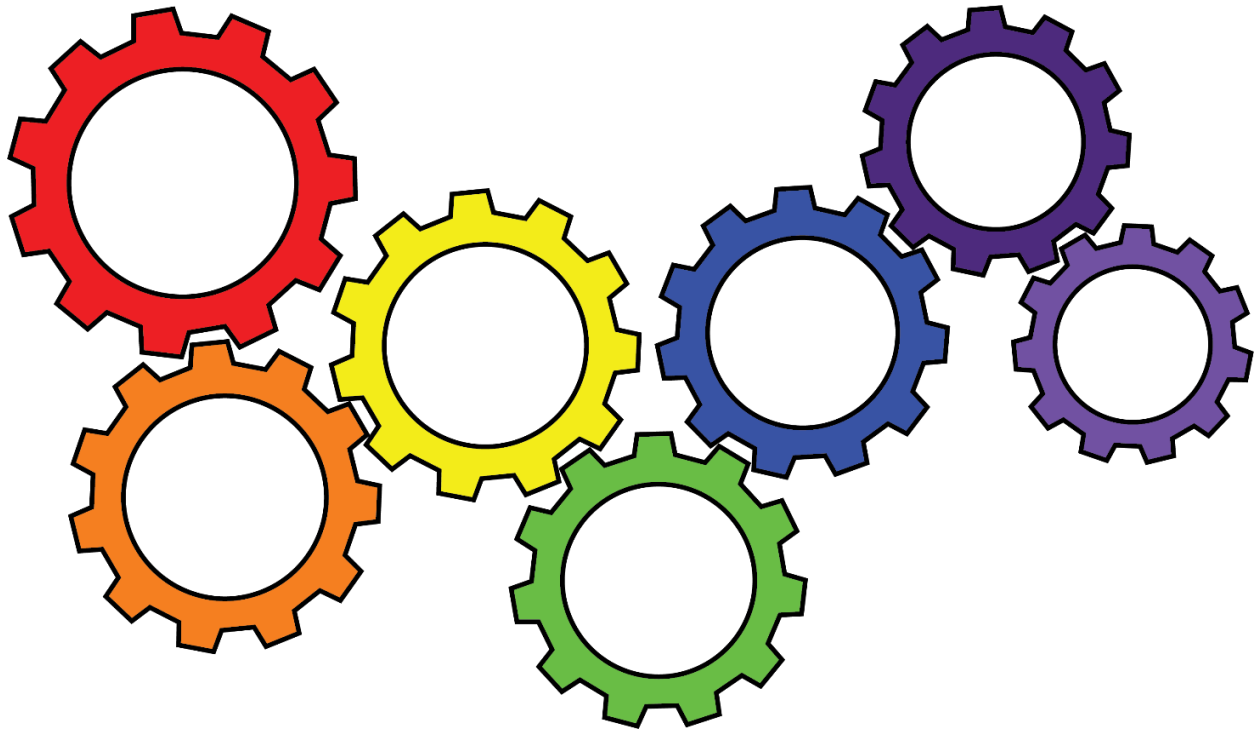




Autism Resource Handbook

A Guide for Caregivers, Families, Educators, and Autistic Individuals

Doc Clegg

[Autism Studies School of Education, Utah Valley University](#)

AUTISM STUDIES

Summer Edition

July 27th, 2026



<https://bit.ly/resourcehandbook>

Scan to Access the Digital Version and Downloadable PDFs



Disclaimer

*This handbook was created to help **autistic people, families, caregivers, educators, and professionals** find information, services, and resources in one place. Its purpose is to make options easier to understand and provide a starting point for people who may feel overwhelmed or unsure where to begin.*

*Although care has been taken to provide accurate and useful information, this handbook is for **general educational and informational purposes only**. It is not a substitute for individualized medical, mental health, legal, educational, financial, or professional advice. Every autistic person is different, and a resource or approach that helps one person may not be appropriate for another.*

*The inclusion of a provider, organization, product, program, treatment, book, website, or other resource **does not constitute an endorsement or guarantee of quality, safety, effectiveness, availability, or suitability**. Readers are encouraged to review options carefully, ask questions, and consult qualified professionals when appropriate.*

Programs, services, eligibility requirements, costs, contact information, and website links may change. Readers should confirm current information directly with the organization or provider.

*This handbook is not intended for emergency or crisis response. For an immediate safety or medical emergency, contact **911 or the appropriate local emergency service**. For personal guidance, treatment decisions, legal questions, or urgent concerns, contact a qualified professional or local support service.*

The goal of this handbook is to support informed choices, increase access to information, and connect people with possible next steps—not to replace professional care or individual decision-making.



Disclaimer	3
Section 1: Autism Basics.....	8
Definitions & Terminology	8
Core Autism & Diagnostic Terms.....	8
ABA & Professional Roles	9
Education & Systems	9
General & Behavioral Terms.....	10
Common Co-Occurring Conditions	10
Daily Living & Lived Experience Terms.....	11
What is Autism?	13
Understanding the Autistic Brain	14
Brain Differences & Structure	14
Processing, Emotion & Sensory Integration.....	14
Social Connection & Communication.....	15
Repetitive Behaviors & Stimming	16
Vaccine Myths & Facts	17
Co-occurring Conditions	19
Anxiety & OCD.....	19
Sleep & Digestive Health	20
Other Common Co-occurrences.....	20
Section 2: Diagnosis	22
Diagnostic Process	22
Where to Get Evaluated.....	23
Evaluation Resources (Screeners & Guides).....	23
Evaluation Services (Places to Go).....	24
Adult & Late Diagnosis.....	25
Diagnostic Tools.....	25
History, Context, & Trends	27
Section 3: Interventions & Supports	30
Overview of Evidence-Based Practices.....	30
Applied Behavior Analysis Concepts.....	31
Core Principles & Skills.....	31
Prompting & Reinforcement.....	32
Alternatives & Debates	33
Behavior Supports	34
Where to Receive Services.....	37
Research & Participation Portals.....	39
Evidence-Based Reports.....	39



Learn & Participate.....	40
Academic Journals & Research Organizations.....	40
Section 4: Sensory & Connection.....	42
Communication Supports.....	42
Augmentative & Alternative Communication	43
Therapy & Creative Communication	44
Sensory Tools & Regulation Strategies.....	45
Emotional Regulation & Coping Skills	46
Section 5: Education	48
IEPs, 504s, and Educational Rights	48
Local Schools & Contacts	49
College & Postsecondary Options	50
Transition Planning for Students	51
Legal & Advocacy Guides for Families	52
Section 6: Autistic & Ally Voices	54
Autistic Voices & Media	54
Professional & Advocate Voices.....	55
Parent & Ally Perspectives	56
Media & Representation.....	57
Section 7: Health Supports	60
Health & Therapy Supports	60
Clinics & Therapy Providers	61
Supportive Dental Care	63
State & Local Health Supports.....	64
Section 8: Safety & Crisis Supports.....	66
First Responders & Safety Teams.....	66
Wandering & Safety Planning.....	68
Teaching Safety Skills	70
Crisis Lines & Response Teams	71
Section 9: Teens, Transition & Adult Life	74
Employment & Job Support.....	74
Relationships, Sexuality & Personal Safety	76



Housing & Independent Living	77
Info & Guides	77
Services & Providers.....	79
Section 10: Community Supports	82
Family & Early Support	82
Independent Living & Adult Supports.....	83
Community Centers	84
Recreation & Accessible Spaces	85
Recreation & Activities.....	85
Sensory-Friendly Businesses	87
Belonging & Community Engagement	88
Parent & Caregiver Tools	89
National Resources.....	90
Out-of-State Resources.....	91
LGBTQ+ Support & Belonging	92
Student Presentation Handouts	93
References.....	94
About the Creator – Doc Clegg.....	96



SECTION I

AUTISM BASICS

Autism, Language, and Lived Experience

“Autism is not one experience. It is a spectrum of strengths, differences, identities, and support needs.”



Section 1: Autism Basics

Definitions & Terminology

Sometimes, the hardest part is just understanding the words people use. This section breaks down the basics, such as ASD, ABA, BCBA, and all those acronyms that get tossed around. It's a solid starting point for anyone new to the autism space.

Core Autism & Diagnostic Terms

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A developmental condition that affects communication, social skills, and behavior. Autism is a spectrum, so every person is different in their strengths and support needs.

DSM-5-TR: A manual used by professionals to diagnose mental health conditions. The DSM-5 (updated in 2022) defines Autism using two main criteria.

Autism Levels (Level 1, 2, 3): A system from the DSM-5 used to describe how much support an autistic person may need.

- ▶ **Level 1:** Requires support (may have difficulty with social interaction and organization, but can function more independently)
- ▶ **Level 2:** Requires substantial support (more noticeable challenges with communication, behavior, and flexibility)
- ▶ **Level 3:** Requires very substantial support (significant support needs in daily life, communication, and behavior)

These levels are general guidelines and do not capture a person's full abilities, strengths, or changing support needs over time.

Developmentally Delayed (DD): A term used when a child isn't meeting developmental milestones like walking, talking, or sitting up. It can also apply to older individuals if diagnosed later.

PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder): An older diagnosis for Autism-like symptoms. Now considered part of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the DSM-5.

Co-occurring Conditions (Co-Morbidity): Having more than one diagnosis at the same time (e.g., Autism and Anxiety).



ABA & Professional Roles

ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis): A scientific approach that uses strategies based on learning principles to teach and support behavior. ABA isn't just for Autism—it helps many people with different challenges. Examples include Discrete Trial Training and Incidental Teaching.

ABA Therapist / Behavior Technician: These people work directly with individuals using ABA strategies. Other names might include tutor, tech, or clinician. In this document, we use “ABA Therapist.”

BCBA / BCaBA / BCBA-D: Different levels of certified behavior analysts. BCBA-D has a doctorate, BCBA has a master's, and BCaBA is assistant-level.

RBT (Registered Behavior Technician): Entry-level credential for ABA therapists. They need training and must pass an exam. Not always required, but many jobs and insurance plans prefer it.

Consultant: Usually a certified behavior analyst (BCBA) who creates treatment plans, trains staff, and monitors progress.

Behavior: An action that you can see or measure. Example: Raising a hand is behavior, but “being quiet” is not (a quiet person might be doing nothing at all).

Consequence: What happens right after a behavior. It can increase or decrease how often that behavior occurs.

Intervention: A teaching plan or strategy used to change a behavior (e.g., teaching a child to ask for help instead of having a meltdown).

Education & Systems

IEP (Individualized Education Plan): A legal document that outlines a student's special education services and goals.

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act): A law that ensures students with disabilities receive appropriate education and services.

OCR (Office of Civil Rights): Part of the U.S. government that protects your rights and enforces anti-discrimination laws.

Contained Classroom: A special education class with only students with disabilities. Smaller group size and extra support.

Inclusive Classroom: A classroom where students with and without disabilities learn together.



Mainstream: Placing a student with disabilities into a general education classroom with typical peers.

General & Behavioral Terms

Chronological vs Developmental Age: Chronological age is actual age. Developmental age is based on skills and behavior.

Hypersensitivity / Hyposensitivity:

- **Hyper:** Overreacts to input (e.g., sounds).
- **Hypo:** Underreacts (e.g., may not feel pain).

Verbal vs Non-Verbal: Refers to whether someone uses spoken words. In professional terms, “non-vocal” is often more accurate than “non-verbal.”

NT (Neurotypical): A term for people without neurological differences, like Autism.

Normal vs Typical: To be more respectful and accurate, “normal” is often avoided in favor of “typical.”

Mouthing: Putting toys or other objects in the mouth when it’s not appropriate.

Perseverative Behavior: Doing or saying something over and over again, like asking the same question repeatedly.

Scripting: Repeating phrases from shows, books, or conversations (sometimes called “self-talk”).

Scrolling: Giving multiple answers when asked a question, often to try and get the right one.

Self-injurious behavior (SIB): Harming oneself intentionally (e.g., biting, headbanging).

Stereotypic/Repetitive behaviors (“Stimming”): Repetitive actions like rocking or hand-flapping that help with self-regulation or expression.

Common Co-Occurring Conditions

Anxiety Disorders: Conditions involving excessive worry, fear, or nervous system activation. Common in autistic individuals and may show up as avoidance, shutdowns, or physical symptoms.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A condition affecting attention, impulse control, and activity level. Many autistic individuals also have ADHD.



Depression: A mood disorder involving persistent sadness, low motivation, or loss of interest in activities.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): A mental health condition involving unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors or mental actions (compulsions) used to reduce distress.

Sensory Processing Differences: Differences in how the brain processes sensory input (e.g., sound, light, touch), which may be heightened or reduced.

Daily Living & Lived Experience Terms

Executive Functioning: Skills that help with planning, organization, memory, and starting or finishing tasks. Many autistic individuals and those with ADHD experience challenges in this area.

Self-Regulation: The ability to manage emotions, behaviors, and reactions to sensory input or stress.

Emotional Regulation: The ability to understand and manage emotions. This overlaps with self-regulation but focuses more on feelings.

Meltdown: An intense response to overwhelm where a person may lose control of behavior (e.g., crying, yelling, or shutting down). Not the same as a tantrum.

Shutdown: A response to overwhelm where a person withdraws, becomes quiet, or has difficulty responding or communicating.

Burnout (Autistic Burnout): A state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, masking, or unmet needs.

Masking: Hiding or suppressing natural behaviors to fit in socially. This can be exhausting over time.

Social Communication: The use of language in social situations (e.g., understanding tone, taking turns in conversation).

Portions of this section were simplified and adapted from the work of Lillian Adolphson, Ph.D. (2023).

