

Where to start if you think your child might have ADHD or Autism

If you suspect your child may be neurodivergent (for example, having ADHD or autism), it can feel overwhelming to know where to begin.

Here's a simple step-by-step guide to help you navigate the process calmly, confidently, and with the right support.

1 Start with Observation

Notice what's happening day to day and write down:

- ▶ Behaviours that stand out (e.g. focus, energy, meltdowns, anxiety, social challenges)
- ▶ What helps or makes things harder
- ▶ Feedback from teachers, family, or friends

These notes will really help when you speak to professionals later.



2 Speak to School or Nursery

Schools often notice early signs and can offer support

- ▶ Ask to meet with the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) or class teacher
- ▶ Share your observations and concerns
- ▶ Discuss what can help right now (e.g. movement breaks, visual aids, quiet zones, sensory tools)
- ▶ Ask if your child can be added to the SEN Support register

Remember, support can start based on your child's needs, even without a diagnosis.

3 Contact Your GP

Talk to your GP about your concerns. Bring your notes from home and school.

You can request:

- A referral to a Community Paediatrician (for younger children)
- A referral to CAMHS or a Neurodevelopmental Team (for ADHD/autism assessments)

The clearer your examples, the easier it is for your GP to make a referral.



4 Check Local Pathways

Every area is slightly different. Search online for **ADHD/autism assessment pathway** for your local area Or contact SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service) for free, impartial help.

5 While You are on the waiting list

Waiting lists can be long but you don't have to wait for a diagnosis to get support. Here a few things for you to try:

- ▶ Learning about neurodiversity. This first step of understanding will help you adapt at home
- ▶ Adjusting your expectations. Focus on what helps your child thrive
- ▶ Joining local or online parent support groups will help you not feel so alone
- ▶ Prioritise wellbeing for you and your child. Easier said than done we know, but even small moments of calm will be beneficial. It might be trial and error but you will find something that works for you both.

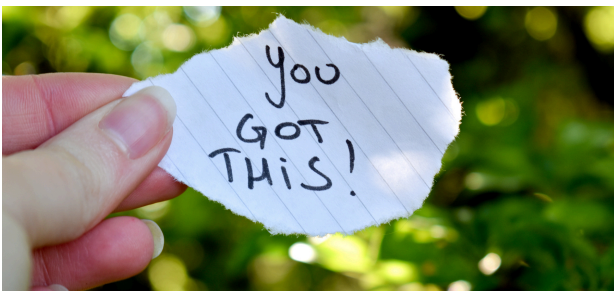


6 Practical Supports & Resources

EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan): You can request this from your local authority if your child needs extra support beyond school resources

Parent Support Services: Family hubs, early help teams, and local charities often offer workshops or 1-to-1 guidance.

MakeWell Clinic: Supporting families with and without diagnoses through advice, community, and wellbeing sessions. Keep an eye on our website for all our upcoming events.



Remember....

You don't need to have all the answers right away.

Trust your instincts, you know your child best.

Getting curious, informed, and supported is the best place to start.

Lets stay connected



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