

Contents at a Glance

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Part I: Understanding Autism</i>	<i>9</i>
Chapter 1: Autism: The Big Picture.....	11
Chapter 2: From Classification to Treatment: Scanning the Autism Spectrum	27
Chapter 3: Causes, Clusters, and Clues: Where Does Autism Come From?.....	39
Chapter 4: Getting a Diagnosis	53
Chapter 5: Asperger Syndrome and Autism.....	71
<i>Part II: Addressing Physical Needs</i>	<i>93</i>
Chapter 6: Injecting Yourself with Knowledge about Autism Medication.....	95
Chapter 7: Improving Immunity and Boosting Biochemistry	109
Chapter 8: Optimizing Nutrition.....	129
<i>Part III: Enhancing Learning and Social Skills</i>	<i>145</i>
Chapter 9: Choosing an Appropriate Behavioral, Developmental, or Educational Intervention	147
Chapter 10: Dealing with Learning and Sensory Differences.....	181
Chapter 11: Finding a Learning Environment That Fits Your Child's Needs	207
Chapter 12: Legally Speaking: Making the Most of Your Child's Education.....	235
Chapter 13: Fostering Healthy Relationships	253
<i>Part IV: Living with Autism as an Adult</i>	<i>271</i>
Chapter 14: For Adults with Autism: Living Well after K-12	273
Chapter 15: For Adults with Autism: Fostering Friendships and Romantic Relationships	301
Chapter 16: Special-Needs Planning for the Future.....	319
<i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i>	<i>333</i>
Chapter 17: Ten Tactful Responses to Challenging Questions or Comments	335
Chapter 18: Ten Things to Do after a Diagnosis	341
<i>Appendix: Where to Go for More Help</i>	<i>345</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>355</i>

Table of Contents

Forewordxvii

Introduction 1

About This Book.....2
Conventions Used in This Book2
What You're Not to Read.....3
Foolish Assumptions3
How This Book Is Organized.....4
 Part I: Understanding Autism4
 Part II: Addressing Physical Needs4
 Part III: Enhancing Learning and Social Skills5
 Part IV: Living with Autism as an Adult5
 Part V: The Part of Tens.....6
Icons Used in This Book.....6
Where to Go from Here.....7

Part I: Understanding Autism..... 9

Chapter 1: Autism: The Big Picture11

What We Know — and Don't Know — about Autism12
Making the Diagnosis: Learning Your ASDs13
 Understanding the diagnostic criteria.....14
 Seeing the signs: Autism symptoms15
Understanding the Far-Reaching Impact of Autism.....17
 How autism can affect the diagnosed individual18
 How autism can affect families, schools, and communities18
 How autism can affect caregivers19
Navigating the Sea of Interventions.....20
 Using behavioral, developmental, and other educationally
 based interventions.....21
 Implementing occupational and speech-language therapies23
 Medicating symptoms that can accompany autism23
 Applying biomedical and natural interventions.....24
If You Think You (Or People You Care for) Have Undiagnosed Autism25

**Chapter 2: From Classification to Treatment: Scanning the
Autism Spectrum** 27

Surveying the Colors of Autism.....28
 Severe (or “classic”) autism.....29
 PDD and PDD-NOS30



- Asperger Syndrome.....31
- Considering Conditions That Resemble Autism32
 - Childhood Disintegrative Disorder32
 - Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder33
 - Other possible diagnoses33
- Understanding Why Early Treatment Matters More than Classification.....35
 - Attempting early identification and intervention35
 - Getting good medical care36
 - Enrolling in effective early programs.....37

Chapter 3: Causes, Clusters, and Clues: Where Does Autism Come From? 39

- Considering the Rise in Diagnoses.....40
- Exploring the Genetic Link.....41
 - Familial patterns41
 - Brain size and structure42
 - The brain-gut connection44
 - The testosterone link.....45
- Examining Biomedical Theories.....45
 - What do allergies have to do with it?46
 - Heavy-metal poisoning hypotheses47
 - Autoimmune or virus-induced theories of causation49
- The Backlash Against the Cure50

Chapter 4: Getting a Diagnosis 53

- Tracking Your Child’s Medical History.....54
- Broaching the Possibility of Autism with a Doctor.....55
 - Preparing for the consultation56
 - Requesting a referral.....57
- Consulting a Specialist58
 - Contacting a qualified specialist59
 - Sharing information62
 - Embarking on the assessment process62
 - Diagnosing related conditions65
- Dealing with the Impact of the Diagnosis67
 - Coming to terms emotionally68
 - Taking action.....68
 - Avoiding scams.....69

Chapter 5: Asperger Syndrome and Autism 71

- Discovering Where Asperger Syndrome Sits on the Autism Spectrum...72
 - Examining common characteristics of Asperger’s.....72
 - Diagnosing Asperger Syndrome73
 - Examining typical nondiagnostic personality traits of Asperger Syndrome.....76
- Helping People with Asperger Syndrome Socialize78
 - Finding the hidden curriculum79
 - Handling idioms and figures of speech80