(Find this in Section I, Subsection "Definitions & Terminology" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Autism Acronyms – Autism Council of Utah

Autism services use many acronyms, including IEP, ABA, BCBA, and DSPD. This simple guide explains what those letters mean and can help make paperwork easier to understand.

Link: <https://www.autismcouncilofutah.org/post/autism-acronyms>

People First vs. Identity First Language – YouTube

Autistic advocate Ivanova Smith breaks down the difference between people-first (“person with autism”) and identity-first (“autistic person”) language. Helpful if you’re unsure which to use and want guidance straight from lived experience.

Link: <https://youtu.be/Ddcl-yA88MU>

ICD Autism Codes (WHO ICD)

The ICD is an international guide used by healthcare professionals to define and code autism and other conditions. This resource is more technical, but it can help you understand the language used in medical records and evaluations.

Link: <https://icd.who.int/browse/2025-01/mms/en#437815624>

Identity-First vs. Person-First Language

This article explains the difference between “autistic person” and “person with autism.” It explores how language can reflect identity, respect, and personal preference.

Link: <https://healthjournalism.org/blog/2019/07/identity-first-vs-person-first-language-is-an-important-distinction/>



What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong, brain-based difference in how people communicate, connect, and experience the world. I like to think of it as a different operating system — not broken, just designed differently. Autism isn't something to "fix." It represents a distinctive way of thinking and being. Autistic people aren't less — just wonderfully different.

Autism Spectrum Disorder – NIMH

A clear, concise overview of autism, its signs, and what to look for—easy to share for beginners.

Link: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd>

Wired Differently: Module 4 Handout (PDF)

A plain-language introduction to autism, diagnosis, and the wide range of autistic experiences. Created by Doc Clegg, it is designed for people who are new to the topic

(Find this in Section 1, Subsection ["What is Autism?"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASHA

An easy-to-read overview of autism from a communication and development perspective. Helpful for families who want to understand the professional language without heavy jargon.

Link: <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/autism>

CDC – Autism Overview

Answers many of the big questions parents usually have. A great starting point if you're new and want something reliable, simple, and clear.

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/>

Note: CDC resource — I've included it here with some caution. The CDC is a common starting point for medical facts. Still, its reliability is in question within the autism community right now due to false claims being pushed by political figures (like linking Tylenol to autism). It's best used in conjunction with autistic voices and advocacy sources for balance.

What Causes Autism in Children – YouTube

Explains what research currently tells us about the causes of autism and what remains uncertain. Helpful for sorting reliable information from common myths.

Link: <https://youtu.be/EoCD0asRXvc>



Understanding the Autistic Brain

Autistic brains may process sensory information, emotion, learning, and communication differently. These differences are not signs of a broken brain, but part of a distinct way of experiencing and understanding the world.

Brain Differences & Structure

Temple Grandin Brain Scan – YouTube

Uses Temple Grandin's brain scans to show how autistic brains may process information differently. A visual introduction to brain differences, learning, and perception.

Link: <https://youtu.be/-j5bIYuVGdW>

Brain of an Autistic Child – YouTube

Ever wonder how the autistic brain works differently? This video makes it visual, real, and relatable—without going over your head.

Link: https://youtu.be/gFIB7ovqL_k

How the Striatum Is Linked to Autism

Explains the striatum, a part of the brain involved in movement, attention, and reward. It explores how differences in this area may relate to repetitive behavior and social experiences in autism.

Link: <https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/how-the-striatum-is-linked-to-autism/>

Processing, Emotion & Sensory Integration

Inside the Autism Brain: The Cerebellum – YouTube

Explains how the cerebellum may affect movement, learning, emotion, and repetitive behavior in autism. A clear introduction to one part of the autistic brain.

Link: https://youtu.be/Ct6a6z_roiA

Inside the Autism Brain: The Prefrontal Cortex – YouTube

Explains how the prefrontal cortex may affect decision-making, flexible thinking, and responses to social cues. A short, science-based look at autistic brain processing.

Link: https://youtu.be/OnWt-EDF_ss



Social Connection & Communication

Autism may change how people communicate and connect, but not whether they want meaningful relationships. Autistic communication can include different body language, tone, interests, and ways of expressing care.

Social Communication in Autism – Spectrum News

Explains why eye contact, tone of voice, body language, and back-and-forth conversation may look different for autistic people. Helpful for understanding social communication without treating difference as failure.

Link: <https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/social-communication-autism-explained/>

Adult Issues Webinar – Intro to Autism (NJACE) – YouTube

Autistic advocates share lived experiences and practical insights about autism myths, self-advocacy, relationships, and adult life. Relatable and affirming for autistic adults, families, and professionals.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/FexYOglSkCE>



Repetitive Behaviors & Stimming

Stimming includes repetitive movements, sounds, or routines that may support regulation, focus, communication, or joy. Understanding the purpose of stimming helps shift the focus from stopping it to supporting the person.

Repetitive Behaviors – Spectrum News

Explores when repetitive behaviors and stimming are helpful forms of regulation and when additional support may be needed. It encourages readers to understand the purpose of a behavior before trying to change it.

[Link: https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/learning-when-to-treat-repetitive-behaviors-in-autism/](https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/learning-when-to-treat-repetitive-behaviors-in-autism/)

Why Autistic Brains Stim (YouTube)

Explains why autistic people may use repetitive movements, sounds, or behaviors to regulate, focus, communicate, or express joy. It presents stimming as a natural and meaningful part of autistic life

[Link: https://youtu.be/iJMWATYG9Zc-](https://youtu.be/iJMWATYG9Zc-)



Vaccine Myths & Facts

Autism has been surrounded by harmful myths, including false claims about vaccines and parenting. This section provides evidence and history to correct those misconceptions.

MMR & Autism Study Retracted – New Scientist

The study that started the vaccine myth? Fully retracted. This article explains why, using facts instead of fear.

Link: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn4743-controversial-mmr-and-autism-study-retracted/>

NPR – Autism & Vaccine Study Was Fraudulent

Explains how the false link between vaccines and autism began with fraudulent research. A clear overview of how the myth spread and why it is not supported by evidence.

Link: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2011/01/06/132703314/study-linking-childhood-vaccine-and-autism-was-fraudulent>

Meta-Study: No Link Between Vaccines and Autism

A large review of vaccine research showing no link between vaccines and autism. Helpful for readers who want a strong evidence-based source.

Link: <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M18-2101>

CDC – Thimerosal in Vaccines

Explains what thimerosal is, how it has been used in vaccines, and why research does not support a link with autism.

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccine-safety/about/thimerosal.html>

Meta-Analysis – Vaccines & Autism (ScienceDirect)

A large review that combines findings from multiple vaccine studies. Helpful for readers who want a deeper look at the evidence showing no link between vaccines and autism.

Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X14006367>

AAP – Vaccine Studies Page

Explains vaccine research in clear, parent-friendly language. A useful resource to share with families who have questions about vaccines and autism.

Link: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Studies-Examine-the-Evidence.aspx>



CDC: Vaccine Studies on Autism (PDF)

A concise summary of research showing that vaccines do not cause autism. Helpful as a clear, shareable reference.

(Find these PDFs in Section 1, Subsection "Vaccine Myths & Facts" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Refrigerator Mother Theory in Fiction: Pauline Holdstock's Here I Am!

Explores how the harmful "refrigerator mother" theory appears in fiction and how the story challenges the idea that parents cause autism. Helpful for understanding the emotional harm this theory caused families.

Link: <https://iupress.istanbul.edu.tr/en/journal/litera/article/autism-and-refrigerator-mother-theory-in-fiction-pauline-holdstocks-here-i-am>

Why "Refrigerator Mothers" Were Blamed for Autism – and Its Harmfulness

Explains how parents, especially mothers, were once wrongly blamed for autism. It describes how the theory developed, the harm it caused, and why it has been rejected.

Link: <https://www.discoveryaba.com/aba-therapy/why-refrigerator-mothers-are-blamed-for-autism>

Refrigerator Mother Theory – What It Was & Why It Matters

Explains the history of the harmful "refrigerator mother" theory and how autism came to be understood as a biological and developmental difference rather than the result of parenting.

Link: <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/early-infantile-autism-and-refrigerator-mother-theory-1943-1970>

Tylenol & Autism Myths – PBS NewsHour

Reviews claims about Tylenol use during pregnancy and autism. It explains why the available evidence does not prove that Tylenol causes autism.

Link: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/research-doesnt-show-using-tylenol-during-pregnancy-causes-autism-here-are-5-things-to-know>



Co-occurring Conditions

Autism can occur alongside ADHD, anxiety, OCD, sleep difficulties, digestive concerns, and other conditions. Understanding the full picture helps families and professionals support the whole person.

Anxiety & OCD

International OCD Foundation – Autism & OCD

Explains how autism and OCD can overlap and how they may also differ. Includes examples, treatment information, and practical guidance for families and professionals.

Link: <https://iocdf.org/autism/>

Exposure (ERP) in Autistic Individuals – Research Summary (PDF)

Explains how exposure and response prevention therapy for OCD may need to be adapted for autistic people. It highlights sensory needs, communication differences, pacing, and person-centered care.

Note: *This summary was created with assistance from ChatGPT using academic and professional sources. Doc Clegg reviewed and edited the final content. Original sources are cited or linked for further reading.*

Co-occurring OCD and Autism in Youth (PDF)

A large study of young people with both OCD and autism. It found that those with both conditions may need longer and more individualized support, but they can still improve with treatment.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7595977/>

(Find these PDFs in Section 1, Subsection ["Anxiety & OCD"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Sleep & Digestive Health

Sleep Problems in Autism – The Transmitter

Explains why autistic people may have difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or keeping a regular sleep schedule. It connects sleep differences with sensory needs, anxiety, and brain processes.

Link: <https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/sleep-problems-autism-explained/>

Sleep Differences in Autism (YouTube)

Explores why sleep may be different for autistic people and explains some common causes of sleep difficulties. Helpful for families looking for a simple introduction.

Link: <https://youtu.be/Q2a75v8wzgU->

Autism & Digestive Health (YouTube)

Digestive issues are common in autistic people. This video looks at possible reasons and what that means for everyday life.

Link: https://youtu.be/5NqcW_rSDbc-

Other Common Co-occurrences

Psychiatric Comorbidities in Autism – Comorbidity Handout (PDF)

Explains how ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other conditions can occur alongside autism. Helpful for understanding why support should address the whole person.

Comorbid Psychopathology in Autism Spectrum Disorder (PDF)

Reviews research on mental health conditions that may occur alongside autism, including anxiety and depression. Useful for professionals and readers who want a deeper research-based overview.

(Find these PDFs in Section 1, Subsection ["Other Common Co-occurrences"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Conditions That Accompany Autism – The Transmitter

Provides an overview of conditions that commonly occur with autism, including ADHD, anxiety, epilepsy, sleep difficulties, and digestive concerns. Helpful for understanding why autistic experiences and support needs vary.

Link: <https://www.thetransmitter.org/spectrum/conditions-accompany-autism-explained/?fspec=1>



SECTION II

DIAGNOSIS

Evaluation, Diagnosis, and Next Steps

“A diagnosis should provide clarity, understanding, and access to support, not limit how a person is seen.”



Section 2: Diagnosis

Diagnostic Process

An autism evaluation usually includes interviews, observations, developmental history, and screening tools. The process can take time, but it may provide understanding, access to services, and clearer next steps.

[DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria \(PDF\)](#)

Explains the official criteria professionals use when evaluating someone for autism. Helpful for understanding what clinicians look for in communication, social interaction, and repetitive behavior.

[DSM-5 \(ASD Guidelines Overview\) \(PDF\)](#)

A simplified guide to the DSM-5 autism criteria. Helpful for families who want to understand the requirements without reading the full clinical manual.

[AAP Clinical Guide: Autism Diagnosis & Support \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how pediatricians screen for autism, complete evaluations, and connect families with support. Helpful for understanding what may happen after concerns are first raised.

Link: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/145/1/e20193447/36917>

(Find these PDFs in Section 2, Subsection "[Diagnostic Process](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

AAP Executive Summary – Autism Diagnosis & Care

A shorter version of the American Academy of Pediatrics' full autism guide. It provides the main information without as much medical detail.

Link: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/145/1/e20193448/37021>

Autism Research Institute (ARI) – Screening & Assessment

Explains common autism screening and evaluation tools, including questionnaires, interviews, and professional assessments. Helpful for knowing what to expect during the diagnostic process.

Link: <https://autism.org/screening-assessment/>



Where to Get Evaluated

Finding an autism evaluator can feel overwhelming. Start by looking for a qualified professional who listens carefully, considers the whole person, and explains the process clearly.

Evaluation Resources (Screeners & Guides)

M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers)

A screening questionnaire that helps identify possible autism signs in toddlers. It looks at communication, social interaction, and play but does not provide a diagnosis.

Link: <https://www.mchatscreen.com>

Early Red Flags of Autism: (PDF)

A parent-friendly guide to early differences in communication, play, and social interaction. Helpful for deciding when to discuss concerns with a healthcare professional.

Early Brain Development in Infants at High Risk for Autism (PDF)

Explores research showing that brain differences may appear before visible autism traits. This is a more technical resource for readers interested in early identification research.

Milestones CDC – Learn the Signs. Act Early (PDF)

Tracks common developmental milestones from 2 months through age 5. It can help families notice differences and decide when to ask a healthcare professional for guidance.

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/>

Red Flag Checklist for Autism (Parent Questionnaire) (PDF)

A parent questionnaire that organizes possible autism signs by communication, interaction, language, and play. It may help families decide whether to seek a professional evaluation.

(Find these PDFs in Section 2, Subsection "[Evaluation Resources \(Screeners & Guides\)](#)" of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

CDC Autism Diagnosis Info

Explains the steps involved in autism screening and diagnosis. A helpful starting point for families who want to know what to expect during an evaluation.

