

## AUTISM ACTION PLAN

By Dr. Leigh Ann Chapman

[www.Chapmannd.com](http://www.Chapmannd.com)

Has someone told you that your child may have a developmental delay or disorder such as autism or Asperger Syndrome?

Do you have concerns about your child's development?

Here are some steps to get you going in the right direction...

### **Validate your concerns:**

If you have concerns about your child's motor, social/ emotional, cognitive or communication development, investigate them with the following tools:

[www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org)

[www.asqoregon.com](http://www.asqoregon.com)

### **Getting a Diagnosis:**

A specific diagnosis is not absolutely necessary, but can be very helpful. The sooner you can get a diagnosis, the sooner you can get services from schools, programs and specialists.

In Oregon, you can get an educational diagnosis through early intervention specialists that work through your county. This diagnosis will be enough to qualify your child for educational resources. If the educational diagnosis alone is not meeting your child's needs, pursue a medical diagnosis from an experienced psychologist or developmental pediatrician.

### **Get Organized:**

Manage medical records, assessments, laboratory values and other important data in a binder and have it organized and ready to go for appointments. A "Child's Life Care Notebook" is available from the [Swindell's Center in Portland, Oregon](#).

### **Get Resources:**

The [Autism Society of Oregon](#) provides many wonderful resources for families in Oregon. These resources include support groups, social groups, conferences and the "Take a break on ASO" program.

The [Northwest Autism Foundation](#) is a wonderful group of caring folks who can provide local numbers and resources for just about every aspect of living with autism and getting the best opportunities for your child. Call 503-557-2111 and request a current Autism Resource Directory.

### **Get an IEP (Individualized Education Program):**

[OrPTI \(Oregon Parent Training and Information Center\)](#) helps parents with the IEP process - for free. They run free seminars throughout Oregon, have a free Special Ed helpline, and - on request - provide volunteer Parent Partners to attend IEP meetings with the parents. The website is <http://www.orpti.org/>

Other helpful links and info can be found at:

[www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/forms/iep/](http://www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/forms/iep/)

[www.tacanow.com/iepcheck.htm](http://www.tacanow.com/iepcheck.htm)

If your child is under the age of 5, an IFSP (Individual Family Support Plan) is available.

*The Complete IEP Guide* by Attorney Lawrence M. Siegel.

This book clearly illustrates your rights, has examples of letters to write and will define what is possible for your child to receive.

**Obtain early outside assessments and intervention:**

Organize a team of therapists under the guidance of your primary care provider, pediatrician or an autism consultant. A good therapist will be able to identify your child's strengths and weaknesses and provide detailed recommendations for your child. Early intervention leads to success!

**Types of professionals to consider:**

Speech pathologist

Occupational therapist

Behavioral therapist

**Find A doctor who is experienced in biomedical assessment and treatment:**

A doctor is an important step on the autism journey. There are many safe and effective biomedical therapies that can be helpful for your child. Examples include: Methyl B12 injections, nutritional therapy, homeopathy, dietary treatments and immune modulation. Remarkable improvements have been seen in children who receive biomedical treatments.

Find a doctor who utilizes the [Defeat Autism Now! approach](#). Make sure this doctor stays up-to-date with information and experience in treating children on the spectrum.

**Address your child's diet:**

The foods your child eats directly effects the ability of your child's brain and body to develop and function properly. Remove additives, preservatives & dyes from all foods. Go organic if you can and eat as many whole, fresh foods as possible. Get some good recipes and experiment with vegetables! Your child will only eat them if he sees you eating (and enjoying) them, so get creative and have fun!

**Cookbooks:**

Nourishing Traditions by: Sally Fallon

The Petit Appetit Cookbook: Easy, Organic Recipes to Nurture Your Baby and Toddler

by: Lisa Barnes

[The Family Nutrition Book](#): William Sears MD

Many parents have found a Gluten free/ Casein free (GF/CF) diet extremely effective in reducing autistic symptoms.

[Nourishing Hope](#) by Julie Matthews

[www.gfcfdiet.com](http://www.gfcfdiet.com)

[The Kid-Friendly ADHD and Autism Cookbook: The Ultimate Guide to the Gluten-Free, Casein-Free Diet \(Hardcover\)](#) by [Pamela Compart](#) & [Dana Laake](#)

**Attend support group meetings:**

Autism Society of Washington and Oregon hold meetings in several counties.

**Autism Society of Oregon:** [www.oregonautism.com](http://www.oregonautism.com)

Call: 1-888-AUTISM-1 or email at: [aso@teleport.com](mailto:aso@teleport.com)

**Autism society of Washington:** [www.autismsocietyofwa.org](http://www.autismsocietyofwa.org)

Call: 1-888-279-4968

**Autism medical support group:** [kathyh@arroautism.org](mailto:kathyh@arroautism.org)

Call: 503-284-0350

**Get Ready to Read:**

There are many books and websites to give you information about services, treatments, support and resources.

**Websites:**

[Autism Research Institute](#)

[Talk About Curing Autism](#)

<http://www.socialthinking.com/>

**Biomedical Treatment:**

*Changing the Course of Autism*- Bryan Jepson, M.D.

[Healing the New Childhood Epidemics: Autism, ADHD, Asthma and Allergies](#)- Kenneth Bock, M.D.

*Children with Starving Brains* – 2 nd Edition – Jacquelyn McCandless, M.D.

**Find Balance:**

Keep in mind that advocating for your child is quite like running a marathon. You need to pace yourself and think both short term and long term about every decision you make. Balance in your life will benefit both you and your child. Remember to cherish your spouse and other children. Also, remember to take time for your self. Keep seeking out the fun and love that comes with being a family. Keep participating in activities that help control stress and lift you up. Encourage your child every day and emphasize all of his or her unique and wonderful qualities.