



Autism Resource Sheet

This resource sheet was created to assist autistic people and their families, especially those who are new to the diagnosis. Autistic people think, communicate, and act in ways that differ from most people. Autism is not a disease, but one of many ways of being human. We have selected resources to help you build both a better understanding of autism and a better world for all autistic people. This document reflects collaboration between autistic adults, parents of autistic children, healthcare providers, and school staff. You will see some national resources, but we have tried to focus on Kentucky specific information and highlight those developed with autistic adults.

Learn More About Autism

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disability that is believed to occur in about 2-3% of our population. Observable differences such as those in communication, social behavior, and need for security reflect differences in the brain. Every autistic person experiences autism differently. Learn more by visiting these links.

Resources

- What is Autism
- About Autism
- Autism 101
- The Meaning of Self Advocacy
- Books About Autism
- Autism & Co-Occurring Disabilities

Connect With Other Families

If you have a family member with autism, a great way to learn more about supporting them is from others with experience doing it. Connecting with families who have an autistic family member provides sense of community, belonging and understanding. In person or online, you can create a place where you can discuss similar needs, help each other by sharing information and resources envision all the possibilities for your child. This support and friendship helps navigate your journey and is necessary for maintaining good health.

Resources

- Start Here Guide
- Family Support Group List
- KY Special Parent Involvement Network
- Family to Family
- 13 Necessary Next Steps for Parents

Get to Know Autistic Self-Advocates

We believe autistic adults are experts in autism. Autistic adults can help you understand autism, give you suggestions for or ways to help to you or your child, and/or be a mentor as you or your child grows. Autistic mentors show you or your child that it is okay to be autistic and model autism advocacy and self-determination skills. You can connect online (chat rooms, social networks) or at local autism groups.

Resources

- **Autistic Self Advocacy Network**
- **Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network**
- **Kentuckiana Autistic Spectrum Alliance (KASA)**
- **A Curriculum for Self-Advocates**

Establish School Plans

School plays a major role in a child's life, from early years through adolescence. Whether your child is already attending or just getting started, planning for a strong education is key. Social, communication, thinking, or sensory differences can make school more challenging—but your child has rights. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may require your child's public school to evaluate their strengths and needs and create an individualized learning program. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requires any school that receives federal funding to provide accommodations and support to students with disabilities so they can fully participate in school.

Resources

- **Kentucky Early Intervention System**
- **KDE Autism Guidance Document (June 2023)**
- **Kentucky State Funded Preschool**
- **KY-SPIN Publications- IEP & 504 Infographics**

Seek Desired Supports and Services

Each autistic person is unique so there is no one-size-fits-all support list for autism. Families and individuals may choose from a wide array of possibilities depending on their own needs. These supports and services provide access to the expertise of health practitioners to help you and/or your family member enjoy a full and meaningful life. Supports can help to improve communication between autistic and non-autistic family members, facilitate belonging in the community, or recognize sensory patterns or preferences. Services are not intended to make autistic people less autistic. Ideally, services provided should support areas of need and bolster strengths towards the client's own goals. Professionals can also help people to understand autism, advocate for themselves and others, and learn skills in ways that work best for the person's learning styles.

Resources

- **Autism Affirming Support Descriptions & Provider Lists**
- **Autism Crisis Supports**
- **ECMH Contact List**

Specific supports and services like art, play, speech, occupational, physical therapy, or mental health supports are available across Kentucky. You can access these in your region by collaborating with your **primary care doctor** or a **case manager** through your child's insurance company.

Explore the Larger Disability Community

Autistic people are also part of a broader community of people with disabilities. These resources will help you connect to other communities of disabled people as well as family advocates. You can engage with these communities to build understanding of disability and to share ways to navigate systems of support. You can also advocate to make society more accessible and welcoming to all people with disabilities.

Resources

- **Disability Rights Network**
- **Disability Rights Timeline**
- **Disability Justice**
- **Principles of Disability Rights**
- **American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT)**
- **The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)**
- **New Disabled South**

Support Participation

There are common challenges families experience in their daily lives. These tips and toolkits can help support the needs of your autistic child to participate in activities of daily living.

Resources

- **Sleep and Autism**
- **Toileting**
- **Feeding difficulties**
- **Dental care**
- **Blood draw**
- **Safety**
- **Transition to Adulthood: A Health Care Guide for Youth and Families**

Additional Resources

Autistic people may face challenges in daily routines. These tips and toolkits are provided to help you and your family address some potential challenges with activities of daily living.

Resources

- **Kentucky Advisory Council on Autism**
- **Supported Decision Making**
- **KY-SPIN Youth & Adult Suite**
- **Transition Resource Sheet**
- **Life Course Tools**
- **Family & Youth Employment Checklists**
- **Medicaid Long-Term Supports**
- **Resources and Supports for Families (KATC)**
- **Kentucky Protection and Advocacy**
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**