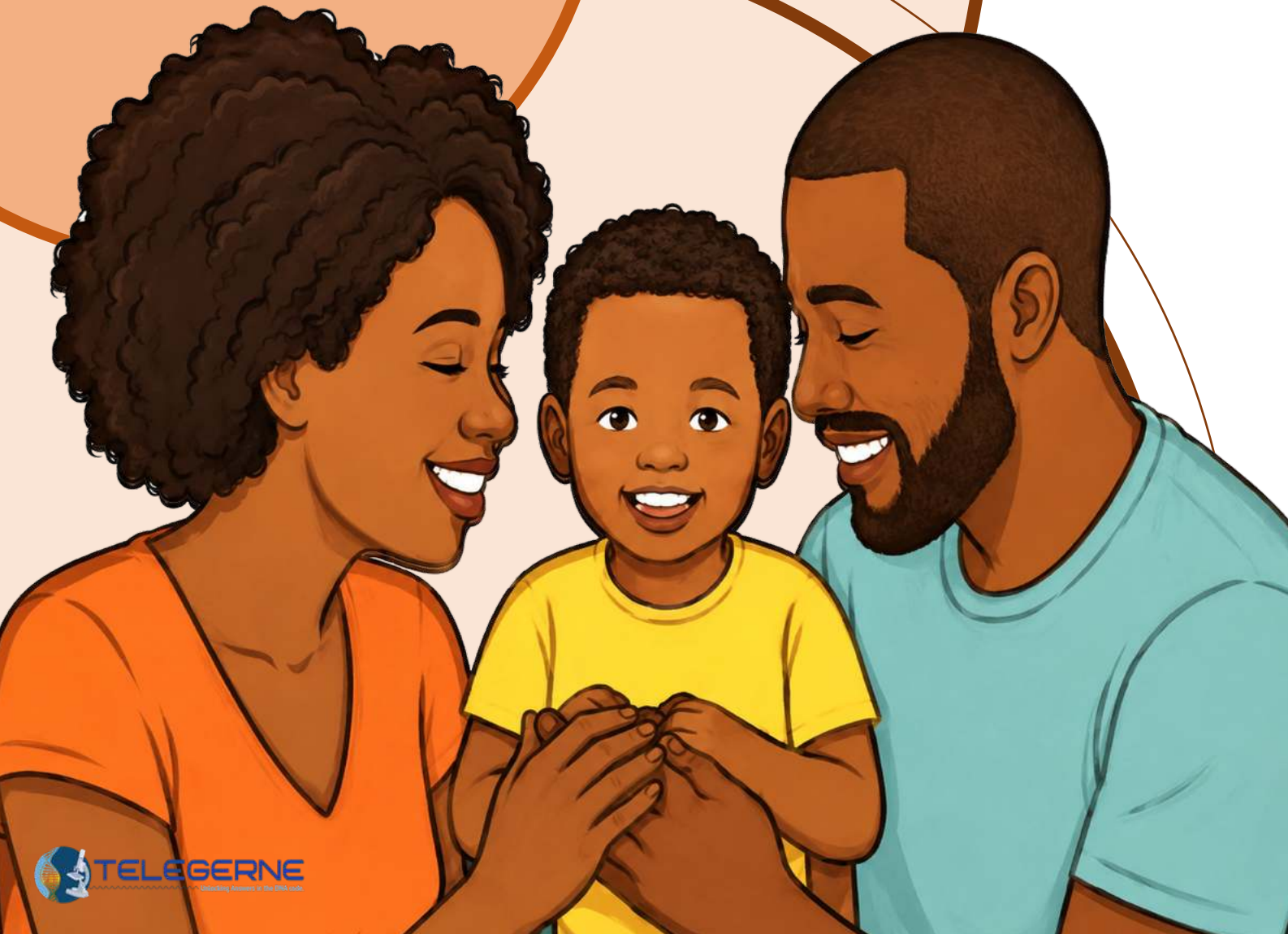


AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)



WHAT WILL YOU FIND HERE?

Do You Know What Autism
Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Is?

What are the signs and
Symptoms of ASD?

What are the causes of ASD?

My Child Has Autism. Now
What?

But Where Does All This Fear
Come From?





This guide is for mothers, fathers, and /or caregivers of children with **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

want to know what is ASD and who feel worried or insecure about supporting their child's communication, social interaction, behaviour, and overall development.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IS?

