

Autism Guide

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Know to ask:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a broad diagnosis made in individuals who generally have difficulty with social interactions, exhibit repetitive behaviors, and have challenges with communication. Many parents may be overwhelmed if struggling to get the proper diagnosis for their child, or confused as to their rights and benefits.

Within the Israeli healthcare system, there are many services and benefits for those with an Autism diagnosis. Having a diagnosis is only beneficial to your child, and the earlier a diagnosis can be made, the better. This guide will provide you with clear information on how to get a proper diagnosis, and help you understand and access your rights and benefits. There is no shame in receiving a diagnosis and proper care, and we encourage you to get the help you need, and find support.

When to Seek a Diagnosis:

Autism is a common diagnosis amongst young children. If your child is exhibiting some of these signs or symptoms, you may want get him/her screened for Autism:

- Avoiding eye contact
- Delayed speech/communication skills
- Heavily reliant on routine, to the point that minor changes are not manageable
- Behavioral issues
- Difficulty understanding people's emotions
- Obsessive focus on a narrow range of object/interest
- Repetitive behaviors such as flapping hands or rocking

Please note:

Not all children who exhibit some of these behaviors have Autism.

Some children exhibit other symptoms. Girls in particular, may be overly verbal/social. ASD is a spectrum. Some children will often have the ability to function at a high level, and therefore a diagnosis may be hard to pinpoint. **Regardless, a diagnosis is only to your child's benefit,**

and the earlier you receive a diagnosis, the better for the support, therapy, and general outcomes there are for your child.

Children can receive a diagnosis until age 18.

Receiving a Diagnosis:

1. Speak to your child's pediatrician, and their metapelet/ganenet/teacher
 - Have your pediatrician write you a referral for a specialist
 - Have the ganenet fill out a form describing the issues (the form is available at your local Kupah or sometimes online)
2. A full medical examination must be carried out by a physician who is one of the following:
 - A psychiatrist for children and youth
 - A specialist in neurology and child development
 - A developmental pediatrician with work experience of at least 3 years in a recognized Child Development Institute
3. In addition to the medical examination, the child must receive a diagnosis by:
 - A clinical psychologist with recognized clinical training in the field of children
 - A developmental psychologist (or specializing in such under guidance)
 - A rehabilitative psychologist or educational psychologist - provided they have a proven training in the field of autism diagnosis

Important Tips:

- This might sound overwhelming, but follow the above 3 steps, and contact SPP if you are struggling. Following through can open the door to many therapies and benefits.
- This process may take some time. Specialist appointments are not always easily available, and if a diagnosis is unclear, they may want you to come back at a later date to reassess.
- Start the process as early as possible, and continue following up with the clinic regularly to check for appointment cancellations.
- A diagnosis can be made by a private physician/professional that is recognized by Misrad HaBriut (Ministry of Health). Speak to your medical secretary at your Kupat Cholim office to find a private specialist that may be fully or partially covered by your Kupat Cholim.

- For a list of Hitpatchut HaYeled (Childhood Development) Centers:
https://www.health.gov.il/Subjects/KidsAndMatures/child_development/Documents/child_development_Inst.pdf
- For more information on Autism diagnosis:
https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Autism_Diagnosis

Please note:

A diagnosis will be made for Autism Spectrum Disorder only, and not for any subcategory like Asperger's, PPD, etc.

Benefits for a Child Diagnosed with Autism:

1. Therapy
 - Speech, OT, PT, Tipul Righshi, counseling, and many other therapies will be available to your child through Hitpatchut Haya'eled and the Kupat Cholim.
 - Your child may need or benefit from some or all of these services, and others, depending on their diagnosis and prognosis.
 - Speak to the Hitpatchut HaYeled medical secretary for assistance with making appointments, and to understand what referrals or paperwork is necessary.
2. Disability Benefit
 - A child diagnosed with Autism is eligible for the Disabled Child Benefit (which includes a monthly stipend) from Bituach Leumi.
 - A child with an Autism diagnosis is eligible for 100% disability, a child who has been determined to be completely dependent on others with an Autism diagnosis is eligible for 188% disability.
 - One must apply through Bituach Leumi and be approved to receive this benefit.
 - For the complete process of applying click here:
https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Disabled_Child_Benefit_for_Children_on_the_Autism_Spectrum
3. Housing
 - Children above the age of 12 may be eligible for housing outside of their home to meet their specific needs.
 - To understand eligibility requirements and the process click here:
https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Disabled_Child_Benefit_for_Children_on_the_Autism_Spectrum

4. Education

- Children with an Autism Diagnosis are entitled to special educational services to meet their needs.
- For information on Special Daycare Centers for toddlers:
https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Daycare_Centers_for_Toddlers_with_Autism
- For information on Special Education (Age 3+):
https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Special_Education_and_Integration_into_Regular_Education

5. Other Benefits for Parents and Family Members

- Tax and Arnona Discounts
- Sick Days to care for child with Autism
- Some Hitpatchut HaYeled centers offer programs and counseling for siblings and parents.

For a complete list of benefits please see our Autism Portal and click through to learn more:
<https://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Autism>

Adult Autism

While some benefits may still be available to those diagnosed with Autism through adulthood, at the moment it is nearly impossible, and incredibly expensive to receive a first diagnosis of Autism as an adult in Israel. It is critical that if one suspects they may be on the spectrum, they receive a diagnosis before age 18.

We understand that there are many adults who may have missed the opportunity to be diagnosed as children, or were unaware that they should even seek out a diagnosis, and that a lack of diagnosis causes much difficulty in their adult life. This is something we have vocalized to Misrad Habriut, and we hope to see a change in the future.

Resources:

Please note:

All resources linked to www.yadlolim.org/healthcare are the original work of the Yad L'Olim Healthcare Division in memory of Shira Pransky ז"ל.

All resources linked to www.kolzhut.org.il/en are the exclusive translations of the Yad L'Olim Healthcare Division in memory of Shira Pransky ז"ל.

External links to outside resources are reputable sources, however we are not responsible for the content or any changes made.

For further information and personal assistance, please contact Yad L'Olim's Healthcare Division at healthcare@yadlolim.org