

Activity 1—Delegating

Use this exercise to help identify tasks that you do routinely that could be done by someone else. This can free up some time for yourself and involve more people in your day-to-day activities. Family and friends often want to help, but aren't sure how to do so or how to ask. If you have an idea of how they can help, you can delegate tasks, take stuff off of your plate, and receive support from those in your life.

1. Make a to-do list for the day:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Make a list of other tasks that are on your to-do list for the week:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Now, review the items on these two lists and circle the ones you need to do yourself.

4. Draw a star next to the items that friends, family, or your partner could help with.

5. Draw a line through the items that do not have to be done or could be removed from your list.

Use these edits to revise your to-do list, maybe for the day or for the week. Try it and see how it goes. You can do this exercise again for another week, finding new ways to ask those in your life to support you and help you create more time and space for yourself, your child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and your family.

Some ideas that others can help with:

- Shopping for groceries
- Mowing the lawn
- Cooking dinners
- Preparing snacks
- Running siblings to appointments/activities
- Taking the dog for a walk

Even small things can add up to a lot more time for you. The key is to know what to ask for, how to ask, and whom to ask. You can't know the answer until you ask.

Activity 2—Delegating

It can be stressful to imagine telling your close family and friends about your child’s diagnosis. You may be confused and scared and not ready to talk to others about it. When the time is right and you feel comfortable and/or need support from those who care about you, you can figure out the best way to inform them about your child’s diagnosis.

This exercise can help you highlight the details you would like to share with your family or friends. You can choose from these prompts and add more information if you would like and are comfortable doing so. Fill in the blanks with information about your child and your experiences.

When your first concerns arose:

Special characteristics of your child:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The types of specialists that you’ve seen:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What ASD is (in relation to behaviors/symptoms in your child):

Things that are challenging for him or her:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Things that he or she is really good at:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How you and your family are moving forward (specialists, treatments, homework):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



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- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

You may find it helpful to role-play explaining what autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is to family or friends. With a friend, partner, or family member, practice explaining ASD as it relates to you, your child, and your family.

Example: Autism is a spectrum disorder. Sometimes people refer to this spectrum as ASD or autism spectrum disorders. Autism is a developmental disorder that impacts an individual socially, communicatively, and behaviorally. For instance, my son does not speak unless he is prompted, and he's not interested in playing with other children. He loves to read and watch movies—especially movies with animals in them.

Activity 3—Tracking Information

This activity can be a great way to keep track of useful resources about autism spectrum disorders (ASD) that you find or that other caregivers recommend to you. You might like to post a request for resources on the Autism Caregiver Web site, or ask other autism caregivers whom you may encounter in your day-to-day life for recommendations. A resource may be a Web site, book, organization, or local community contact. As caregivers share resource ideas, fill out the table below.

Resource name	Where to find it	What kind of information is it?
<i>Example: Autism Caregivers Web site</i>	<i>On the Internet: www.autismcaregiver.com</i>	<i>Community of caregivers of children and/or adults with ASD, discussion boards, resources for caregivers</i>

Activity 4— Effective questions

Different kinds of questions yield different answers. Simple yes-no questions will give you yes-no answers, and often, this is not enough information when you are communicating with your child’s teachers, health care providers, and others. The way you approach questions can help you obtain information, establish clear communication with the other person, and promote teamwork. Effective questions also provide opportunities to clarify information, enhance your understanding of your child and autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and help you feel more in control and informed.

Types of effective questions

- Open-ended questions. These are questions that require more than a yes-no answer.
- Factual questions. These are questions that ask for more detail on definitions, confirmation of facts, asking how a fact or information relates to something else.
- Clarifying questions. These questions ask for more information about something. “What does this mean?” “How would you measure this?” “What is your goal?” “What are the next steps?”
- Evaluation questions. These are questions that compare or examine information. “What can you conclude from this?” “How would you interpret these results?” “What does this mean?”
- Solution questions. These are questions that build on clarification and evaluation answers to understand upcoming actions and goals based on information learned. “How can we use this information to help my child?” “How will this information inform treatment decisions?” “How can we apply this information to the intervention?”

“What” or “how” questions often yield the most information. “Why” questions can make the receiver feel defensive.

Transform the questions or statements below into effective questions.

Has this treatment worked with other children with ASD?

Make this an open-ended question.

Your child care provider has mentioned that your child had a difficult day.

Ask a factual question.

You’ve read an interesting article on a new social skills approach.

Ask a clarifying question of a professional.

Why would you recommend this type of medication?

Turn this into an effective evaluation question.



Your child just participated in a lengthy early intervention planning evaluation.
Ask a solution focused question of the evaluator.

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