



Developmental Delay and Family

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Developmental Delay and Family Diagnosis Healthcare Team Is My Child Del

When a child has significantly delayed development, the family may feel strengthened or strained by the challenges of caring for a child with special needs. Many parents of developmentally delayed children withdraw from friends and other family members because they feel embarrassed, anxious, or exhausted. Parents often put their needs aside in order to care for their delayed child and the rest of the family. Remember that you will be able to take better care of your child if you take care of your own emotional and physical health.

Below are some tips to help parents and families.

- Take care of yourself and your health. You need exercise, rest, laughter and time with friends and others. Maintain your stamina. Practice staying calm and finding humor each day.
- Set priorities and make a plan. Identify the top few issues and needs for your family and then develop a plan and enlist others in achieving the plan's priorities.
- Intensive and ongoing interventions can have a positive long-term impact on your child but may be time consuming. In addition to pursuing special therapies and educational options, realize that your child is learning continually. Speak with your child's physicians, therapists, and educators about ways to make daily life activities into learning and therapeutic opportunities.

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- Learn to be consistent with praise and positive information. Minimize negative comments and punishment. Children will not learn by being told what not to do; instead, they need continual and direct guidance on expected behavior.
- Work on establishing positive relationships with professionals. You will need to work together closely to resolve difficult issues. Focus your efforts on attacking problems -- not each other.
- Celebrate and build upon your child's interests and accomplishments. Be creative. Realize that these interests and strengths could lead to a career.
- Small steps may be major accomplishments for your child. Acknowledge these and celebrate.
- Find leisure and recreational activities that the family can enjoy together. Work with the school to teach skills that will facilitate your child's involvement in these activities.
- Kids grow up, so start early to encourage and enhance behaviors that will help your child become more successful as an adult.
- If you are a two parent home, remember the importance of each other. Set time aside to talk each day, even if it is just a few minutes.
- You can't do it alone, so ask for and accept help from others.

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