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain.
- People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests.
- People with ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention.
- It is important to note that some people without ASD might also have some of these symptoms. But for people with ASD, these characteristics can make life very challenging.

Common Features



Challenges with social communication limited eye contact, delayed speech

- A child does not make eye contact or smile back when greeted by parents, grandparents, or visitors at home.
- A child does not respond when called by their name during family gatherings or meal times.
- A child does not point to show interest in familiar objects such as a goat, chicken, banana tree, or passing motorcycle.
- A child prefers to play alone and does not join siblings or neighborhood children in traditional games or group pl



Repetitive behaviors or intense interests

- A child repeatedly lines up bottle caps, stones, or toy cars and becomes upset if someone moves them.
- A child repeatedly echoes phrases heard from family members, songs from the radio, or television programs.
- A child insists on following the same route to school, church, or the market every day and becomes distressed if the route changes.
- A child repeatedly flaps their hands, rocks back and forth, or spins around when excited or upset.



Sensory sensitivities to sounds, textures, or lights

- A child has delayed speech and uses very few words compared with children of the same age in the community.
- A child has difficulty learning simple tasks taught at home, in preschool, or in community childcare settings.

- A child has unusual eating habits, such as eating only specific foods (e.g., only rice, porridge, or bananas) and refusing family meals.
- A child has frequent sleep problems, is unusually fearful of common sounds (e.g., drums, church music, or livestock noises), or experiences seizure.

There is not just one cause of ASD. Many different factors have been identified that may make a child more likely to have ASD, including environmental, biologic, and genetic factors.

Although we know little about specific causes, the available evidence suggests that the following may put children at greater risk for developing ASD:

- Having a sibling with ASD
- Having certain genetic or chromosomal conditions like X fragile
- Experiencing complications at birth
- Being born to older parents

RISK FACTORS

Autism is NOT



- Parenting style
- Witchcraft, curses, evil spirits, or punishment from ancestors
- Not caused by vaccinations
- Contagious
- Is not temporary and does not get away in adulthood

Screening and diagnosis

Diagnosing ASD can be difficult since there is no medical test, like a blood test, to diagnose the disorder. Doctors look at the child's behavior and development to make a diagnosis.

ASD can sometimes be detected at 18 months of age or younger. By age 2 years, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered reliable.¹ However, many children do not receive a final diagnosis until they are much older. Some people are not diagnosed until they are adolescents or adults. This delay means that people with ASD might not get the early help they need.

Treatment

Current treatments for ASD seek to reduce symptoms that interfere with daily functioning and quality of life. ASD affects each person differently, meaning that people with ASD have unique strengths and challenges and different treatment needs.² Treatment plans usually involve multiple professionals and are catered to the individual.

MY CHILD HAS AUTISM. NOW WHAT?

It is common for parents to feel confused, worried, or scared when their child is diagnosed with autism. After all, it brings many questions about the future.

Children with autism can learn, develop new skills, and live fulfilling lives with the right support. Many benefit from early intervention such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, structured routines, visual supports, and play-based learning.

Many caregivers think:

**“I don’t think
I can do this.”**

**“Will my child
have a good
future?”**



BUT WHERE DOES ALL THIS FEAR COME FROM?

*"I don't know if
I'm doing even
play."*

*Thoughts
cannot rooping
even play...*





*Thoughts are
to emotions...*

*Thoughts are
thoughts to*

**ON A SCALE FROM 0 TO 10, HOW CAPABLE
DO YOU FEEL OF SUPPORTING YOUR
CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?**

Incapable $\longleftrightarrow$ **Capable**



NEGATIVE PREDICTIONS



*"My Child
will never
speak"*

*"He will never live
independently"*

*"I will never be
a good parent
for him"*

FEARS LIVE IN OUR THOUGHTS!

*"That mother
is better at
parenting"*

*"I am not
doing
enough"*

*Don't allow
yourself to
feel bad*





CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK

Your feelings and actions are influenced by your thoughts. To feel better and more confident, we need to change the way we think.



LET'S DO THIS!

NEGATIVE PREDICTIONS

(Interactive Worksheet)

Start by writing down one negative prediction you have identified here.

Answer

.....
.....
.....