Link: cdc.gov/autism/hcp/diagnosis



Kids On the Move – Utah Autism Resources & Evaluations

Provides autism evaluations for children and connects Utah families with early-sign information, services, and local resources. A practical starting point for families seeking an evaluation or next steps.

Link: <https://kotm.org/utah-autism-resources/>

Evaluation Services (Places to Go)

Utah Autism Evaluation Resources (PDF)

A statewide list of autism evaluation providers organized by region. Helpful for Utah families looking for local assessment options.

Link: https://familyhealth.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/Office_CSHCN/pdf/autism/Autism-Evaluations.pdf

ScenicView Clinic (PDF)

Provides autism evaluations and related services for teens and young adults. A possible option for families seeking support beyond childhood.

Link: scenicviewclinic.com

(Find these PDFs in Section 2, Subsection "[Evaluation Services \(Places to Go\)](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Kids Who Count (Utah)

A Utah County nonprofit offering early intervention, autism services, and parent coaching for young children and families.

Link: <https://kidswhocount.org/>

The Autism Clinic of Utah

A Utah provider offering autism evaluations and therapy services. Helpful for families seeking both diagnosis and ongoing support.

Link: theautismclinicutah.com

University of Utah – HMHI Autism Services

Provides team-based autism evaluations and services for children and adults. A possible option for families seeking assessment through a large healthcare system.

Link: healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/treatments/autism-clinic

Milestone Neurodevelopment Center

Offers autism and developmental evaluations for children and adults, along with individualized recommendations and support planning.

Link: milestoneneuro.com



Dr. Colton Miller (Psychologist, Park City)

A Park City psychologist offering autism evaluations and therapy. A local option for diagnosis and ongoing mental health support..

Link: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/colton-miller-park-city-ut/753092>

Adult & Late Diagnosis

Many people are not identified as autistic until adulthood. A late diagnosis may bring clarity, mixed emotions, and a better understanding of past experiences and current support needs.

Autism Diagnosis in Adulthood – SPARK – YouTube

A webinar explaining how autism is evaluated in adults and what the process may involve. Helpful for adults considering an assessment and for people supporting them.

Link: https://youtu.be/pniYFYqG_cQ

Understanding Undiagnosed Autism in Adult Females – UCLA Health

Explains why many women and AFAB adults are diagnosed later, including masking, gender bias, and diagnostic tools based mainly on male traits. Helpful for understanding how autism may be missed in adulthood.

Link: <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/understanding-undiagnosed-autism-adult-females>

Diagnostic Tools

Diagnostic tools help professionals organize observations and determine whether someone meets autism criteria. They guide evaluations and access to support, but they do not define a person's identity or abilities.

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2)

Explains the ADOS-2, a commonly used autism evaluation tool involving structured activities and observation. Helpful for families who want to understand what may happen during an assessment.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4883454/>

(ADOS®-2) Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition

The official publisher's overview of the ADOS-2, a structured assessment used by trained professionals. Families do not administer it, but the page explains how the tool works.

Link: <https://www.wpspublish.com/ados-2-autism-diagnostic-observation-schedule-second-edition>



Module 3: Severity Levels (PDF)

The official publisher's overview of the ADOS-2, a structured assessment used by trained professionals. Families do not administer it, but the page explains how the tool works.

DSM-IV vs DSM-5 Comparison (PDF)

Compares older and current autism diagnostic criteria. Helpful for understanding why diagnoses such as Asperger's syndrome and PDD-NOS are now included under autism spectrum disorder.

How Diagnosis Changed with DSM-5 (PDF)

Explains how changes to the DSM-5 affected autism diagnosis, terminology, and access to services.

(Find these PDFs in Section 2, Subsection "[Diagnostic Tools](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

DSM-5: Classification & Criteria Changes:

Explains why several older autism diagnoses were combined into one spectrum and how the current criteria and support levels work.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3683251/>

AAP Autism Care Hub

The American Academy of Pediatrics' main autism resource page. It includes information about diagnosis, healthcare, development, and family support.

Link: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/autism>

Baby Watch Early Intervention (Utah)

A Utah program providing developmental screening and early intervention for children from birth through age 3. Services may include in-home support and family coaching.

Link: <https://familyhealth.utah.gov/oec/baby-watch-early-intervention/>



History, Context, & Trends

Ideas about autism have changed significantly over time. This section explores how diagnostic criteria, language, research, and autism identification have evolved

Psychiatrist Views on DSM-5:

Summarizes professional opinions about changes to the DSM-5 autism criteria. Helpful for understanding why some clinicians supported the changes while others raised concerns.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3846446/>

2020 CDC ADDM Data Slides (PDF)

Shows autism identification rates, age of diagnosis, and differences among racial and regional groups. Helpful for understanding gaps in early identification and services.

(Find this in Section 2, Subsection "[History, Context, & Trends](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Autism in the DSM, 1952–2013 – Archive Entry

A timeline showing how autism definitions changed across different editions of the DSM. Helpful for understanding why older diagnoses and terms are no longer used.

Link: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/autismhistoryproject/archive/autism-in-the-dsm>

CDC Autism Prevalence Reports (2014–2022)

Tracks changes in autism identification across multiple CDC reporting years. The reports also examine age of diagnosis and differences among communities.

Link: 2014 | <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/ss/ss6706a1.htm>

Link: 2018 | <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/ss/ss7011a1.htm>

Link: 2020 | <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/ss/ss7202a1.htm>

Link: 2022 | <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/74/ss/ss7402a1.htm>

CDC Community Report on Autism

Summarizes national autism data in clear, family-friendly language. It explains identification rates, age of diagnosis, and differences across communities.

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/communication-resources/community-reports.html>

Autism & Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network

The CDC network that collects much of the national data about autism in children. It helps researchers identify trends, service gaps, and differences among communities

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/addm-network/index.html>



History of Autism – YouTube

A short overview of how autism definitions, diagnosis, and public understanding have changed over time.

Link: <https://youtu.be/KRL3RqOmGiU>

Dr. Bernard Rimland Talks About His Journey – YouTube

This is also more historical than an autistic voice, and Bernard Rimland was a parent and researcher rather than an autistic self-advocate.

Link: <https://youtu.be/wZPxcSUKfp8>

Don Triplett: Autism’s First Child – YouTube

Tells the story of Don Triplett, the first person described in Leo Kanner’s original autism case series. His life offers historical context about diagnosis, community, and changing attitudes toward autism.

Link: <https://youtu.be/4rNX0Kmu6ak>



SECTION III

INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS

Evidence and Person-Centered Support

“The right support should strengthen communication, autonomy, safety, and quality of life.”



Section 3: Interventions & Supports

Overview of Evidence-Based Practices

There are many autism supports and interventions, and comparing them can feel overwhelming. This section explains research-supported options in plain language so families and autistic people can make informed choices.

[What's ABA & Why Do People Use It? \(PDF\)](#)

A beginner-friendly introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis, including who provides it, where services may happen, and how progress is tracked.

(Find this in Section 3, Subsection "[Overview of Evidence-Based Practices](#)" of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

IRIS Center Modules – Vanderbilt

Free training modules for families, educators, and professionals supporting autistic learners. The lessons use practical examples and do not require professional experience.

Link: <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>

Organization for Autism Research (OAR)

Provides practical, research-based guides for autistic people, families, and educators. Helpful for readers who want clear information without heavy academic language.

Link: researchautism.org

Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in the Classroom

A step-by-step guide for using evidence-based practices in real classrooms. It also connects educators with trusted training and research resources.

Link: <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/spedteacherresources/implementing-evidence-based-practices-in-the-classroom/>



Applied Behavior Analysis Concepts

ABA uses specialized terms that may be unfamiliar to families and new professionals. This section explains common concepts in plain language so readers can better understand treatment plans and conversations with providers.

Core Principles & Skills

[Pairing in ABA \(PDF\)](#)

Before learning begins, trust must be built. Pairing involves the therapist or caregiver becoming the “fun person” by engaging in the child's interests. This guide explains how to do pairing well and provides a data sheet.

[Mand Training – Increasing Requests \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how to teach someone to request what they want or need. It includes research information and practical strategies using natural reinforcement.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3592491/>

[Echoic Training / Verbal Imitation \(PDF\)](#)

A step-by-step program for supporting vocal imitation, from early sounds to short phrases. It focuses on encouraging attempts rather than expecting perfect speech.

This resource focuses on spoken language and should not replace access to AAC or other communication methods.

(Find these PDFs in Section 3, Subsection ["Core Principles & Skills"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Skinner’s Verbal Behavior – Research Article

Explains the theory behind ABA communication terms such as mands, tacts, and intraverbals. This is a more technical resource for readers interested in the research behind these concepts.

Link: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2774593/>

Verbal Operants – HowToABA

A simple introduction to ABA communication terms, including requesting, labeling, and answering questions. Helpful for families and new professionals

Link: <https://howtoaba.com/verbal-operants/>

Teaching Play Skills – HowToABA

Offers step-by-step ideas for supporting different types of play, from simple actions to imaginative activities. Includes a free example families can try at home

Link: <https://howtoaba.com/teaching-play-skills/>



Prompting & Reinforcement

Positive vs Negative Reinforcement – YouTube

A short explanation of positive and negative reinforcement in ABA. Helpful for understanding that “negative” means removing something, not punishment.

[Link: https://youtu.be/x8WWGwWwRlg?si=ustg7FhrWPAyMpUI](https://youtu.be/x8WWGwWwRlg?si=ustg7FhrWPAyMpUI)

Unwanted Effects of Reinforcement – PsychCentral

Explains how rewards may sometimes create stress, dependence, or unintended behavior changes. Offers guidance for using reinforcement more carefully.

[Link: https://psychcentral.com/pro/child-therapist/2019/12/unwanted-effects-of-reinforcement-the-bad-effects-of-a-good-intervention#1](https://psychcentral.com/pro/child-therapist/2019/12/unwanted-effects-of-reinforcement-the-bad-effects-of-a-good-intervention#1)



Alternatives & Debates

ABA is widely used, but autistic people, families, and professionals have different views about its benefits and risks. This section presents multiple perspectives and encourages readers to choose supports that respect autonomy, safety, and individual needs.

The Controversy Around ABA – Child Mind Institute

Explains why some families value ABA and why some autistic adults criticize it. Helpful for readers who want an introduction to both sides of the debate.

Link: <https://childmind.org/article/controversy-around-applied-behavior-analysis/>

Center-Based vs Home-Based Autism Intervention (PDF)

Compares the possible benefits and drawbacks of receiving services at home or in a clinic. Helpful for families deciding which setting may fit their needs.

Old Horses in New Stables – James Todd (PDF)

Examines concerns about Facilitated Communication and Rapid Prompting Method. It explains how a supporter may unintentionally influence messages and why independent communication must be carefully verified.

(Find these PDFs in Section 3, Subsection ["ABA Debates & Alternatives"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Rapid Prompting Method – ASHA

ASHA's official position on Rapid Prompting Method. It explains why the method is not considered evidence-based and why independent communication cannot be reliably confirmed.

Link: <https://www.asha.org/policy/ps2018-00351/>

Unwanted Effects of Interventions – All Day ABA

Explains possible side effects of reinforcement, punishment, and extinction-based interventions. Helpful for understanding why behavior plans should be monitored carefully and changed when they cause distress or harm.

Link: <https://alldayaba.org/blog/f/unwanted-effects-of-interventions---section-h-5?blogcategory=Vocabulary>



Behavior Supports

Behavior can provide important information about a person's needs, environment, communication, or distress. This section focuses on identifying possible causes, adjusting environments, and teaching useful alternatives with compassion.

[Encouraging Behavior – IRIS Center \(PDF\)](#)

Explains positive classroom strategies such as clear expectations, choices, specific praise, and meaningful reinforcement. Helpful for both families and educators.

[Step-by-Step Guide for ABI \(Antecedent-Based Interventions\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how to change what happens before a behavior to make success more likely. Strategies include visual schedules, choices, sensory supports, and using personal interests.

[Antecedent Intervention List \(PDF\)](#)

A quick-reference list of proactive supports that can be used before difficulties occur. Includes visual supports, sensory adjustments, choices, and changes to routines.

[Functional Behavior Assessment Study \(PDF\)](#)

Compares several ways of identifying why behavior occurs. The study found that direct observation was especially important and should be combined with interviews and other information.

[Hanley – Functional Assessment \(Myths & Best Practices\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains common misunderstandings about functional assessment. It recommends listening carefully, gathering individualized information, and using humane, person-centered approaches.

(Find this in Section 3, Subsection ["Behavior Support"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

[Trial-Based Functional Analysis in Classrooms \(PDF\)](#)

Examines a shorter form of functional analysis that can be used during regular classroom activities. It may be more practical than a full assessment, but it may not identify every possible cause of behavior.

[Practical Functional Assessment \(PFA\) & IISCA \(PDF\)](#)

Explains a practical approach to identifying situations that lead to challenging behavior and the outcomes that may maintain it. This is a technical resource intended mainly for trained behavior professionals.

(Find this in Section 3, Subsection ["Behavior Support"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Helpful Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior – Autism Speaks

Provides practical ideas for routines, expectations, reinforcement, and daily behavior support. Written for families and designed to be easy to apply.

[Link: autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/helpful-strategies-promote-positive-behavior](https://autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/helpful-strategies-promote-positive-behavior)

Note: Autism Speaks resource — I've included it here with caution. The organization has a complicated history in the autism community, and many autistic people (myself included) have concerns about how they represent autism.

Teaching Social Skills Workshop (YouTube)

Shows examples of ways families, educators, and peers may support social interaction and connection. Helpful for readers who learn best through demonstrations and real-life examples.

