

Active participation of parents ensures efficient development of autistic children

By : Editor Published On : 22 May, 2020 07:06 AM IST



- Dr. Anil RamaKrishna -

Communication and interaction in any form is the basis of human evolution. It helps us understand and know each other in a better manner. It is also an essential entity that each of us have in order to convey our thoughts, wishes or emotions. Communication certainly makes our life convenient but imagine if this basic entity is taken away from you. Such is the situation of those that are affected by autism. Autism is no longer an unheard word but it is still not a very well understood one. Also referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), autism is a serious developmental disorder that damages the ability to communicate and interact. It impacts the nervous system and affects the overall cognitive, emotional, social and physical health of the affected individual. Hence, the major complications occur with the person's communication and behavior.

Utmost support, especially on the emotional front, is required by those dealing with autism, and family specifically parents play a very crucial role if their kids are autistic. It is so because autistic children face trouble in interacting with other people. It is not easy for them to express their feelings and ideas. Often they are not able to even imagine what other people could think or feel and they usually end up spending a speechless life. It is a struggle for them to bond with their own family or friends.

Hence autism is an everyday challenge and can eventually take a toll on overall health. Children with autism, are often be exposed to bullying which can cause them anxiety and affect them in various manners. This condition affects parents too, as it is not easy to understand their child's behavior, making the situation further difficult. It is not enough for autistic children to receive the right kind of treatment but also to have the right kind of support. For this, education about autism, its treatment, the way to handle the kids and leaning about the condition is a must, especially for parents.

Autistic children have a better chance of imbibing the required skills when parents actively participate.

Parenting a child with autism is quite challenging but parents' involvement increases the consistency in assuring their child receives the right guidance and that guidance is better implemented even at home after the sessions. It is essential because parents are also the ones who are more familiar with their child, who first observe the developmental issues in the child and are more often accompanying the child.

Some of the tips that parents can take are:

- Be consistent with your child. Constantly practice at home the same exercises or things he/she has learned during therapy or counseling session.
- Have a pre-planned schedule for your child and work according to that. Autistic children perform way better when they are in a constant highly-structured routine.
- Appreciate your child when he/she performs well with an exercise. Positive reinforcement is a long-way forward with these children.
- Keep a safety zone in the house for your child to relax.
- Look out for non-verbal cues and get better with them.
- If your child throws tantrum, try to patiently understand the reason for the same.
- Many times, children with ASD are hypersensitive to light, sound, touch, taste, and smell while some are "under-sensitive" to sensory stimuli.
- It is also very important to be observant of your child's behavior, the triggers that affect them adversely, the things that they would enjoy, their strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- As a parent, you must also know the best form of learning for your child.
- Most importantly, always research well and get an efficient therapist for your child. Do not delay in starting the necessary treatment.
- Be it therapists, or educationists, parents should honestly share their observations with them so that the professionals can accordingly tailor the program for the child.
- Always read, reach out to experts and educate yourself about autism.
- Go for counseling sessions together.
- Always be supportive and involved.

It is very crucial and significant for parents and professionals to work in collaboration for the benefit of the child. This ensures that the child gets faster and better results which will strengthen the child.

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