Now, write down when and where you think this prediction might come up.

Answer

.....
.....
.....

Finally, create a plan with things you can do to support your child:

Answer

.....
.....
.....

UNFAIR COMPARISONS

(Interactive Worksheet)

Write down one unfair comparison you make.

Answer

.....
.....
.....

Write down two positive things you have already done while supporting your child.

Answer

.....
.....
.....

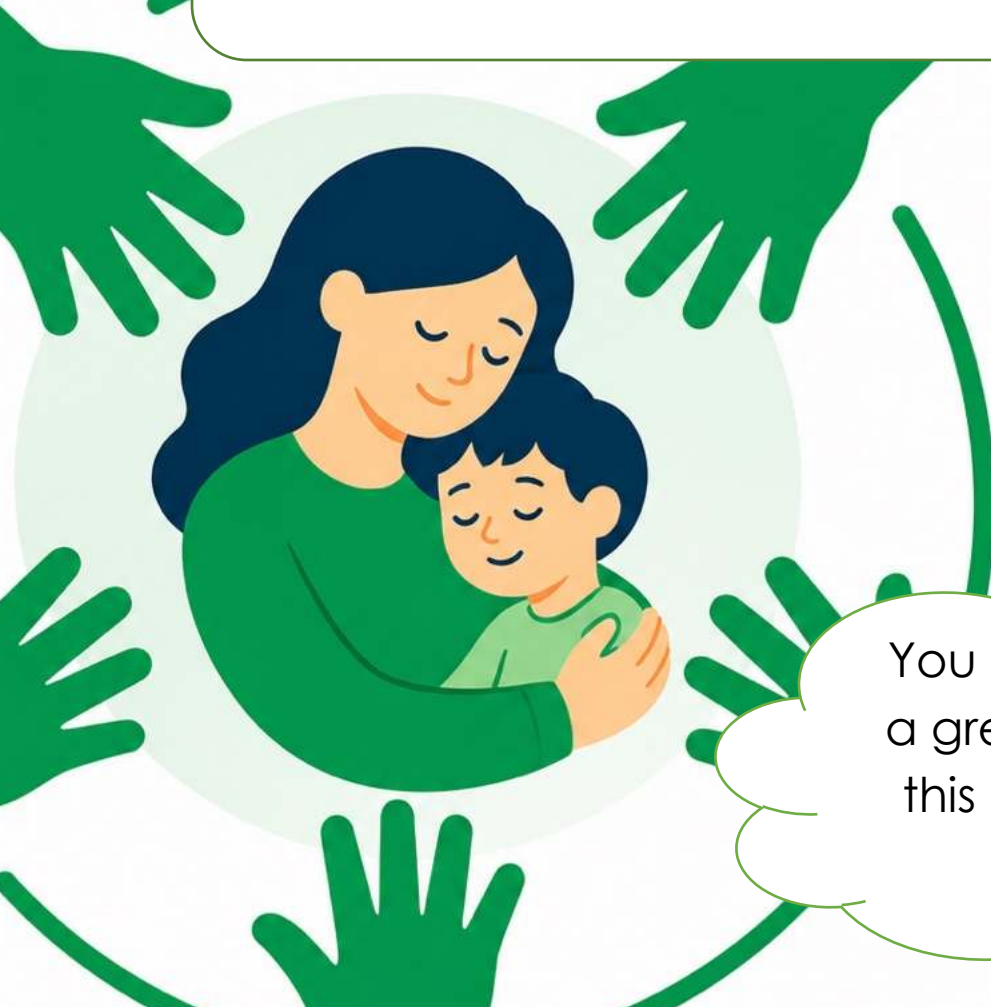
What do these things say about your performance?

Answer

.....

.....

.....



You are already doing
a great job by reading
this guide and caring
for your child.

LOOKING BACK

Identify the true and false statements below:			
01	Autism is caused by bad parenting or witchcraft?	True	False
		✓	✗
02	Children with autism cannot learn or make progress?	True	False
		✓	✗
03	Thoughts influence our feelings and actions?	True	False
		✓	✗
04	When we have negative thoughts, we often feel worried?	True	False
		✓	✗
05	Early support and understanding help children with autism?	True	False
		✓	✗
06	Families with autistic children are not alone?	True	False
		✓	✗
Answer Key: True True True True True False False False			

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RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

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