



A GENTLE ROADMAP FOR PARENTS

The First 90 Days

An Autism Diagnosis Support Roadmap — bringing calm, clarity, and confidence to the weeks after diagnosis, one small step at a time.

"You are not late. You are not failing. You are right on time."

HTH Services

Here to Help — Calm guidance. Clear steps. Real support.

90

DAY ROADMAP

"This checklist is designed to bring calm, clarity, and confidence during the first 90 days after diagnosis — without all the overwhelming emotions that come with it. Use this at your own pace. Some weeks you'll do more. Some weeks, less. Both are okay."

DAYS 1 – 30

1

Pause, Process, and Regulate

Focus on slowing down, acknowledging your feelings, and reminding yourself that your child is still the exact same wonderful person they were yesterday.

Initial Actions

- ☐ **Read the diagnosis paperwork once** — no deep dives yet!
- ☐ **Write down your first reactions** — no trying to fix anything, just noticing and honoring your feelings
- ☐ **Identify one person** you feel safe talking to and being vulnerable with
- ☐ **Give yourself permission** to pause big decisions
- ☐ **Remind yourself daily:** "My child did not change — only the language did."

What NOT to Rush — Crucial Rules

- ✓ Do not compare timelines with other families or children
- ✓ Do not feel pressured to "fix" anything right now
- ✓ Do not sign up for everything at once — there's no prize for rushing
- ✓ Do not consume endless social media about autism; protect your peace
- ✓ Do not make decisions from fear

Parent Regulation Plan

Because you cannot pour from an empty cup. Fill this out for yourself.

One grounding practice that works for me:

.....

One small daily reset (tea, a walk, 5 quiet minutes):

.....

One boundary I need to set:

.....

One thing that helps me sleep:

.....

One reminder I need on hard days:

.....

Diagnosis Debrief

Take a quiet moment to reflect on these questions:

What the diagnosis means:

.....

What it does not mean:

.....

Strengths I already see in my child:

.....

My biggest fears right now:

.....

Questions I don't have answers to yet (and that's okay):

.....

DAYS 31 – 60

2

First Contacts and Organizing Support

When you feel ready, begin making initial outreach calls and setting up a simple organization system. Remember, services are a menu, not a mandate.

First Contact Checklist — Only If Ready

- ☐ **Pediatrician follow-up:** discuss the diagnosis report and any medical next steps
- ☐ **Early Intervention / School District intake:** initiate support or educational evaluations
- ☐ **Insurance call:** ask what's covered — don't worry about scheduling appointments yet
- ☐ **Request copies** of all diagnoses and assessments in writing
- ☐ **Set up a filing system** — a simple physical binder or digital folder

Potential Services Menu

Not all services are required. This is a menu, not a mandate — only choose what fits your child and family right now.

Early Intervention / School Services

Speech Therapy

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Behavioral Supports (if appropriate)

Community / Sensory-Friendly Resources

School / EI Advocacy Tracker

Who I contacted:

.....

What was discussed:

.....

Next steps promised:

.....

Follow-up date:

.....

How I felt after the interaction:

.....

Communication Scripts

Keep these handy to slow things down:

BOUNDARY SETTING

"I'm still learning what my child needs. I appreciate patience."

CLARIFICATION

"Can you explain that in plain language?"

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

"What does this look like in real life?"

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

"What are my options?"

TAKING SPACE

"I need time before deciding."

Advocacy Confidence Builder

- ✓ I am allowed to ask questions
- ✓ I know my child best
- ✓ I am allowed to say no
- ✓ Progress does not have one look
- ✓ I am allowed to change my mind

DAYS 61 – 90

3

Establishing Rhythms and Advocacy

Begin adjusting daily routines to support your family's nervous system, map triggers, and reflect on the positive moments of connection.

Daily Rhythms & Supports

- One predictable **morning anchor** — a consistent, calming start to the day
- One predictable **evening anchor** — a calming transition to bedtime
- **Visual or verbal supports added** — visual schedules or simple first-then routines
- **Flexibility built into the day** — buffer time for transitions
- **Parent expectations adjusted** — grace for yourself and your child

Meltdown Support Checklist

Triggers I notice:

.....

Early signs (body language, vocalizations):

.....

What helps regulate:

.....

What makes it worse:

.....

What I need afterward (parent & child):

.....

WINS Tracker

Train your mind to notice the positive, everyday moments:

A moment of
connection

A moment of
peace

A moment of
understanding

A moment of
advocacy

A moment I showed
myself grace

DAYS 61 – 90 • CONTINUED

3

Reflection & What You Now Know

Close out the 90 days by reflecting honestly on the journey so far — the wins, the hard parts, and what you've learned along the way.

Progress Reflection

At the end of month three, take a step back:

What improved (even slightly):

.....

What stayed the same:

.....

What surprised me:

.....

What feels harder:

.....

What I'm proud of:

.....

"What I Know Now"

What I wish I knew on Day 1:

.....

Advice I'd give another parent:

.....

What my child has taught me:

.....

What I'm still learning:

.....

What hope looks like now:

.....

USE ANYTIME

Crisis-Mode Checklist

If today is hard, set everything else aside and do only this.

- 1 **Feed everyone** — nutritious or not, just get fed.
- 2 **Breathe** — take slow, deep breaths.
- 3 **Lower expectations** for what needs to get done today.
- 4 **Postpone decisions** — nothing major needs to be decided today.
- 5 **Reach out for support** — a trusted friend, family member, or professional.

"You don't need to do everything. You just need support while doing something."

HTH SERVICES • HERE TO HELP • CALM GUIDANCE • CLEAR STEPS • REAL SUPPORT