[Link: https://youtu.be/ZFulP9VHIz4?si=tkhFxlPIVWsDCrsT](https://youtu.be/ZFulP9VHIz4?si=tkhFxlPIVWsDCrsT)

Stimming & Should We Treat It? (YouTube)

Explores when stimming is a healthy form of regulation and when additional support may be needed, such as when it causes injury or serious disruption. Encourages understanding before intervention.

[Link: https://youtu.be/2LhI23QPoi8](https://youtu.be/2LhI23QPoi8)

ABA Visualized – Behavior Strategies Made Simple

Uses pictures and step-by-step guides to explain behavior-support concepts. Helpful for families, educators, and professionals who prefer visual learning.

[Link: https://abavisualized.com/](https://abavisualized.com/)

Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families (PTR-F) (Amazon)

A practical guide to understanding behavior, preventing difficulties, teaching new skills, and reinforcing progress at home. Designed for families working together with professionals.

[Link: https://www.amazon.com/Prevent-Teach-Reinforce-Families-Individualized-Positive-Community/dp/1598579789](https://www.amazon.com/Prevent-Teach-Reinforce-Families-Individualized-Positive-Community/dp/1598579789)

ABA Visualized Guidebook (2nd Edition)

A visual guide to ABA and positive behavior-support strategies. Uses simple illustrations to show how ideas may be applied at home, school, or in therapy.

[Link: https://abavisualized.com/products/aba-visualized-guidebook-2nd-edition?srsId=AfmBOoot5849VWeHDE7mP7mg_LJXOXLqNoiP_LDU1dq1Dtdaf4zBE2PD](https://abavisualized.com/products/aba-visualized-guidebook-2nd-edition?srsId=AfmBOoot5849VWeHDE7mP7mg_LJXOXLqNoiP_LDU1dq1Dtdaf4zBE2PD)

[Link: https://www.amazon.com/ABA-Visualized-Guidebook-2nd-Approachable-ebook/dp/B0DXQV2P8Z](https://www.amazon.com/ABA-Visualized-Guidebook-2nd-Approachable-ebook/dp/B0DXQV2P8Z)



Antecedent-Based Interventions (ABI) – AFIRM Module

A free training module about changing routines, environments, or supports before difficulties occur. Includes examples, visuals, and practical steps.

Link: <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/ebp-module/antecedent-based-interventions-abi/>

A Systematic Review of ABI – ScienceDirect

A research review of strategies that change what happens before a behavior. Best suited for professionals and readers who want a deeper look at the evidence.

Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S175094671100064X>



Where to Receive Services

Finding a provider can be difficult because of waitlists, insurance rules, and differences among programs. This section lists Utah resources and providers to help families begin comparing options.

Find an ABA Provider – Utah Medicaid

A directory of ABA providers enrolled with Utah Medicaid, including providers serving the Autism Spectrum Disorder Family Assistance Program

Link: <https://medicaid.utah.gov/ltc-2/asd-fap/>

Autism Council of Utah – A-Z Provider List

A statewide directory of autism service providers. Some listings may include ABA, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other supports.

Link: https://www.autismcouncilofutah.org/post/_a-z

BridgeCare ABA

Provides in-home ABA services in Utah. Families should contact the provider directly to ask about service areas, availability, ages served, and treatment approach.

Link: <https://www.bridgecareaba.com/locations/aba-therapy-in-utah>

Whole Child Therapy

Offers several services in one setting, including ABA, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and mental health support. May be useful for families seeking coordinated care.

Link: <https://www.thewholechildtherapy.com/>

Utah Autism Academy

Provides ABA services in homes, clinics, and community settings. The program also offers practice activities for medical, dental, and other daily-life situations.

Link: <https://utahautismacademy.com/>

ABS Kids

Provides home- and center-based ABA services in Utah and other states. The organization also offers family resources and assistance with insurance questions.

Link: <https://www.abskids.com/>

Kids On The Move – Autism Center

Offers home- and center-based ABA services for children in Utah County. The program focuses on communication, daily living, social development, and family participation.

Link: <https://kotm.org/programs/autism-center/>



ScenicView Clinic

Provides clinic-based ABA services for autistic people and individuals with related needs. Services may address communication, independence, social participation, and daily living skills.

[Link: https://scenicviewclinic.com/](https://scenicviewclinic.com/)



Research & Participation Portals

Autism information online can range from strong research to outdated or misleading claims. This section provides starting points for finding research, training, and opportunities to participate in studies.

Evidence-Based Reports

National Autism Center Reports

Provides reports reviewing research on autism interventions. Helpful for families and professionals comparing which practices have stronger or weaker evidence.

[Link: nationalautismcenter.org](https://nationalautismcenter.org)

What Works Clearinghouse

A federal resource that reviews research on educational programs and interventions. Helpful for checking whether a practice has been studied and what the evidence shows

[Link: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC)

National Standards Project – Phase 2 (PDF)

Reviews research on autism interventions and groups practices by the strength of available evidence. Helpful for comparing established, emerging, and unestablished approaches.

[Link: https://nationalautismcenter.org/national-standards/](https://nationalautismcenter.org/national-standards/)

Social & Daily Living Skills Review (PDF)

Reviews interventions intended to support social and daily living skills, including video modeling, peer support, and pivotal response training. Best suited for readers who want a research-based overview.

[Link: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1750946711001279?via%3Dihub](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1750946711001279?via%3Dihub)

(Find these PDFs in Section 3, Subsection ["Evidence-Based Reports"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Learn & Participate

SPARK for Autism

A national autism research project that autistic people and families can join from home. Participants contribute information that may help researchers better understand autism.

Link: <http://sparkforautism.org/>

Autism Internet Modules

Free, self-paced lessons on communication, behavior, sensory differences, and evidence-based practices. Designed for families, educators, and professionals.

Link: autisminternetmodules.org

Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM)

Free training modules, videos, and tools about evidence-based autism practices. Each module explains a strategy and shows how it may be used.

Link: autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu

Academic Journals & Research Organizations

Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders

An academic journal publishing research on autism and developmental disabilities. Best suited for professionals, students, and readers comfortable with technical studies.

Link: <https://link.springer.com/journal/10803/volumes-and-issues>

Autism Research (Wiley)

An academic journal covering autism research, including health, development, genetics, services, and interventions. Most articles are written for researchers and professionals.

Link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/19383703>

Autism Science Foundation (ASF)

Funds autism research and shares summaries, podcasts, and educational information. Helpful for readers interested in current research updates.

Link: <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/>

Autism Research Institute (ARI)

Provides webinars, articles, and educational resources about autism. Some materials are designed for families, while others are more research-focused.

Link: <https://autism.org/>



SECTION IV

SENSORY & CONNECTION

Communication, Regulation, & Expression

“Communication is more than speech, and regulation is more than appearing calm.”



Section 4: Sensory & Connection

Communication Supports

Communication can include speech, pictures, devices, typing, gestures, or other methods. This section explores AAC and other tools that help autistic people express their thoughts, needs, and choices.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

A national organization for speech, language, and hearing professionals. Its website explains communication supports, AAC, evaluations, and how to find qualified speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Link: <https://www.asha.org/>

Speech & Language Development Chart (PDF)

Shows common speech and language milestones by age. It is not a diagnostic tool, but it may help families and educators notice differences to discuss with a doctor or speech-language pathologist.

(Find this in Section 4, Subsection "[Communication Supports](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Google Live Transcribe & Sound Notifications

A free Android accessibility tool that turns speech and important sounds into real-time text. Helpful for people who are hard of hearing or process spoken information more easily when they can read it.

Link: <https://www.android.com/accessibility/>



Augmentative & Alternative Communication

Tobii Dynavox – AAC Devices & Eye-Tracking Tools

Provides AAC devices, communication software, symbols, and eye-tracking tools. The website also includes training, funding information, and support for families and professionals.

Link: <https://us.tobiidynavox.com/>

CoughDrop – AAC That Moves With You app

A cloud-based AAC app that works across phones, tablets, and computers. Communication boards can be customized and shared with trusted supporters while remaining centered on the user's voice.

Link: <https://www.mycoughdrop.com/>

Proloquo2Go – AssistiveWare

An AAC app for iPhone and iPad that uses symbols, customizable vocabulary, and text-to-speech. It can be adjusted for different ages, communication needs, and language levels.

Link: <https://www.assistiveware.com/products/proloquo2go>

AAC – American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Explains what AAC is, who may benefit, and how tools such as picture boards, signs, typing, and speech-generating devices support communication. A helpful starting point for families and educators.

Link: <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/>

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Autism

A learning module about AAC for autistic people. It explains communication options, common misconceptions, and ways families and professionals can support successful AAC use.

Link: <https://autisminternetmodules.org/m/1189>



Therapy & Creative Communication

Communication is about more than spoken words. Music, art, movement, and other creative approaches can support expression, confidence, regulation, and connection without focusing only on correction.

Pure Progression Music Therapy

Provides music therapy to support communication, emotional expression, regulation, and connection. May be helpful for people who respond well to rhythm, sound, and creative activities.

Link: <https://www.pureprogressionmt.com>

Art Access Utah

Art Access offers inclusive art programs for neurodiverse individuals and families. Through painting, sculpture, and creative storytelling, participants explore new ways to communicate and express emotions in a sensory-aware environment.

Link: <https://artaccessutah.org/>



Sensory Tools & Regulation Strategies

Autistic people may experience sound, light, touch, movement, or other sensations more or less intensely. This section explores tools and environmental changes that may support comfort, focus, regulation, and safety.

National Autistic Society – Sensory Differences

Explains sensory processing differences across sound, touch, movement, light, and other senses. Includes practical ideas for home, school, work, and community settings.

Link: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/about-autism/sensory-processing>

Autism Community Store – Sensory Toys & Tools

An online store offering fidgets, weighted products, movement tools, and other sensory items. Families and professionals can browse options when building sensory kits or trying different supports.

Link: <https://autismcommunitystore.com/collections/sensory-toys>

Sensory tools work differently for each person. Consider comfort, safety, preferences, and professional guidance when needed.

Steelcase Buoy Stool

A stool designed to allow gentle rocking and movement while seated. It may support people who focus or regulate more easily when they can move.

Link: https://store.steelcase.com/ccrz_ProductDetails?cartId=868826b3-455d-4aef-9486-976b993dbc05&cclcl=en_US&sku=QU7RB7TR8BY5FG3TP6PV&cartItemId=a4cR3000000jOXdIAM&viewState=EditView

SOS Play / Buzzy Buddy

A stuffed sensory tool that provides gentle vibration and a bilateral hugging sensation. It is designed to support calming and regulation during stress, overwhelm, or transitions.

Link: <https://www.sosplay.com/>



Emotional Regulation & Coping Skills

Sensory overwhelm, anxiety, burnout, and strong emotions can be difficult to manage. This section offers practical tools for emotional regulation, mindfulness, distress tolerance, and coping at home, school, work, and in the community

DBT Skills Guide – Doc Clegg (PDF)

A plain-language guide to DBT skills, including mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and crisis coping. Includes visuals, examples, worksheets, and quick-reference pages

(Find this in "[The Regulation Field Guide](#)" or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Many autistic people and caregivers may find these skills useful for anxiety, sensory overwhelm, and daily stress.

Insight Timer

A meditation and wellness app offering guided meditations, breathing exercises, sleep stories, calming music, and courses. Much of the content is free, with optional paid features.

Link: <https://insighttimer.com/>

Self-Care for Autistic People: Ways to Recharge, De-Stress, and Unmask!

A practical self-care guide written by an autistic and ADHD clinical psychologist. Includes strategies for sensory regulation, burnout, unmasking, stress, and building sustainable routines.

Link: <https://a.co/d/0cs1epvf>

The Body Keeps the Score – Bessel van der Kolk

Explores how trauma can affect the brain, body, emotions, relationships, and sense of safety. It also discusses different approaches to healing, including therapy, mindfulness, movement, and supportive relationships.

Link: <https://a.co/d/0eNkVIGE>

Content note: *Includes detailed discussions of trauma, abuse, violence, and distressing experiences.*



SECTION V

EDUCATION

School, Rights, and Student Support

*“Every student deserves access, belonging, meaningful participation,
and the support needed to learn.”*



Section 5: Education

IEPs, 504s, and Educational Rights

School support systems can be confusing, especially when terms like IEP, 504 plan, and accommodations are new. This section helps families, students, and educators understand educational rights and available supports.

Utah Special Education Services

Utah's official resource for special education rules, programs, and IEP services. A useful starting point for families learning how school supports work.

[Link: schools.utah.gov/specialeducation](https://schools.utah.gov/specialeducation)

Autism Speaks – School & Your Child's Rights

Explains IEPs, 504 plans, accommodations, and educational rights for autistic students. Written for families who are new to school support systems.

[Link: https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-school-your-childs-rights](https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-school-your-childs-rights)

Note: Autism Speaks resource — I've included it here with caution. The organization has a complicated history in the autism community, and many autistic people (myself included) have concerns about how they represent autism.

Least Restrictive Behavior Interventions (LRBI) Manual (PDF)

Utah's guide for using positive and least restrictive behavior supports in schools. Helpful for families and educators reviewing behavior plans and student protections.

(Find this in Section 5, Subsection "[IEPs, 504s, and Educational Rights](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Autism Classroom Resources

Offers classroom strategies, training, and practical tools for supporting autistic students. Helpful for educators and families who want examples of effective school supports.

[Link: https://autismclassroomresources.com/autism-internet-modules-free-training/](https://autismclassroomresources.com/autism-internet-modules-free-training/)

Educator Resources – Organization for Autism Research (OAR)

Free guides and lesson plans for creating inclusive classrooms and supporting autistic students. Designed for educators but also useful for families.

