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## Parent Guide to Autism:

# Day 1

**Welcome back, <<First Name>>!**

## What Autism Is (and Isn't) and Making an Autism Diagnosis

### Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a condition that affects how children communicate, play, and connect with others and the world around them. Many kids with autism reach early milestones like sitting, crawling, and walking on time, so delays in social or language skills might not be noticed right away.

**Because autism looks different in every child, it's called a spectrum.**



### Why Early Screening Matters

Every child has unique needs and finding those needs early makes a big difference. That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends autism screenings at 18 and 24 months.

When you visit your child's doctor for their 18-month and 24-months well-visits, you may be asked to complete a screening tool called the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers or M-CHAT. Your doctor may also ask you to complete this screening at any time if you or they have concerns about your child's development.

**Early support can help children build important skills and give families the tools they need to thrive.**



### What to Do If You Have Concerns

If you have questions about your child's development, a great place to start is by talking with their doctor. That may even be how you ended up with this email in your inbox!

### Helpful Resources:

- [Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children](#) – Covers what autism is, common myths and misconceptions, and known causes
- [If Autism is Suspected, What's Next?](#) – Walks through the steps of the diagnostic process

**Tomorrow we'll take a closer look at the diagnostic process and what to expect along the way.** You're already taking positive steps for your child—and we're here to support you every step.

With care,

The ICAAP Team

## Get Connected!



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