



A Roadmap for Your Child

While every child, adolescent and adult with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is different, this roadmap may help provide some general insight of what you can expect at different stages — and how to prepare for what’s next.

Preschool

- At age 3, early intervention programs begin to fade away and your school district takes over.
- Work with your school district and early intervention therapists to develop an IEP that addresses your child’s distinct needs.
- Research appropriate schools and school environments for your child.
- Seek out private therapy resources to help your child continue to grow emotionally, socially and physically
- Seek out social skills groups to help your child begin to build social skills among peers
- Join a parent support group to help you gain the strength and knowledge you need to be a strong advocate for your child
- Find sibling support groups for your other children to help them learn how to deal with the emotional and social challenges that often come along with having a sibling with ASD
- Continue to monitor your child’s developmental, physical and mental health with a regular check-up schedule with your child’s developmental pediatrician, therapists and other health professionals.
- Continue in-home behavior interventions
- Begin setting limits on screen time (e.g., computers, tablets, television); setting limits early on may help you avoid battles when your child is older
- Begin helping your child understand “stranger danger” and determining who is a friend and who is a stranger.
- You may continue to expect challenges with sleep, eating habits and safety.

Transition planning

As your child nears the end of the grade school years, he or she will be on the brink of puberty, which brings in a host of additional hurdles and challenge.

- Contact your school district to discuss kindergarten placement and how your district will work with you and your child to ensure an appropriate educational environment for your child.
- Start working with your child to further grow your child’s independent living skills (e.g., bathing, toileting, basic hygiene, dressing, cleaning up basic messes)
- Focus on helping your child become more tolerant of routines

Autism Resource Directory

We can help you find the services and resources you need. The [Autism Resource Directory](#) is a comprehensive online directory that links you to service providers, support groups, community resources and government programs across the nine-county Chicago metropolitan area — Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will.