[Link: https://researchautism.org/educators/](https://researchautism.org/educators/)



Local Schools & Contacts

Knowing who to contact can make navigating school services much easier. This section lists Utah school districts, special education departments, and programs that may help with IEPs, 504 plans, transitions, and student support.

Choosing a School or Program

When comparing schools or programs, ask about staff training, supervision, accessibility, safety policies, reporting procedures, and how bullying or misconduct concerns are handled. The right fit will depend on the individual student's needs and preferences.

Spectrum Academy

A Utah charter school serving autistic students and students with related learning needs. Families should review its academic supports, class structure, services, and safety practices to determine whether it is a good fit.

Link: <https://spectrumcharter.org>

Provo School District

Provides information about special education, preschool services, IEPs, and family contacts for students in the Provo area.

Link: <https://provo.edu/special-education/>

Nebo School District

Provides special education information, parent resources, program descriptions, and contact details for families in southern Utah County.

Link: <https://www.nebo.edu/page/special-education>

Davis School District

Provides evaluation and special education services for eligible students from birth through age 21. Its Child Find information helps families request screening or evaluation when concerns arise.

Link: <https://www.davis.k12.ut.us/page/special-education>

Salt Lake City School District

Provides information about special education, 504 plans, transition services, accommodations, and family support contacts.

Link: <https://www.slcschools.org/special-education-and-504-home>

Washington County School District

Offers special education services, school-based supports, and transition planning for students with disabilities in Washington County.

Link: <https://www.washk12.org/special-education/>



Tooele County School District – CLIMBS Program

Provides information about Tooele County special education services, including the CLIMBS program for students who need additional academic and behavioral support.

Link: <https://www.tooeleschools.org/departments/special-education-services>

Duchesne County School District – Con Amore School (Special Ed)

Con Amore School is a specialized educational program within Duchesne County School District for students with significant support needs. Families should contact the district for current eligibility and program information.

Link: <https://www.dcsd.org/>

College & Postsecondary Options

Planning for life after high school may involve college, job training, independent living, or community participation. This section highlights programs that support academic growth, employment skills, independence, and adult life.

PASSAGES Program (PDF)

A UVU program for autistic adults focused on social connection, life skills, self-advocacy, and community participation. Helpful for people seeking support outside a traditional degree program.

Link: uvu.edu/autism/passages

Wolverines Elevated (PDF)

A three-year inclusive college program at UVU for students with intellectual disabilities. It combines academics, campus life, employment preparation, and independent-living skills.

Link: <https://www.uvu.edu/wolverines-elevated/index.html>

Life Journey Through Autism: A Guide for Transition to Adulthood (PDF)

A practical guide to employment, independent living, rights, self-advocacy, and life after high school. Designed for autistic students, families, and transition teams.

Link: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508625.pdf>

(Find this in Section 5, Subsection "[College & Postsecondary Options](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

ScenicView Academy

A Utah program for young adults with autism and other learning differences. It offers education, employment preparation, social support, and independent-living instruction.

Link: <https://www.svacademy.org>



Aggies Elevated – USU

An inclusive college program at Utah State University for students with intellectual disabilities. Participants take classes, build employment skills, and take part in campus life.

Link: <https://cehs.usu.edu/aggieselevated/>

Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment – IDEA

A federal guide explaining transition planning, postsecondary education, employment, disability rights, and available supports. Helpful for students, families, and school teams preparing for adult life.

Link: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/policy-guidance-transition-guide-postsecondary-education-employment-students-youth-disabilities-august-2020/>

Brigham Young University Autism Program

A university-based autism education and training program. It focuses on preparing professionals, supporting research, and increasing community understanding rather than providing direct student services.

Link: <https://education.byu.edu/autism>

Transition Planning for Students

Transition planning helps students prepare for education, employment, independent living, and community participation after high school. Effective plans should reflect the student's goals, strengths, preferences, and support needs.

Secondary Transition & Graduation – Utah State Board of Education

Utah's official resource on transition requirements, graduation planning, IEP goals, employment preparation, and postsecondary options. Helpful for students, families, and school teams.

Link: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/programs/secondarytransitiongraduation>

Transition to Adulthood Webinar – Organization for Autism Research (OAR)

A free webinar about preparing autistic students for adulthood. Topics include goal setting, education, employment, community participation, and family planning.

Link: <https://researchautism.org/audience/education/transition-to-adulthood-webinar>



Legal & Advocacy Guides for Families

Education laws and policies can feel overwhelming, but they also protect student rights. This section includes legal, policy, and advocacy resources that help families understand school systems and request appropriate support.

[Autism in the Legal System: What Advocates & Judges Should Know \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how autism may affect communication, sensory needs, behavior, and participation in legal settings. Written mainly for attorneys, judges, advocates, and professionals.

[Multicultural Issues in Autism – Journal Article \(PDF\)](#)

Explores how culture, race, language, and access can affect autism diagnosis and services. Helpful for understanding why advocacy must include diverse experiences.

[Culturally Sensitive Collaboration Within Person-Centered Planning \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how person-centered planning can reflect a person's culture, language, family values, and community. Helpful for creating more respectful and individualized support plans.

[2017 Report to Congress on Autism Activities \(PDF\)](#)

A federal report summarizing autism research, programs, funding, and policy activities. Best suited for readers who want a detailed look at national priorities.

Link: https://iacc.hhs.gov/publications/report-to-congress/2017/report_to_congress_2017.pdf

[Autism CARES Act of 2019 – IACC \(PDF\)](#)

Explains the federal law supporting autism research, monitoring, professional training, and services. Helpful for understanding how national autism programs receive funding.

Link: <https://iacc.hhs.gov/about-iacc/legislation/autism/cares-act-2019/>

[Special Education Rules for IDEA \(PDF\)](#)

Explains Utah's special education rules under IDEA, including school responsibilities and family rights. Helpful when preparing for IEP meetings or resolving concerns.

(Find these PDFs in Section 5, Subsection ["Legal & Advocacy Guides for Families"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)



SECTION VI

AUTISTIC

&

ALLY VOICES

Lived Experience and Diverse Perspectives

“Autism resources are strongest when autistic people are included in the conversation.”



Section 6: Autistic & Ally Voices

Autistic Voices & Media

Autistic people share their experiences through blogs, podcasts, books, art, and social media. These resources highlight autistic perspectives on identity, advocacy, creativity, challenges, and belonging..

Journey of a Neurodiverse Gal – Blog

An autistic woman shares personal experiences, daily challenges, and advocacy in her own words. A relatable example of autism from a lived-experience perspective.

Link: <https://journeyofaneurodiversegal.blogspot.com/>

The Tism Time – Podcast

An autistic-led podcast exploring the challenges, joys, and everyday experiences of being autistic. Helpful for families and professionals who want to learn directly from autistic voices.

Link: <https://linktr.ee/thetismtime>

TheDoctorNextVoice – Instagram

An advocacy page about autism, ADHD, and neurodiversity. Shares personal experiences, educational content, and perspectives on everyday neurodivergent life.

Link: <https://www.instagram.com/thedoctornextvoice/>

Created by Doc Clegg.



Professional & Advocate Voices

Autistic advocates, educators, writers, and professionals connect lived experience with research, policy, and education. Their work helps expand understanding of autism across different ages, identities, and settings.

Doc Clegg

An autistic advocate, artist, and educator who uses technology, creativity, and lived experience to support community and inclusion. Their work at Utah Valley University includes advocacy, education, art, and student engagement.

Link: https://www.uvu.edu/news/2020/11/11052020_caleb_clegg.html

Temple Grandin, Ph.D.

An autistic author, speaker, and professor of animal science. Her books and lectures have shaped public conversations about autism, sensory differences, visual thinking, and the value of different kinds of minds.

Link: <https://www.templegrandin.com/>

John Elder Robison

An autistic author and advocate known for *Look Me in the Eye*. His writing explores late diagnosis, adulthood, identity, relationships, and belonging.

Link: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/contributors/john-elder-robison>

Jared Stewart, M.Ed.

An educator, speaker, and program leader at ScenicView Academy. His work focuses on self-advocacy, adult independence, education, and belonging for autistic and neurodivergent young adults.

Link: <https://www.svacademy.org/meetourteam/jareds>

David Finch

An autistic author known for *The Journal of Best Practices*. He writes with humor and honesty about marriage, communication, personal growth, and adult relationships.

Link: <https://davidjfinch.com/>

Elliot Francis

An autistic author known for *The Journal of Best Practices*. He writes with humor and honesty about marriage, communication, personal growth, and adult relationships.

Link: <https://www.interdependence.org/program-speaker/elliott-francis/> - .XE&tBFxKhPY



Parent & Ally Perspectives

Parents, caregivers, and allies offer experiences that differ from autistic self-advocacy. Their stories may provide practical ideas, emotional support, and connection for families while remaining only one perspective on autism.

The Autism Dad – Blog

Rob Gorski shares experiences raising three autistic children as a single parent. His writing includes family life, challenges, practical ideas, and encouragement for caregivers.

Link: <https://www.theautismdad.com/blog/>

Finding Cooper’s Voice – Blog

Kate Swenson writes about parenting her autistic son, family life, grief, acceptance, and joy. The blog has grown into a large online community for parents and caregivers.

Because this resource can be emotionally and ideologically mixed for autistic readers, you may want a brief note that it presents a parent perspective.

Link: <https://www.findingcoopersvoice.com/>

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgZfCCbfnkjlvtSRUuAFaQ>

Forever Boy – Book

Kate Swenson’s memoir about parenting, diagnosis, grief, acceptance, and family life. It includes emotionally intense themes but may help some caregivers feel less alone.

Link: <https://www.findingcoopersvoice.com/books/ - forever-boy>

Content note: grief, emotional distress, and difficult parenting experiences



Media & Representation

Movies, television, and books influence how the public understands autism. These resources can encourage conversation, but no single character or story represents the full range of autistic experiences.

IRIS Center Film List

A collection of films and documentaries about autism and other disabilities. Helpful for educators and families looking for stories that support discussion and reflection.

Link: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/films/>

Geek Girl – Netflix Series

A coming-of-age series about Harriet Manners, a neurodivergent teenager navigating modeling, relationships, and identity. The story is based on books by autistic author Holly Smale.

Link: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81637842>

Viewers may connect with its portrayal of sensory and social experiences, but it remains a fictional story.

Heartbreak High – Netflix Series

A teen drama featuring Quinni, an autistic student navigating friendships, relationships, school, masking, and sensory experiences. Quinni is played by autistic actor Chloe Hayden, bringing lived experience to the role.

Link: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81342553>

Content note: Includes mature language, sexuality, substance use, and other teen themes.

Atypical – Netflix Series

A fictional series about an autistic teenager navigating family, relationships, school, and growing independence. It brought autism into mainstream television, but some viewers criticize its early portrayal and limited autistic involvement.

Link: <https://www.netflix.com/title/80117540>

As We See It – Prime Video Series

A comedy-drama following three autistic adults sharing a home while navigating employment, relationships, independence, and family support. The series includes autistic actors in its central cast and shows several different adult experiences rather than presenting autism through one character alone.

Link: <https://www.primevideo.com/detail/0QINBG3T0DMVOH7JUW2RWI7E2L>



Love on the Spectrum – Netflix Documentary Series

A documentary series following autistic adults as they explore dating and relationships. It has increased autism visibility, although viewers have different opinions about its editing, framing, and representation.

Link: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81338328>

Media note: *These programs are made for entertainment and may simplify or dramatize autistic experiences. No character or series represents the entire autism spectrum. Consider watching alongside autistic reviews and lived-experience perspectives.*



SECTION VII.

HEALTH SUPPORTS

Accessible and Informed Care

“Good healthcare considers communication, sensory needs, autonomy, and the whole person.”



Section 7: Health Supports

Health & Therapy Supports

Medical care can be stressful when providers overlook communication, sensory, or accessibility needs. This section offers resources that may help autistic people, families, and healthcare professionals prepare for safer and more supportive care.

[Health Support for Autism \(PDF\)](#)

A quick-reference guide for healthcare and school staff. It offers practical suggestions for communication, sensory support, and creating more accessible care environments.

[Paramedics and Emergency Room Staff \(PDF\)](#)

A guide for paramedics and emergency staff supporting autistic people during medical crises. It explains communication differences, sensory needs, and ways autism may affect responses to pain, fear, or trauma.

[Planned Parenthood Utah – Reproductive & Health Services \(PDF\)](#)

Provides reproductive healthcare, STI testing, cancer screening, health education, and other services across Utah. Readers should contact the organization directly for current locations, services, eligibility, and insurance information.

Link: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-utah>

(Find these PDFs in Section 7, Subsection [Health & Therapy Supports](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Utah Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)

Utah's main state agency for public health, behavioral health, disability programs, and family services. A useful starting point when you are unsure which state program to contact.

Link: <https://dhhs.utah.gov/>



Clinics & Therapy Providers

This section lists Utah healthcare and therapy providers that may serve autistic people or address common co-occurring needs. Services, availability, insurance, and autism experience can vary, so contact each provider directly before making care decisions.

Mountainlands Community Health

Provides medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services at community health locations. May be useful for people seeking several types of care through one organization.

Link: <https://www.mountainlands.org/>

Utah Psychological Associates

Offers autism evaluations and mental health services for people age 10 and older. Services may include support for anxiety, depression, and other conditions that can occur alongside autism.

Link: <https://utahpsychologicalassociates.com/>

Alpine Pediatrics

Provides pediatric healthcare and autism-related information for families. Its website includes educational resources and links to additional services.

