
The First 30 Days

A gentle week-by-week list for the month after an autism diagnosis. This list is deliberately small. Your child is exactly the same child they were before the appointment — what's changed is that you have better information, and soon, more help. Nothing here is urgent enough to lose sleep over.

WEEK 1 Let it be a lot

- ☐ Feel whatever you're feeling
Relief, grief, both in the same hour — all of it is a normal thing to feel.
- ☐ Tell one person who is good at listening
- ☐ Give yourself permission NOT to read everything on the internet tonight
- ☐ Write down three things you love about your child
Diagnosis week has a way of drowning that out. Don't let it.
- ☐ Eat, sleep, drink water
Parent-of-the-year can wait a week. Functional is plenty.

WEEK 2 Tell the people who need to know

- ☐ Decide what you want to say, and to whom
You are in charge of this information. There is no deadline.
- ☐ Tell close family in plain words
Hand the big feelers one good book or article instead of debating — you don't have to be everyone's educator.
- ☐ Practice one simple line for everyone else
"She's autistic — it mostly means she learns differently. Here's what helps."
- ☐ Let your pediatrician's office know the evaluation is done
Ask what referrals they'd suggest next.
- ☐ Consider telling your child's school or daycare
Teachers who know what's going on can quietly help.

WEEK 3 Gather the papers, get on the lists

- ☐ Ask for the full written evaluation report, and make copies
- ☐ Start one folder or notebook for everything
Every name, date, phone number, and reference number goes in it. Future-you will be grateful.
- ☐ Call your insurance and ask what's covered
Our companion guide, The Insurance Phone Call, has the exact questions.
- ☐ Ask for referrals and put your name on therapy waitlists — more than one
Being on several lists is normal and expected. You can always decline a spot later.
- ☐ Under 3? Contact your county's early intervention program. 3 or older? You can request a school evaluation in writing.

WEEK 4 One small win

- ☐ Pick ONE daily routine and make it predictable
Bath, bedtime, leaving the house — same steps, same order, every time. Just one.
- ☐ Follow your child's play for ten minutes a day
Sit down at whatever they're doing. Copy it. Then add one small thing. That's connection — and connection is the soil everything else grows in.
- ☐ Start noticing what your child tells you without words
A pull toward the door, a turned back, a flap of joy — it all counts as communication.
- ☐ Find one parent who is further down this road
Local parent groups are where the real intel lives.
- ☐ Write down one thing that went well this month
There will be one. There's usually more than one.

You don't have to do this month perfectly. Done gently is done well.

— the Fathom North team