



# Handy Handouts®

Free, educational handouts for teachers and parents\*

Number 262

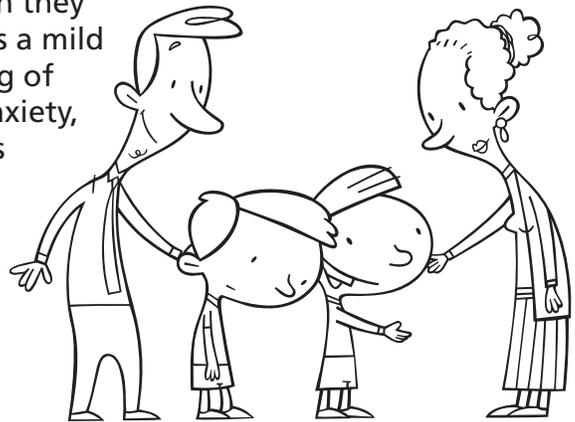


## Helping Parents Deal with Their Child's Disability Diagnosis

by Kevin Stuckey, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

### How Might Parents Feel?

Many parents are unsure how to respond when they learn their child has a disability. Whether the deficit is a mild articulation disorder or a diagnosis of autism, learning of your child's disability can initiate feelings of shock, anxiety, fear, and concern. When you learn that your child has a disability, there are many different thoughts that may run through your mind: "Is my child normal?" "Will he/she be successful in school?" "Will other kids make fun of him/her?" "What will his/her future be?" For parents, this becomes a time to realize that their ideal, normal child is now different. Some parents may ask the question "Why me?" as well as feel guilt and depression. As these thoughts begin to develop, parents may also try to determine if the disability is short-term and "fixable" or whether the diagnosis is more severe, requiring lifestyle changes throughout the entire family. This is all done in an attempt to quickly comprehend information about the disability as well as try to find the best educational and life options for their child.



### Who Can Help and Provide Information?

At a time of initial diagnosis of their child's disability, parents may find themselves wondering where to turn and who can help them. A medical doctor is often the professional who makes a disability diagnosis; however, other professionals, such as a psychologist or speech-language pathologist, may provide valuable information relating to your child's disability. A great place to start is to talk to those professionals, including doctors, therapists, counselors, school psychologists, and your child's teachers, so that everyone who has a hand in the child's education has the best interest of the child first and foremost. In order to meet your child's individual needs, some considerations will address appropriate educational levels such as a high school diploma, college, or even a vocational or trade school. Other considerations may be the need for additional instruction provided in special classes with specially-trained instructors, help from tutors, and/or support from mentors for guidance and encouragement.

### Whom Can Parents Turn to for Support?

Parents should be aware that they are not alone. There are many support groups for parents of children with the same disability who meet regularly to express concerns about their child as well as receive support and encouragement from others who are experiencing the same feelings. These groups can provide opportunities for other families

to share their experiences and provide coping methods that have helped them get through the tough times and adjust to their child's disability. Online sources and groups are other great resources parents can access to gain further information related to their child's specific disability.

### **Is There Any Financial Assistance?**

Parents have access to alternative sources of funding to assist with any additional expenses that may be related to their child's disability. Some of these resources are below:

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

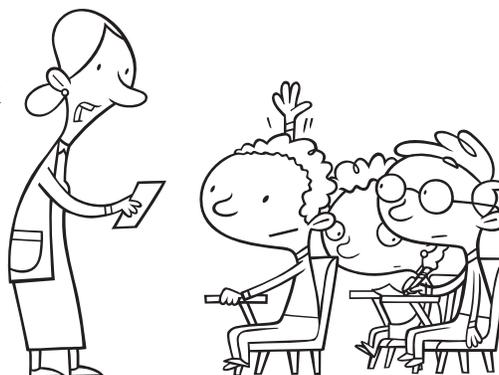
<http://www.hhs.gov/children/index.html>

**Brave Kids**

[http://www.bravekids.org/financial\\_aid/default.aspx](http://www.bravekids.org/financial_aid/default.aspx)

### **What's Next for My Child?**

After your child's evaluation and diagnosis of a disability, an educational plan is put in place to address the deficit area(s) of concern. At that point, you will work alongside teachers, counselors, and administrators to achieve an educational plan that best meets the needs of your child. These educators monitor targeted goals and objectives for progress and adjust them if necessary to maximize learning success. Parent dedication and involvement in their child's learning, including making sure assignments are done, as well as having open communication with the child's teachers can have a



major impact on the consistency of progress. The future for a child with a disability will require the active involvement of parents, teachers, and other educational professionals to assist with the child's specific needs and progress. With a great support system, the child will have the encouragement needed for success.

**For more Handy Handouts®, go to [www.handyhandouts.com](http://www.handyhandouts.com).**

### **Helpful Products**

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

*Early Developmental Milestones*  
[Item #BK-311](#)

*Normal Development Software and Text*  
[Item #TP-7802](#)

*Autism – A Guide for Educators, Clinicians, and Parents*  
[Item #TP-297](#)

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