Link: https://www.alpinepeds.com/pe_autism.html

Wasatch Behavioral Health

Provides therapy, psychiatric care, crisis services, and community mental health programs in Utah County. It is not autism-specific but may help with anxiety, depression, trauma, and other mental health needs.

Link: <https://www.wasatch.org/>

Utah Valley Pediatrics

A pediatric healthcare network with multiple Utah locations. Services may include developmental screening, behavioral health support, referrals, and coordination with specialists.

Link: <https://www.uvpediatrics.com/>

Anxiety, Trauma & Depression Treatment Center

A mental health clinic focused on anxiety, trauma, and depression. It is not autism-specific but may help autistic people seeking support for co-occurring mental health concerns.

Link: <https://www.anxietytraumadepressiontreatment.com/>



OCD & Anxiety Centers – Orem, Utah

A specialty clinic treating OCD and anxiety, including Exposure and Response Prevention. It is not autism-specific, so autistic clients may want to ask how treatment is adapted for communication, sensory needs, pacing, and distress tolerance.

Link: <https://www.ocdanxietycenters.com/locations/ocd-anxiety-centers-orem-utah/>

Serenity Mental Health Centers

A mental health provider offering psychiatric evaluations, medication management, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), ketamine therapy, and ADHD assessment. Services may support people with depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, and other mental health conditions.

Link: <https://serenitymentalhealthcenters.com/>

Considerations: *Serenity is not autism-specific. Autistic clients may want to ask about sensory accommodations, communication preferences, pacing, and the provider's experience adapting mental health treatment. TMS requires an individual evaluation; some uses, including certain anxiety and PTSD treatments, may be considered off-label.*

BYU Comprehensive Clinic

A university training clinic offering lower-cost therapy and psychological services from supervised graduate clinicians. It may help with anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns but is not autism-specific.

Link: <https://comprehensiveclinic.byu.edu/>

Telos Residential Treatment Center

A residential treatment program for teens and young adults with significant mental health, behavioral, or educational needs. Families should carefully review eligibility, treatment methods, licensing, staffing, safety policies, costs, and experience supporting autistic clients.

Link: <https://telos.org/>

Cognitive FX

A Utah clinic offering specialized care for persistent concussion symptoms, neurological concerns, depression, and anxiety. Services include functional brain imaging, intensive rehabilitation, and accelerated fMRI-guided Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS).

Link: <https://www.cognitivefxusa.com/>

Considerations: *Cognitive FX is not autism-specific. Autistic clients should ask about sensory accommodations, communication needs, pacing, treatment eligibility, costs, and insurance coverage. TMS requires an individual medical evaluation and may be most appropriate when other treatments have not provided enough relief.*



Supportive Dental Care

Dental visits can be difficult because of bright lights, sounds, tastes, textures, unfamiliar tools, and loss of control. This section lists resources and providers that may offer accommodations or experience serving disabled and autistic patients.

Dentably – Dentist

A directory for locating dentists who report experience serving patients with disabilities or additional support needs. Always contact the office directly to confirm accommodations, age limits, insurance, and autism experience.

Link: <https://www.emergencydentistsusa.com/special-needs-dentist-near-me/>

Burg Children’s Dentistry

A pediatric dental provider with several Utah locations. Families can ask about sensory accommodations, preparation visits, communication support, and options for children with dental anxiety.

Link: <https://burgchildrensdentistry.com/>

Little Peoples Dental

A pediatric dental practice that describes using “tell, show, do” to make procedures more predictable. Families should ask which additional accommodations are available for autistic and disabled children.

Link: <https://www.littlepeoplesdental.com/services/pediatric-dentistry/special-needs/>

Mountainland Pediatric Dental

Provides pediatric dentistry and lists services for children with additional healthcare needs. Contact the office to ask about sensory accommodations, preparation visits, communication support, and treatment options.

Link: <https://mountainlandpediatricdental.com/special-needs-dentistry/>

Pediatric Smiles and Braces

Provides pediatric dentistry and orthodontic services. Families can ask about accommodations, visit prep, communication preferences, and support for dental anxiety.

Link: <https://pediatricsmilesandbraces.com/>

UVU Dental Hygiene Clinic

Offers lower-cost cleanings, X-rays, and preventive dental services performed by supervised dental hygiene students. Contact the clinic to ask about accessibility, accommodations, eligibility, and appointment length.

Link: <https://www.uvu.edu/dental/clinic.html>



State & Local Health Supports

Utah agencies can help connect individuals and families with healthcare, disability services, behavioral health programs, and funding. This section provides official starting points for finding state and local support.

Utah DSPD – Division of Services for People with Disabilities

Utah's application point for many long-term developmental disability services, including supported living, employment services, day programs, respite, and other community supports. The site explains eligibility, applications, waiting lists, and available programs.

Links: <https://dspd.utah.gov/>

Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH)

A Utah state office overseeing community mental health, substance-use treatment, prevention, crisis services, and recovery programs. Helpful for locating publicly funded behavioral health services.

Link: <https://sumh.utah.gov/>



SECTION VIII

SAFETY

&

CRISIS SUPPORTS

Prevention, Planning and Response

“Safety planning works best when it is proactive, individualized, and grounded in dignity.”



Section 8: Safety & Crisis Supports

First Responders & Safety Teams

Emergency situations can become more difficult when responders misunderstand autistic communication, sensory needs, or behavior. These resources help autistic people, families, and first responders prepare for safer interactions.

Orem Police Department Autism Info

Orem Police offers a program that lets families share important information about an autistic or disabled person before an emergency occurs. Contact the department to confirm current registration procedures and what information officers can access.

[Link: orem.org/police](https://www.orem.org/police)

West Valley City – Project Safeguard

A voluntary registry that allows caregivers to share disability, communication, and safety information with West Valley City police before a crisis. Families should contact the department for current eligibility and registration details.

[Link: https://www.wvc-ut.gov/1692/Crisis-Intervention-Team](https://www.wvc-ut.gov/1692/Crisis-Intervention-Team)

First Responder Training – UVU Center for Autism

Describes autism training available to police, firefighters, emergency medical staff, and other first responders. Families and agencies may use the page to learn about local training opportunities.

[Link: uvu.edu/autism/first-responders.html](https://uvu.edu/autism/first-responders.html)

UVU Center for Autism – Crisis Intervention Article

Highlights UVU's efforts to improve first-responder understanding of autistic communication, sensory differences, and crisis responses. A useful example of local autism safety education.

[Link: https://www.uvu.edu/news/2019/11/1152019_crisis-intervention.html](https://www.uvu.edu/news/2019/11/1152019_crisis-intervention.html)

Law Enforcement and Other First Responders (PDF)

A practical guide explaining how autism may affect communication, sensory processing, and behavior during stressful encounters. Includes suggestions for what responders can do and what they should avoid.

(Find these PDFs in Section 8, Subsection ["First Responders & Safety Teams"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Community Days (PDF)

Community Days are sensory-aware fire station events for autistic people and individuals with developmental disabilities. They provide a chance to meet first responders, explore emergency vehicles and equipment, practice communication supports, and become more familiar with what may happen during an emergency.

(Find these PDFs in Section 8, Subsection "[First Responders & Safety Teams](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Autism Speaks – Interacting with Law Enforcement

Offers preparation tips for autistic people, families, and law enforcement before and during police interactions. Topics include disclosure, communication, identification tools, and reducing misunderstandings.

Link: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/interacting-law-enforcement>

Note: Autism Speaks resource — I've included it here with caution. The organization has a complicated history in the autism community, and many autistic people (myself included) have concerns about how they represent autism.

Autism and Law Enforcement: Strategies for Safer Interactions (OAR)

Provides practical guidance for autistic people, families, and police on preparing for law-enforcement encounters. It emphasizes planning, clear communication, identification tools, and officer education.

Link: <https://researchautism.org/oaracle-newsletter/autism-and-law-enforcement-strategies-for-safer-interactions/>

Center for Autism UVU First Responder Card (PDF)

A printable wallet card that tells responders the carrier is autistic and may communicate or respond differently during an emergency. It includes space for contact information and brief interaction guidance.

Link: https://www.uvu.edu/autism/docs/autism-center-first-responder-card_accessible.pdf



Wandering & Safety Planning

Wandering, sometimes called elopement, can happen for many reasons, including curiosity, sensory needs, distress, or trying to reach a preferred place. These resources support prevention, emergency planning, and safer independence without treating wandering as simple disobedience.

Wandering Prevention Checklist – September 26

A short checklist of steps families, schools, and caregivers can use to reduce wandering risks and prepare for emergencies.

[Link: september26.org/wandering-prevention](https://september26.org/wandering-prevention)

Fire Safety (PDF)

Explains how autistic communication and sensory differences may affect fire emergencies. Includes practical ways to prepare for alarms, evacuation instructions, and interactions with firefighters.

Life Journey Through Autism: A Guide to Safety (PDF)

A broad safety guide covering wandering, home safety, internet use, emergency preparation, and communication with first responders. Includes practical planning tools for autistic people, families, and educators.

Children’s Specialized Hospital Family Safety Handbook (PDF)

A family guide covering wandering, fire, water, transportation, and community safety. Helpful for creating an individualized safety plan.

[Link: https://www.rwjbh.org/documents/csh/CSH.Autism.Safety-TS-FamilySafetyHandbook.ENG.Lambert.082620.pdf](https://www.rwjbh.org/documents/csh/CSH.Autism.Safety-TS-FamilySafetyHandbook.ENG.Lambert.082620.pdf)

(Find this in Section 8, Subsection "[Wandering & Safety Planning](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Fire Safety Checklist – September 26

A printable checklist for preparing autistic people and households for fire alarms, evacuation, and emergency response.

[Link: september26.org/fire-safety](https://september26.org/fire-safety)

National Autism Association – Wandering and Safety Resources

Provides safety facts, prevention checklists, emergency-planning tools, and information about the Big Red Safety Box. A useful starting point for families supporting someone at risk of wandering.

[Link: nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-safety-facts](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-safety-facts)

[Link: nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-box](https://nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-box)

[Link: https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/wandering/](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/wandering/)



Utah Drowning Prevention Coalition (UDPC)

Provides Utah water-safety education using the ABCDs of drowning prevention: adult supervision, barriers, classes, and devices. Helpful for families creating layered water-safety plans.

Link: <https://www.urpa.org/udpc.html>

AngelSense GPS Tracking Device

A wearable GPS device designed for people who may be at risk of wandering. Features may include location tracking, alerts, and two-way communication.

Link: <https://www.angelsense.com/>

Tracking devices can support safety but should be used with attention to the person's age, consent, privacy, comfort, and independence.

Autism Speaks – Safety Resources

A collection of resources about home, school, community, and emergency safety. Topics include wandering, identification tools, public restrooms, community outings, emergency planning, and safety products.

Link: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/safety-products-and-services>

Link: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/safety-community>

Link: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-safety>

Link: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/using-public-restrooms>

Note: *These resources are from Autism Speaks. The organization has a complicated history, and many autistic people, including the handbook author, have concerns about its representation of autism.*

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children – Missing Child Help

Provides immediate guidance when a child is missing, including reporting steps, law-enforcement coordination, and family support resources.

Link: <https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/isyourchildmissing>



Teaching Safety Skills

Safety skills should be taught through clear instruction, practice, and support rather than fear or punishment. These resources explore ways to teach practical safety behaviors to children, teens, and adults.

Teaching Safety Skills to Children with ASD (YouTube)

A presentation on research-supported ways to teach safety skills to autistic children. It reviews instruction methods and offers guidance for families and educators.

Link: <https://youtu.be/iLaOJ2mbnFA?si=MBFNDf1jm7nZLd3q>

ABA Inside Track “Technology and Safety Skills Training” (YouTube)

A discussion of how technology and behavioral skills training may be used to teach and practice safety behaviors. Best suited for professionals and readers interested in the research behind safety instruction.

Link: <https://youtu.be/wS4w6mTEecI?si=oNb5HnoqN3fLwblK>



Crisis Lines & Response Teams

Crisis lines and response services can provide immediate emotional support, safety planning, and connections to local care. Autism knowledge and response practices may vary, so callers can share communication and sensory needs when possible.

Utah Warm Line

A free peer-support line for Utah residents who are feeling lonely, overwhelmed, or emotionally distressed but are not currently in crisis. Callers speak with certified peer-support specialists who can listen, offer encouragement, and help identify next steps. It is available daily from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Call: [833-SPEAKUT](tel:833-SPEAKUT) or [801-587-1055](tel:801-587-1055)

Non-Crisis Emotional Support

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call, text, or chat 988 for 24-hour support during suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, or a mental-health crisis. Counselors may provide support, safety planning, and connections to local services.

Link: <https://988lifeline.org/>

Utah Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams

Mobile crisis teams can provide in-person help during a mental-health or behavioral-health crisis. Teams may complete an assessment, help create a safety plan, and connect the person with local services. In Utah, they are available statewide through 988 at no cost.

Link: <https://988.utah.gov/someone-to-help-you/>

Stabilization and Mobile Response for Youth

A free Utah crisis-response service for children, teens, and families. Teams can help during emotional or behavioral crises, provide stabilization, create a safety plan, and connect families with ongoing support. **Call: 1-833-723-3326 or 988**

Link: <https://sumh.utah.gov/services/treatment/child-mental-health/>

SafeUT App — Utah Crisis Chat & Tip Line

A free Utah app and crisis chat service offering 24-hour support from licensed counselors. It also allows anonymous school-safety tips and is commonly used by students, families, and schools.

Link: <https://safeut.org/>



Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor during emotional distress or a mental-health challenge. Available 24 hours a day.

[Link: https://www.crisistextline.org/](https://www.crisistextline.org/)

The Trevor Project – LGBTQ+ Youth Crisis Support

Provides 24-hour crisis support and counseling for LGBTQ+ young people. It may be especially helpful for autistic LGBTQ+ teens and young adults seeking identity-affirming emotional support.