Dealing with the Emotions Triggered by Asperger Syndrome82
 Avoiding the rage cycle83
 Working through frustration87
 Using emotion thermometers to gauge emotional states87
 Recognizing Bullying and Its Emotional Repercussions89
 Signs of bullying.....90
 Taming the bullies91
 Transitioning to Adulthood91

Part II: Addressing Physical Needs.....93

Chapter 6: Injecting Yourself with Knowledge about Autism Medication95

 Considering Drug Therapy.....95
 Looking at how medication can realistically help.....96
 Educating yourself and pursuing drug therapy.....96
 Using medication wisely97
 Identifying Helpful Medications99
 Beginning the process with a qualified doctor100
 Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs).....101
 Atypical antipsychotic drugs.....102
 Tricyclic drugs.....104
 Antiepileptics (also known as anticonvulsants)105
 Medications for challenging behaviors in severely affected people with autism106
 Maximizing Safety When Vaccinating Your Child.....107
 Considering your child’s medical history107
 Looking at an alternate vaccination schedule.....108

Chapter 7: Improving Immunity and Boosting Biochemistry109

 Taking a Look at the Balancing Act of the Immune System110
 Exposing the Relationship between Autism and Immune Abnormalities.....112
 Analyzing immune measurements in the blood113
 Exploring gut problems114
 Studying brain tissue115
 Improving Immunity116
 Focusing on first-line fundamentals117
 Seeking out second-line strategies118
 Tackling third-line therapies119
 Biochemistry Begets Behavior: A New Way of Thinking.....121
 Shedding light on the broken pathways.....121
 Maximizing metabolism.....122
 Getting the Lead (and Mercury) Out124
 Why the autistic child?124
 Testing for toxicity125
 Chelating.....125

Chapter 8: Optimizing Nutrition 129

Tempering Your Expectations	130
Considering Your Dietary Intervention Options	130
Cleaning up your child's diet	131
Going wheat and dairy free	133
Supplementing your child's diet.....	136
Implementing Your Plan	138
Keeping a food and symptom diary	138
Involving professionals.....	140
Easing the transition	141
Experimenting with specialized diets	142
Eating on the road	143

Part III: Enhancing Learning and Social Skills..... 145**Chapter 9: Choosing an Appropriate Behavioral, Developmental, or Educational Intervention 147**

Understanding What to Look for in the Alphabet Soup of Approaches....	148
Actions and behaviors that lead to success in all interventions....	149
Keys to success in educational interventions	149
Exploring Popular Intervention Approaches.....	150
Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)	151
Daily Life Therapy (DLT)	155
Developmental Individual Difference Relation-Based Intervention (DIR).....	157
Miller Method	160
Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)	164
Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)	169
Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support Model (SCERTS).....	173
Deciding Which Method Is Best for Your Child.....	176
Financing the At-Home Program of Your Choice.....	177
Exploring your at-home options.....	177
Obtaining government assistance.....	178

Chapter 10: Dealing with Learning and Sensory Differences 181

Autistic Learning: Transferring Skills and Providing Structure	182
Thinking conceptually and transferring concepts	182
Incorporating routine into daily life.....	184
Bridging the Communication Gap.....	186
Developing sign language as a communication bridge	186
Working toward functional communication	186
Using assistive communication technology	187
Enjoying music therapy	193

“Retraining” the Brain through Neurotherapy	194
Examining and implementing neurotherapy.....	195
Reviewing a neurotherapy study.....	196
Making Sense of Sensory Confusion	197
Observing sensory integration challenges	197
Using hippotherapy	200
Working with speech-language pathologists	200
Seeing through Irlen-branded lenses	201
Handling Your Child’s Sensory Issues	202
The supermarket test	202
The eyes have it.....	203
The auditory-processing blues	204
Socially unacceptable stimming.....	204
Dealing with the most severe behaviors	206

Chapter 11: Finding a Learning Environment That Fits Your Child’s Needs207

Inclusion: To Be or Not to Be?	208
Recognizing an Effective Classroom	209
Maintaining routine and predictability.....	209
Learning through all the senses	211
Evaluating the room itself	212
Observing a Good Teacher	215
Characteristics to look for in an educator	215
Warning flags to avoid in an educator	216
Developing Effective Accommodations	217
Accommodations in action	218
Addressing the fairness of accommodations	219
Considering educational techniques for promoting inclusion.....	222
Weighing Your Options when the Public School System Falls Short.....	224
Exploring the world of home schooling	224
Considering other educational options.....	226
Understanding and Reducing Challenging Behaviors	226
Getting to the core of the behavior.....	227
Performing a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)	227

