

Autism Education Series: Diagnostic Process - What to Expect

Who is involved in the assessment?

- Family members
- One or two clinicians
 - Psychologist
 - Developmental Pediatrician

Who is Assessed?

- Toddlers
- Preschool-age children
- School-age children
- Adolescents

Goals of the Diagnostic Assessment

- Identify strengths and difficulties.
- Establish diagnosis.
- Make recommendations.



Two Components to Every Assessment

Part 1 - A Detailed Interview with Parents or Primary Caregivers

- The following questions may be asked in person, over the phone, or Zoom for Healthcare:
 - Early developmental milestones (e.g., communication at different ages)
 - Health concerns (e.g., feeding, sleep)
 - Social interactions
 - Play
 - Coping

Part 2 - Interactions / Observations

- Activities depending on the child's age and language level.
 - For younger children, activities will include play with toys (e.g., bubbles, blocks).
 - For older children, activities might involve answering questions, doing a puzzle, or telling a story.
- Caregivers usually stay in the room with their child and the clinician.

Next Steps

- Clinicians will explain what they learned about the child and give time for caregivers to ask questions.
- The clinician(s) will write a report to be shared with others involved in the child's care.
- Parents can choose who will receive the report (e.g., school, community supports).