[Link: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/)

Utah Domestic Violence Coalition (UDVC)

Connects survivors of domestic and interpersonal violence with Utah hotlines, shelters, advocacy, and local support services.

[Link: https://udvc.org/](https://udvc.org/)

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

Provides confidential support and information for people affected by sexual violence. Services include a national hotline, online chat, and connections to local resources.

[Link: https://rainn.org/](https://rainn.org/)



SECTION IX

TEENS, TRANSITION & ADULT LIFE

Independence, Opportunity, and Support

“Adulthood is not the end of support. It is the beginning of new choices, responsibilities, and possibilities.”



Section 9: Teens, Transition & Adult Life

Employment & Job Support

Meaningful work can support income, purpose, confidence, and independence. This section highlights job coaching, workplace accommodations, career preparation, and supported employment resources.

Working in Autism and Disability Services

Organizations that support autistic clients are not always equally prepared to support autistic employees. Some workplaces may struggle with communication, sensory accommodations, flexibility, or understanding neurodivergent staff needs.

Before accepting a job, ask how the organization handles accommodations, employee concerns, supervision, and support for neurodivergent staff.

Utah Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) (PDF)

A statewide program that helps eligible people with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep employment. Services may include career counseling, education, job training, accommodations, and employment support.

Links: <https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/vr/index.html>

Vocational Rehab Flowchart Step-by-Step Help for Teens & Adults (PDF)

A step-by-step guide to the vocational rehabilitation process for teens and adults. It explains applications, planning, school coordination, transportation support, and possible employment services.

Youth Transition Services – Utah VR (PDF)

Explains vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities preparing for adult life. Supports may include career counseling, job training, work experience, and participation in transition planning.

Link: <https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/students>

(Find this in Section 9, Subsection "[Employment & Job Support](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Hire Autism

An employment program connecting autistic job seekers with participating employers. It also offers career resources, job-search support, and guidance for employers.

Link: <https://www.hireautism.org/>



Disability & Employment Barriers (YouTube)

Explores discrimination and barriers disabled people may face when seeking employment. Helpful for starting conversations about workplace accessibility and inclusion.

Link: <https://youtu.be/L7KTODIJGWg>

Columbus NEXTWORK Academy

A transition program for neurodivergent young adults focused on employment preparation, independent-living skills, coaching, and work experience.

Link: <https://www.columbussees.org/>

Utah Parent Center – Employment Resources

Provides information about job readiness, workplace expectations, employment supports, and transition planning. Designed for people with disabilities, families, and transition-age students.

Link: <https://utahparentcenter.org/transition-university/education-employment-daily-life-skills/employment/>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) – Autism Workplace Accommodations

Explains possible workplace accommodations related to communication, sensory needs, scheduling, organization, and job performance. Helpful for both employees and employers.

Link: <https://askjan.org/disabilities/Autism-Spectrum.cfm>



Relationships, Sexuality & Personal Safety

Autistic teens and adults deserve clear, respectful information about relationships, consent, boundaries, identity, sexual health, and personal safety. These resources support informed choices, self-advocacy, healthy connections, and recognizing situations that may be unsafe or uncomfortable.

Respect, Consent, and Autonomy

Every person deserves information that is accessible, age-appropriate, identity-affirming, and free from shame. Consent must be informed, voluntary, specific, and ongoing. A person may change their mind at any time.

Sexuality and Sex Education Guide – Organization for Autism Research

A free guide about relationships, consent, boundaries, sexual health, and self-advocacy for autistic teens and adults. It can also help families, educators, and professionals begin clear and respectful conversations.

[Link:https://researchautism.org/oaracle-newsletter/oar-releases-sexuality-and-sex-education-guide/](https://researchautism.org/oaracle-newsletter/oar-releases-sexuality-and-sex-education-guide/)

OAR – Online Relationships & Safety

A guide for autistic people about online relationships, personal information, boundaries, warning signs, and digital safety. Helpful for building safer and more confident internet use.

Link: <https://researchautism.org/self-advocates/sex-ed-for-self-advocates/online-relationships-and-safety/>

Coming Out Handbook – The Trevor Project (PDF)

This is one of those must-haves. It breaks down identity, attraction, safety, and how to come out (or not) in a way that feels right for you. It has reflection tools, identity maps, mental health check-ins, and plenty of validation. Whether you're out, questioning, or somewhere in between, this guide meets you where you are—no pressure, support.

[Link: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/the-coming-out-handbook/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/the-coming-out-handbook/)

(Find this in Section 9, Subsection "[Relationships, Sexuality & Personal Safety](#)" of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Housing & Independent Living

Adult living arrangements may include independent housing, supported living, shared housing, or residential services. This section offers planning tools, rights information, and Utah resources for housing and daily-life support.

Info & Guides

[Utah Fair Housing Act \(Title 57, Chapter 21 Utah Code\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains Utah law protecting people from housing discrimination. Helpful for understanding disability rights, reasonable accommodations, and equal access to housing.

[Link: https://docs.autismspeaks.org/housing-roadmap/](https://docs.autismspeaks.org/housing-roadmap/)

[Housing Rights & Resources Guide \(PDF\)](#)

Explains disability housing rights under the Fair Housing Act, ADA, and Section 504. It also lists Utah organizations that may help with accommodations, discrimination, and housing support.

[Accessing Home & Community-Based Services \(PDF\)](#)

Explains disability housing rights under the Fair Housing Act, ADA, and Section 504. It also lists Utah organizations that may help with accommodations, discrimination, and housing support.

(Find these PDFs in Section 9, Subsection ["Info & Guides"](#) of the digital folder, or access it by scanning the QR code.)

HousingU – Inclusive Housing in Utah

A Utah initiative focused on accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities. The site includes research, planning information, and advocacy resources.

[Link: https://housinguc.org/](https://housinguc.org/)

Autism Housing Network – National Resource

A national resource with housing-planning tools, community examples, funding information, and a searchable map of housing options.

[Link: https://www.autismhousingnetwork.org/](https://www.autismhousingnetwork.org/)

Disability Law Center – Fair Housing Rights of People with Disabilities

Explains disability housing rights, reasonable accommodations, discrimination, and options for seeking help in Utah.

[Link: https://disabilitylawcenter.org/resources/fair-housing-rights-of-people-with-disabilities/](https://disabilitylawcenter.org/resources/fair-housing-rights-of-people-with-disabilities/)



Neuro-Inclusive Utah – Housing & Accessibility Resources

Provides Utah resources related to housing, accessibility, employment, and community inclusion for neurodivergent people.

Link: <https://www.neuroinclusiveutah.org/resources>

Utah Parent Center – Adult & Independent Living Resources

A directory of Utah programs supporting adult services, independent living, employment, housing, and community participation.

Link: [https://utahparentcenter.org/adult-services/adult-resources-service-provider/ - independent-living](https://utahparentcenter.org/adult-services/adult-resources-service-provider/-independent-living)

Autism Speaks – Housing and Residential Supports Roadmap

An interactive planning guide covering housing readiness, support needs, budgeting, residential options, and long-term planning for autistic adults and families.

Link: <https://docs.autismspeaks.org/housing-roadmap/>

Note: Autism Speaks resource — I've included it here with caution. The organization has a complicated history in the autism community, and many autistic people (myself included) have concerns about how they represent autism.



Services & Providers

Chrysalis

Provides residential, day, employment, and community-based services for people with developmental disabilities in Utah. Contact the provider for eligibility, availability, staffing, and service details.

Link: <https://www.chrysalis.care/>

RISE Services

Provides in-home, residential, employment, and community support services for people with developmental disabilities. Services and availability vary by location.

Link: <https://riseservicesinc.org/>

Utah State Developmental Center

A state-operated facility providing residential, medical, behavioral, and therapeutic services for people with significant developmental support needs. Admission and eligibility are limited and should be discussed with state disability-service professionals.

Link: <https://usdc.utah.gov/>

Families should review rights, staffing, restrictions, family access, community integration, and discharge planning when considering residential care.

85 North Apartments – Provo

An apartment community in Provo connected with ScenicView Academy. Contact the property directly to ask about eligibility, accessibility, sensory features, support services, pricing, and lease requirements.

Link: <https://www.85northprovo.com/>

Ability 1st Utah (PDF) – Independent Living

Offers independent-living skills training, peer support, advocacy, and information for people with disabilities. Topics may include budgeting, cooking, transportation, and self-advocacy.

Link: <https://ability1stutah.org/independent-living-resource/independent-living/>

(Find this in Section 9, Subsection "[Housing & Independent Living](#)" of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Utah Transit Authority (UTA)

Provides bus, TRAX, and FrontRunner transportation across parts of Utah. The website includes accessibility information, reduced-fare programs, paratransit details, and trip-planning tools.

Link: <https://www.rideuta.com/>



211 Utah

Connects Utah residents with local resources for housing, food, healthcare, mental health, transportation, disability services, and financial assistance. Help is available online and by phone, text, or chat.

[Link: https://211utah.org/](https://211utah.org/)



SECTION X

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Resources, Relationships, and Belonging

“Support is not only a service. It is also connection, acceptance, access, and community.”



Section 10: Community Supports

Family & Early Support

Early support can help families understand development, find services, and connect with local resources. This section offers starting points for screenings, childcare, early intervention, and family support.

Help Me Grow Utah

Connects Utah families with developmental screenings, early intervention, parenting resources, and local services. A useful starting point for families who are unsure where to begin.

[Link: helpmegrowutah.org](http://helpmegrowutah.org)

Utah Parent Center – Resource Hub

Provides family-friendly information about special education, disability services, support groups, and community resources. Helpful for families navigating several systems at once.

[Link: https://utahparentcenter.org/resources/](https://utahparentcenter.org/resources/)

Utah Child Care Search

A Utah search tool for finding licensed childcare by location, schedule, and type of care. Families should contact providers directly to ask about availability, accommodations, staff training, and experience supporting disabled children.

[Links: https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/cac/search/](https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/cac/search/)

Giant Steps – Wasatch Mental Health

A preschool program for autistic children ages 3–5 that combines classroom learning, social development, and behavioral support. Contact the program for current eligibility, services, schedule, and enrollment information.

[Links: https://www.wasatch.org/children-youth-and-family-services/giant-steps/](https://www.wasatch.org/children-youth-and-family-services/giant-steps/)

Kids On The Move (KOTM)

Offers early intervention, childcare, autism services, parent education, and family support programs in Utah County. Services vary by age and eligibility.

[Links: https://kotm.org/](https://kotm.org/)

Kids On The Move – Respite Care (KOTM)

Provides scheduled respite opportunities for eligible families of children with disabilities. Respite can give caregivers time to rest, complete tasks, or attend to other family needs.

[Links: https://kotm.org/program/respite-care/](https://kotm.org/program/respite-care/)



Independent Living & Adult Supports

Adult support may include daily-living skills, service coordination, housing assistance, employment support, advocacy, and community participation. These resources help individuals and families understand Utah's adult-service systems.

Utah DSPD – Support Coordination

Explains how support coordinators help eligible DSPD participants develop service plans, choose providers, understand budgets, and connect with community supports.

Link: <https://dspd.utah.gov/services/support-coordination/>

MNCA Resource Library (PDF)

A free on-site resource library at UVU's Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism. Available items may include books, visual supports, sensory tools, games, and educational materials.

Link: <https://www.uvu.edu/autism/resources.html>

Creating an Individualized Support Plan (ISP) – Utah DHS (PDF)

Explains how an Individualized Support Plan outlines a person's goals, services, needs, preferences, and responsibilities. Helpful for people entering or reviewing disability-support services.

(Find this in Section 10, Subsection ["Independent Living & Adult Supports"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)



Community Centers

Community centers can offer education, activities, resources, social connection, and family support outside clinical settings. Programs and eligibility may vary.

Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism – UVU

A UVU-based autism center offering community events, education, student programs, advocacy, professional training, and family resources.

Link: uvu.edu/autism

Carmen B. Pingree Autism Center of Learning

Provides education and autism-related services for children, teens, and adults. Programs may include preschool, school services, therapy, and adult support.

Links: <https://valleycares.com/pingree-autism-center>

Utah Autism Academy Community Center

Offers social, recreational, and life-skills activities for autistic children, teens, and adults. Contact the center for current programs, age groups, costs, and eligibility.

Links: <https://utahautismacademy.com/utah-autism-community-center/>



Recreation & Accessible Spaces

Recreation supports enjoyment, health, social connection, exploration, and community participation. This section highlights adaptive programs, inclusive spaces, sensory-friendly activities, and family recreation resources.

Recreation & Activities

Utah Recreation & Parks Association (URPA)

A statewide association supporting parks, recreation programs, professional training, and accessibility initiatives. Its website may help readers learn about inclusive recreation efforts across Utah.

[Link: https://www.urpa.org/index.html](https://www.urpa.org/index.html)

Interagency Access Pass – U.S. National Park Service

A free lifetime pass for eligible U.S. citizens and permanent residents with permanent disabilities. It provides entry to many federal recreation sites and may include discounts on some fees.

[Link: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/accessibility/interagency-access-pass.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/accessibility/interagency-access-pass.htm)

Autism Adventure Camp – HMHI

AA University of Utah summer program for eligible autistic children ages 8–12. Activities focus on recreation, peer interaction, and social learning.

[Link: https://healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/programs/autism-adventure-camp](https://healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/programs/autism-adventure-camp)

Utah Parent Center – Recreation Resources

A collection of Utah recreation programs and activities for people with disabilities and their families. Helpful for exploring sports, camps, classes, and community events.

