

UCR SEARCH Center's APRIL 2022 AMA

In April 2022, we fielded and answered questions from our Facebook Community. The questions were answered daily and posted as stories. This is a compilation of the questions asked during the week.

Thanks to a grant from the State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) for making this AMA event possible. Please visit our website for more online resources and personalized supports for families in the Inland Empire: www.searchcenter.ucr.edu

DDS Department of
Developmental
Services



Question: My child is 4 years old, and she seems very immature and is unable to keep up with other children her age. My pediatrician said she will mature and grow out of these seemingly delays. Where can I go to get another opinion or some kind of professional assessment?

Answer: You can contact your local school district and request a psychoeducational assessment. We recommend including your current developmental concerns about your child. The school district should get back to you within 15 days and notify you about an assessment plan.

Question: My daughter is in 3rd grade and already in special education for autism. But she's started having big behaviors at home and I think at school. What can I do? We have already had an IEP meeting this year.

Answer: Such a thoughtful question! If you are having new concerns about your child in school, and they are already eligible for special education, you can request an amendment to the IEP. When you do so, the school needs to respond within 30 days. It may be helpful to request an amendment to address these new behaviors!

Question: My 3-year-old son was recently diagnosed with autism. Should I be worried about his 6-month-old little brother? Should I look for signs?

Answer: Over the past 50 years, we have seen a steady increase in autism diagnoses in children (the current prevalence is 1 in 44). Having a family history of autism further increases the likelihood of future children developing autism. Children as young as 18 months of age may show signs of autism, including poor eye contact and repetitive movements. Even though these behaviors can be difficult to measure in

Question: I noticed my toddler has not met many developmental milestones, especially when compared to others in his play-group. He doesn't speak, he doesn't keep up with the play of others, and he seems a little clumsy on the playground. Where can I get services and support in the community?

Answer: If eligible, your local regional center should be able to provide you services and early intervention programs to support your child's development. Typically, children with developmental disabilities (e.g., global developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, autism, ADHD) are eligible for these early intervention services.

Question: I have children with and without autism. Should I treat them differently or set similar expectations for both of them?

Answer: All children have unique needs and challenges, regardless of whether they have autism. So, all children should be provided with an enriching home environment. In order to provide children with what they need based on their needs and developmental stage, individualization might be the best approach. Children may have different emotional needs, learn differently, and respond differently to rewards. A fair set of family rules and expectations for all children - regardless of their age or health condition - may also contribute to preserving core family values (e.g., respect for others). There is no "rulebook" to parenting, but we hope this was useful!

Question: "How can I watch the Autism Goes to College documentary?"

Answer: We're so glad you asked! Visit our website at www.autismgoestocollege.org and visit the "See the Film" tab. Check back in on our Facebook later this month. We'll be hosting a screening in April ;)

Question: My son is going to college in the Fall. We've been talking through whether he wants to disclose his autism diagnosis at school. I'm not sure how to guide him... Help?

Answer: It's great that you've already started to have conversations around disclosure! The biggest advantage to disclosing is gaining access to services like note-taking, extra test time, etc. Like many autistic students, your son might be worried that being open about his disability might negatively set him apart. Ultimately, the decision to disclose is truly a personal one! But one thing that might help is choosing the right college. Consider various institutional models (e.g., 4-year vs. 2-year colleges); research the types of services provided at the college; choose the "right" school based on the student's needs. You might also find this website of autism-specific college programs in the U.S. helpful: <https://can.softtr.app/>

Question: Where can I find a driver education center that is familiar with teaching high functioning autistic 20 year old?

Answer: Thank you for your patience! While our staff doesn't have any direct recommendations for driver's education centers that may be autism friendly, we encourage you to check out the Autism Society of Inland Empire's Facebook community group! They have over 5,000 active members who post similar questions to yours. There's a really good chance that one of the parents in the group can point you in the right direction! Here's the link to the group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AutismSocietyInlandEmpire>. You might also be interested in this related report that was recently posted by Autism Speaks: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/science-blog/one-three-teens-autism-earns-drivers-license>

Question: My son is speech delayed and seems developmentally delayed as well. I am homeschooling and would like to know if medical providers are able to do a psycho educational assessment as a school would? I would like to buy his curriculum according to his capabilities.

Answer: That's a good question! The assessment wouldn't be the same between a school and medical /clinical provider, because the latter would not focus on his educational needs per say nor would it be able to deem eligibility for SpEd.

However, even if you home school, you are entitled to a psycho-educational assessment by your public school system. Your medical provider could certainly recommend that you obtain this for the reasons stated (delayed speech and possible overall delay) and unless your medical providers work in an interdisciplinary setting alongside other professionals (speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, educators), they would not be able to provide this. The physician can provide an important evaluation of many areas of physical health and potential delays there.

The purpose of the psychoeducational assessment is to determine whether your child needs help accessing any areas of a developmentally appropriate school curriculum. If so, your child would be eligible for the IEP and special education.