ask your diagnosing provider (psychologist, developmental pediatrician, etc.) for the written evaluation report. You'll need this to submit to insurance and to start services.

- 2 Contact Your Insurance**

Call the member services number on your insurance card and ask: "Does my plan cover ABA therapy for autism? What do I need to start?" Ask about deductibles, copays, and whether you need a referral.

- 3 Get a Prescription from Your Pediatrician**

Most insurance companies require a written prescription or referral for ABA therapy from your child's primary care physician. Call your pediatrician's office and request one.

- 4 Find an ABA Provider**

This is where most families get stuck — the waitlists are long and it's hard to know who to call. Match Care ABA removes this step entirely by matching you directly with providers accepting new patients.

- 5 Complete the Insurance Authorization**

Your ABA provider will conduct an intake assessment and submit an authorization request to your insurance. This typically takes 2–4 weeks. Stay in touch with your provider during this process.

- 6 Begin Therapy**

Once authorized, your BCBA will complete an initial assessment with your child and build an individualized treatment plan. Therapy sessions will then be scheduled and services begin.

■ Timeline Tip

The full process from diagnosis to first session typically takes 4–12 weeks. Starting the insurance and referral steps immediately after diagnosis will minimize delays. Don't wait — early intervention matters, and every week counts.

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How Insurance Works for ABA Therapy

The good news: **ABA therapy is covered by most insurance plans** — including Medicaid — in all 50 states. Federal law (the Affordable Care Act) requires most health insurance plans to cover ABA therapy as an essential health benefit for children diagnosed with autism.

Private Insurance (Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Cigna, etc.)

Most private insurance plans cover ABA therapy with a copay or coinsurance after your deductible. Coverage typically requires:

- A written autism diagnosis (DSM-5)
- A prescription/referral from your pediatrician
- A treatment authorization submitted by your ABA provider
- Annual re-authorizations as therapy continues

Medicaid (including CHIP)

If your child is covered by Medicaid (Medicaid, NJ FamilyCare, NC Medicaid, etc.), ABA therapy is fully covered with no copay in most cases. The authorization process is similar to private insurance.

State	Medicaid Program	ABA Coverage
New York	NY Medicaid / Health Home	Full coverage, no copay
New Jersey	NJ FamilyCare	Full coverage, no copay
North Carolina	NC Medicaid	Full coverage, no copay

What if I get denied?

Insurance denials are common and often reversible. You have the right to appeal. Your ABA provider can assist with the appeals process. Match Care ABA can also help connect you with providers experienced in navigating denials.

What If I Don't Have Insurance?

If your child does not have insurance coverage, you may qualify for Medicaid based on income. You can also contact your state's early intervention program (for children under 3) or school district (for children 3–21), which are required by law to provide services at no cost.

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Questions to Ask a Provider

Not all ABA providers are the same. Asking the right questions upfront will help you find a provider who is the right fit for your child and family.

About Qualifications

- Are your BCBAs licensed in this state?
- What is the ratio of BCBA supervision hours to RBT-delivered therapy hours?
- How long has your agency been providing ABA therapy?

About the Program

- Do you offer home-based, center-based, or school-based therapy — or a combination?
- How do you individualize treatment plans? Is the program naturalistic or more structured?
- How do you involve parents in the therapy process?

About Logistics

- Are you accepting new patients right now?
- Do you accept my insurance (or Medicaid)?
- What does the intake and authorization process look like, and how long does it take?
- What happens if my assigned therapist (RBT) changes?

About Communication

- How will you keep me updated on my child's progress?
- What does parent training look like, and is it included?
- Who do I call with questions or concerns?

■ ■ Green Flags to Look For

- High BCBA supervision hours (5+ hours per month per client)
- Clear parent training component built into the plan
- Naturalistic, play-based approaches (especially for young children)
- Transparent communication and dedicated case manager
- Experience with your child's specific profile and age group

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How Match Care ABA Can Help

Finding an ABA provider on your own is one of the hardest parts of the process. Waitlists can stretch 6–18 months at popular agencies, and it's nearly impossible to know which providers have openings, accept your insurance, or serve your area. **That's exactly why we built Match Care ABA.**

- 1 Tell Us About Your Child**
 Answer a brief questionnaire about your child's age, diagnosis, location, insurance, and scheduling needs. It takes less than 5 minutes.
- 2 We Find Your Match**
 Our team reviews your profile and identifies licensed ABA providers in your area who are accepting new patients and accept your insurance.
- 3 We Make the Introduction**
 We connect you directly with matched providers — so you're not cold-calling agencies or sitting on waitlists.
- 4 You Start Services**
 Work with your matched provider to complete intake and begin therapy. We follow up to make sure the match worked out.

Why is it free?

Match Care ABA is free for families because providers partner with us to connect with families seeking ABA therapy in their area. There is no catch, no subscription, and no obligation.

New York	New Jersey	North Carolina
NYC, Long Island, Westchester & more	Bergen, Essex, Hudson County & more	Raleigh, Charlotte, Durham & more

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Resources & Next Steps

You don't have to figure this out alone. Here are trusted organizations, tools, and next steps to help you on your journey.

National Organizations

Autism Speaks autismspeaks.org

Resources, toolkits, and a 100-Day Kit for newly diagnosed families.

Autism Society of America autism-society.org

Local chapters, community support, and information on rights and services.

ASAT (Association for Science in Autism Treatment) asatonline.org

Research-based summaries of autism treatments and evidence-based practices.

BACB (Behavior Analyst Certification Board) bacb.com

Verify that a BCBA is licensed and in good standing using their certificant registry.

State-Specific Resources

New York: NYS Early Intervention (for under 3) · CPSE/CSE school services (3–21) · NY Medicaid (DOH)

New Jersey: NJ Early Intervention · Child Study Team services · NJ FamilyCare (Medicaid)

North Carolina: NC Infant-Toddler Program · Exceptional Children services · NC Medicaid (DHHS)

Your Immediate Next Steps

- 1 Request your written diagnosis report from your evaluator
- 2 Ask your pediatrician for an ABA therapy prescription/referral
- 3 Call your insurance to confirm ABA coverage

4 Visit matchcareaba.com to start the free matching process

5 Download and save this guide to share with family members

Ready to Find an ABA Provider?

Match Care ABA matches families with licensed, vetted ABA therapy providers — completely free of charge.

No waitlists. No cold calls. Just answers.

Get started at:

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Currently serving New York, New Jersey & North Carolina — and working to help families wherever you are.



Scan to get started

Point your phone's camera at this QR code to visit matchcareaba.com

Free · Fast · No Obligation

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