[Link: https://utahparentcenter.org/resources/recreation/](https://utahparentcenter.org/resources/recreation/)

Orem “All Together Playground”

An inclusive playground in Orem with adaptive and sensory-friendly play features. Families may want to check current hours, accessibility, parking, and maintenance notices before visiting.

[Link: https://orem.gov/all-together-playground/](https://orem.gov/all-together-playground/)

Draper City Park – Inclusive Play Space

A public park with inclusive playground features, adaptive equipment, walking paths, and open recreation areas. The linked family guide includes photos and visitor information.

[Link: https://www.utahsadventurefamily.com/draper-city-park/](https://www.utahsadventurefamily.com/draper-city-park/)



Camp K (Camp Kostopulos)

Offers day, overnight, and travel-based recreation programs for people with disabilities. Activities may support independence, social connection, and trying new experiences.

Link: <https://www.campk.org/programs/summer-camps/>

SibShops of Utah County

Offers peer activities for siblings of children with disabilities. Participants can connect, share experiences, and take part in age-appropriate recreation and discussion.

Link: <https://sibshopsofutahcounty.blogspot.com/>

Autism Eats

Organizes autism-friendly dining events with environmental adjustments intended to reduce sensory stress. Event availability and participating restaurants vary by location.

Link: <https://www.autismeats.org/>

Special Olympics Utah

Provides year-round sports training and competition for eligible children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Programs may also support friendship, health, confidence, and community participation.

Link: <https://www.sout.org/>

National Ability Center (NAC)

A Park City organization offering adaptive recreation such as skiing, cycling, horseback riding, and other outdoor activities. Programs serve people with a range of disabilities

Link: <https://discovernac.org/>



Sensory-Friendly Businesses

AMC Sensory-Friendly Films

Offers selected movie showings with brighter lighting, lower sound, and more flexibility to move or make noise. Dates, films, and participating theaters vary.

[Link: https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films](https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films)

Haircuts Are Fun – Orem

A children's salon in Orem. Families can contact the salon to ask about sensory accommodations, appointment pacing, preparation, breaks, and experience serving autistic children.

[Link: https://www.haircutsarefun.com/location/ore-ut - /_s/sites/unknown/services](https://www.haircutsarefun.com/location/ore-ut - /_s/sites/unknown/services)

Chuck E. Cheese – Sensory Sensitive Sundays

Selected Chuck E. Cheese locations offer quieter sensory-sensitive hours with reduced sound, dimmer lighting, and fewer crowds. Families should confirm participating locations, dates, and times before visiting.

[Link: https://www.chuckecheese.com/sensory-sensitive-sundays/](https://www.chuckecheese.com/sensory-sensitive-sundays/)

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

A voluntary symbol used by some people with non-visible disabilities to indicate that they may need additional time, patience, or support. Recognition varies by organization and location.

[Link: https://hdsunflower.com/us/](https://hdsunflower.com/us/)

SLC International Airport – Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

Salt Lake City International Airport participates in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. Travelers can use a sunflower item to discreetly indicate that they may need additional support.

[Link: https://slcairport.com/customer-assistance/accessibility/hidden-disabilities-sunflower/](https://slcairport.com/customer-assistance/accessibility/hidden-disabilities-sunflower/)



Belonging & Community Engagement

Community engagement can include advocacy, peer groups, conferences, creative activities, leadership, and social connection. These resources highlight ways autistic people and families can participate and build belonging.

Autism Council of Utah

A coalition of Utah County organizations and community partners that shares resources, promotes events, and supports local autism initiatives.

Link: <https://autismcouncilofutah.org>

Autism Resources of Utah County Council (ARUCC)

A coalition of Utah County organizations and community partners that shares resources, promotes events, and supports local autism initiatives.

Link: <https://arucc.org/>

AutCon – Utah’s Autistic-Run Convention (ScenicView Academy)

An annual Utah conference led by autistic adults. It includes workshops, panels, creative activities, advocacy, and opportunities for community connection.

Link: <https://www.autconsva.com/>

Autism United (PDF)

A peer-led UVU student organization open to autistic students, allies, and community members. Activities may include social events, art, advocacy, education, and community projects.

Link: <https://linktr.ee/autisminuniteduvu>

(Find this in Section 10, Subsection "[Belonging & Community Engagement](#)" of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

Utah Developmental Disabilities Council (UDDC)

Supports disability advocacy, leadership training, community projects, systems change, and self-advocate participation across Utah.

Link: <https://uddc.utah.gov/>



Parent & Caregiver Tools

Research and professional language can be difficult to understand. These resources help families evaluate information, communicate respectfully, provide useful feedback, and make informed support decisions.

[A Parent's Guide to Research \(PDF\)](#)

Explains common research terms, study quality, evidence, and warning signs of weak or misleading claims. Designed to help families make more informed decisions about autism supports.

[Social Validity Questionnaire \(DOC\)](#)

Helps evaluate whether an intervention is acceptable, practical, respectful, and useful to the people involved. It can support conversations about whether a plan fits real-life needs and priorities.

[Understanding Motivational Interviewing \(PDF\)](#)

Introduces Motivational Interviewing, a collaborative approach that helps people explore goals, concerns, and readiness for change. It emphasizes listening, choice, respect, and personal motivation.

[101 Ways to Say Good Job – CCETompkins \(PDF\)](#)

Offers different ways to recognize effort, progress, persistence, and success. Helpful for parents, educators, and caregivers who want feedback to feel specific and meaningful.

Link: <https://ccetompkins.org/resources/101-ways-to-say-good-job>

(Find these PDFs in Section 10, Subsection ["Parent & Caregiver Tools"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)

9 Characteristics of Effective Feedback – ABA Learning Lab

Explains qualities of useful feedback, including being timely, specific, respectful, and focused on behavior or performance. Helpful for parents, educators, supervisors, and support professionals.

Link: <https://www.abalearninglab.com/9-characteristics-of-effective-feedback/>

Healthy Children – Ages & Stages

Provides parent-friendly information about development, health, behavior, and common questions from infancy through young adulthood. Helpful for understanding milestones and knowing when to ask a healthcare professional for guidance.

Link: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/Pages/default.aspx>



National Resources

National organizations can provide toolkits, advocacy information, education, and connections that are available beyond Utah. Each organization has a different perspective and focus.

Autism Society

A national autism organization offering education, advocacy, support navigation, and local affiliate connections. Resources are available for autistic people, families, and professionals.

[Link: autismsociety.org](https://autismsociety.org)

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

An autistic-led disability-rights organization focused on public policy, self-advocacy, community living, and accessible information. It offers plain-language guides and advocacy resources.

[Link: autisticadvocacy.org](https://autisticadvocacy.org)

National Autism Center at May Institute

Provides reports and family resources about research-supported autism interventions. Materials include evidence reviews, parent guides, and educational webinars.

[Link: nationalautismcenter.org](https://nationalautismcenter.org)

The Arc

A national disability-rights organization serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its chapters may offer advocacy, education, employment, housing, and family support.

[Link: thearc.org](https://thearc.org)

Madison House Autism Foundation – Housing & Community Solutions

Focuses on housing, community living, and long-term planning for autistic adults. The organization shares research, planning tools, and examples of residential models.

[Link: https://madisonhouseautism.org/](https://madisonhouseautism.org/)



Out-of-State Resources

Some useful programs and destinations are located outside Utah. These resources may be accessed through travel, online ordering, or national participation.

Camp Yofi – Georgia

An overnight family camp for autistic children and their families. Activities focus on recreation, family connection, and shared camp experiences.

[Link: https://www.acacamps.org/article/camping-magazine/camp-yofi-family-camp-children-autism](https://www.acacamps.org/article/camping-magazine/camp-yofi-family-camp-children-autism)

Morgan’s Wonderland – Texas

An accessible theme park in Texas designed for visitors with and without disabilities. It includes rides, play areas, sensory spaces, and inclusive attractions.

[Link: https://morganswonderland.org/](https://morganswonderland.org/)



LGBTQ+ Support & Belonging

Autistic people may also be LGBTQ+, and some individuals need support that understands both neurodivergence and identity. These resources offer community, mental health support, education, and family guidance.

Encircle – LGBTQ+ Family & Youth Support

Offers LGBTQ+ youth and family programs at Utah locations. Services may include friendship circles, creative activities, family support, therapy, and community events.

Link: encircletogether.org

Encircle LGBTQ+ Resource Guide

A digital guide with information about identity, mental health, family support, coming out, school, and community resources for LGBTQ+ youth and allies.

Link: <https://issuu.com/encircletogether/docs/lgbtq-resource-digital-final>

Encircle Resource Library – LGBTQ+ Guides & Stories

A collection of LGBTQ+ guides, stories, educational materials, and family resources. Topics may include gender, school groups, identity, and community support.

Link: encircletogether.org/library

Flourish Therapy

A Utah mental health clinic offering counseling for individuals, couples, and families. The practice describes its care as LGBTQIA+-affirming, trauma-informed, and neurodiversity-affirming.

Link: <https://www.flourishtherapy.org/>

Utah Pride Center

A Utah LGBTQ+ community organization offering programs, events, support groups, advocacy, and resource connections. Contact the center for current mental health and youth services.

Link: <https://utahpridecenter.org/>



Student Presentation Handouts

These student-created handouts explain autism, behavior, communication, research, and ethics in simplified formats. They should be used alongside professional guidance and established evidence-based resources.

[Single Subject Design \(Research Methods\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how researchers measure change in one person or a small group over time. Covers prediction, verification, replication, and how researchers evaluate whether an intervention may be causing change.

[Motivational Interviewing \(Communication Strategy\) \(PDF\)](#)

Introduces a collaborative communication approach that helps people explore goals and motivation. Covers OARS skills: open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries.

[Consent & Assent in Autism Services \(Ethics & Autonomy\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains informed consent, assent, autonomy, and how autistic people may communicate agreement or refusal. Emphasizes including individuals in decisions about their services.

[Functional Analysis \(Behavior Assessment\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how behavior analysts test possible reasons a behavior occurs by changing environmental conditions. Covers common assessment conditions and shorter formats used in schools or community settings.

[Reinforcement \(Behavior Principles\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains how consequences may increase the likelihood that a behavior happens again. Covers positive and negative reinforcement, identifying meaningful reinforcers, and using reinforcement to support learning.

[Extinction \(Behavior Strategy & Support\) \(PDF\)](#)

Explains extinction, a procedure that involves no longer providing the outcome that previously reinforced a behavior. It also discusses possible side effects and the importance of teaching and reinforcing safer replacement skills.

Extinction procedures can cause distress or escalation and should not be used casually or without careful ethical oversight.

(Find these PDFs in Section 10, Subsection ["Student Presentation Handouts"](#) of the digital folder or access it by scanning the QR code.)



References

All the resources in this handbook originate from credible sources—peer-reviewed research, trusted organizations, or lived-experience content created by the autism community. Not every source is academic, but each one was chosen for its clarity, accuracy, and value to real people. I believe in citing sources and giving credit where it's due, but printing out 15+ pages of references? That's not exactly eco-friendly (or necessary).

So instead of adding extra paper weight, you can find everything—every article, PDF, toolkit, video, and resource—listed in one easy-to-access file.

View the full reference list here:

[Resource Handbook – Doc Clegg – Version 5.0.0 References
bit.ly/resourcehandbook](https://bit.ly/resourcehandbook)

(Open the digital folder and look for that exact title.)

This way, you still get all the transparency and citations, minus the paper waste.



CLOSING NOTE

MEET THE AUTHOR

Advocacy, Experience, and Community

“Resources matter most when they are created with lived experience, practical understanding, and care for the people who use them.”



About the Creator – Doc Clegg



Doc Clegg (they/them) is an administrative professional, advocate, and emerging program leader dedicated to supporting neurodivergent communities through **thoughtful systems, accessible services, and community-centered work**. Diagnosed with autism at age 12, they draw on lived experience with autism and ADHD as one lens among many, grounding their work in both personal insight and practical, systems-focused support.

Doc holds an **Associate of Applied Science in Information Systems** and is currently pursuing a **Bachelor's degree in Family Science with a minor in Autism Studies** at Utah Valley University. They serve as an Administrative Assistant at the **Melisa Nellesen**

Center for Autism, supporting daily operations, program coordination, communications, and creative initiatives, including large-scale community projects such as the **Super Spectrum Showcase**.

As a member of the leadership team for **Autism United**, UVU's autism and neurodiversity student organization, Doc helps guide initiatives focused on **peer support, accessibility, advocacy, and community connection**. Their work has included sensory-support projects, student activities, and collaborations with programs such as Passages. They emphasize collaboration, follow-through, and the creation of sustainable structures that help both people and programs succeed.

In 2025, Doc received the **Michael Sproul Community Spirit Award** from the Autism Resources of Utah County Council in recognition of their dedication, service, and sustained commitment to the autism community in Utah County.

Doc's work centers on **strengthening programs and systems designed with autistic and neurodivergent people rather than simply for them**. Their interests also extend to the broader neurodivergent community, including ADHD and OCD, with a growing focus on gaps in services when autism and OCD co-occur—particularly within community, educational, and support-based settings.





Resource Handbook

Version 5.0.0

Thanks for taking the time to flip through this handbook. Whether you're a parent, teacher, provider, or autistic person yourself, I hope you found something in here that made things feel a little clearer, a little easier, or just more doable.

Every resource was carefully chosen to be practical, respectful, and useful in real life. You don't have to know everything or do it all at once—start where you are and use what helps.

(Find this in the digital folder or access it by going to bit.ly/resourcehandbook or scanning the QR code.)



Created by Doc Clegg (They/Them)

UVU STUDENT • AUTISM ADVOCATE • RESOURCE ORGANIZER
thedoctornextvoice@gmail.com

