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|  | The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) journey: Managing and coping |
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Raising a child with ASD can be physically tiring and emotionally draining. You will need a team of people around you to help support you in the journey. These suggestions may be helpful.

Find a team of professionals you can work with and trust

It is important that your team has a range of specialist expertise to meet your child’s individual needs. This team may include a social worker, teachers and therapists. Depending on your child’s needs, your team may also include medical professionals such as a neurologist, geneticist, developmental paediatrician, gastroenterologist, child psychiatrist or nutritionist. It helps to have a case manager or key worker to coordinate services and help you to access financial support and government programs. Keep an organised file of meetings and reports so all your information is in one handy place.

Learn about the ASD

There are many myths about ASD and there is also a lot of misinformation on the Internet. Learning the facts helps you to understand what ASD is and how it is affecting your child. With time, intervention and your support, you will be rewarded by seeing your child grow and learn in his or her own way.

Take time for yourself and other family members

Caring for a child with ASD can put stress on your personal relationships and your family. It’s important to take time out to relax, exercise or enjoy your favourite activities. Plan one on one time with your other children and have date nights with your spouse or partner— even if it's just doing something special at home.

Meet other families of children with ASD

Joining in with a parent education and skills program is a good way to meet other parents. Many local communities also have support groups for parents and siblings of children with ASD. It can be helpful to meet with other families facing the challenges of ASD.

There are several parent support groups that can be contacted. The Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) will be able to help you to find a support group in your local area. <http://www.acd.org.au/>

For more information about the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Autism Friendly Learning website go to:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/autism](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/autism)