Chapter 12: Legally Speaking: Making the Most of Your Child’s Education235

Navigating the Legal and Education Systems.....	235
Understanding what the law allows	236
Keeping track of changes in the law	236
Staying Involved with Your Child’s Education.....	238
Working within the system.....	238
Supporting your child at home.....	239
Acting Early with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).....	240
Specifying Special: Entering the Public School System.....	241
Initiating an evaluation to establish eligibility	241
Implementing an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	243

Assessing Your Child's Progress	250
Flexing Your Educational Rights When You Need To	251

Chapter 13: Fostering Healthy Relationships 253

Recognizing the Social Challenges an Autistic Child Faces	254
Understanding social norms	254
Conversing and cooperating	255
Supporting a child when verbal communication is minimal or nonexistent	256
All in the Family	258
Talking about autism with your kids	259
Considering the challenges siblings face	260
Including extended family	263
Encouraging Your Child to Form Friendships	264
Staging an emotional rescue	265
Creating social stories and calling on Power Cards	266
Making conversation	268
Sparking interactive play	269
Respecting differences	270

***Part IV: Living with Autism as an Adult* 271**

Chapter 14: For Adults with Autism: Living Well after K-12 273

Discovering How to Live Interdependently	274
Managing your daily life	274
Deciding where to live	275
For caregivers: Preparing your dependent to succeed from day one	276
Out of the High-School Daze: Pursuing Higher Education	277
Evaluating your educational options	278
Getting the accommodations you need for higher education	282
Practicing self-advocacy and disclosure	283
Easing into higher education	284
For caregivers: Helping your dependent realize his/her higher-education dreams	285
Time to Nurture Your Bank Account: Finding (and Keeping) Employment	285
Matching your skills and desires with job opportunities	286
Working with a job coach	287
Applying for and obtaining a position	288
Maintaining your job	291
Gracefully exiting your position	291
Considering self-employment	292
For caregivers: Helping a dependent find employment	293

An Advocate Off the Ol' Block: Getting Involved
with Your Community295
 Becoming a part of your community296
 Looking within the autism community297
 For caregivers: Encouraging an adult with autism
 to get involved299

Chapter 15: For Adults with Autism: Fostering Friendships and Romantic Relationships301

Developing Friendly Relationships302
 Understanding the circle of relationships.....302
 Making first contact304
 For caregivers: Helping your dependent establish friendships ...306
Recognizing (And Overcoming) the Challenges of Dating.....307
 Asking for a date.....307
 Behaving appropriately during the date309
 Opting for full or no disclosure310
 For caregivers: Moving on to dating311
Taking It to the Next Level with Sexual Behavior312
 The most important part of boyfriend or girlfriend is “friend”...313
 Engaging in sexual activity314
 For caregivers: Exploring sex education for
 people with autism315

Chapter 16: Special-Needs Planning for the Future319

Avoiding Common Financial Mistakes.....320
Putting Plan to Paper: Getting Started320
 Taking account of your child’s prognosis321
 Keeping eligibility for government services in mind322
 Sizing up your estate.....323
 Considering living arrangements and guardianship.....323
Involving an Attorney and/or Financial Planner323
Writing Your Will325
 Setting up a special-needs trust326
 Giving a morally obligated gift.....330
 Designating guardianship331

Part V: The Part of Tens333

Chapter 17: Ten Tactful Responses to Challenging Questions or Comments335

“What Special Talent Does He Have?”335
“Why Can’t You Control Your Kid?”336
“Asperger Snausperger. He Looks Fine. He Just Needs
a Better Attitude.”337

“Who Did He Inherit It From?”	337
“Why Should Your Child Get Special Treatment?”	338
“Are You Kidnapping That Child?”	338
The “Bad-Parent” Look	339
“Is She Still in Her Own World?”	339
“They Grow Out of It, Don’t They?”	340
“But She Doesn’t Look Autistic . . .”	340
Chapter 18: Ten Things to Do after a Diagnosis	341
Learn and Read as Much as Possible	341
Network with Other Families	342
Test, Test, Test.....	342
Investigate Sources of Financial Aid	342
Consider Major Lifestyle Changes	343
Set Up an Educational/Behavioral Program in Your Home.....	343
Begin Therapies.....	343
Address Your Child’s Diet and Nutrition	344
Don’t Give Up.....	344
Get Out and Relax	344
 Appendix: Where to Go for More Help	345
Finding Other Helpful Texts	345
Specializing in autism spectrum disorders	347
Special-education publishers.....	347
Research journals and magazines	348
Surfing Informative Sites on the Web	348
Connecting with advocacy organizations	349
Perusing general-information sites	350
Having some fun	351
Gaining insight from people with an ASD.....	351
Chatting about autism	352
Exploring listserves.....	353
Accessing World-Wide Autism Organizations and Resources.....	354
 Index.....	355