

# Autism Speaks provides strategies to help a child with autism shows difficult behaviors

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Autism Speaks, the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization, today released An Introduction to Behavioral Health Treatments, Applied Behavior Analysis and Toilet Training parent's guides. These latest tool kits, all developed as part of the work of the Autism Treatment Network through its participation as the HRSA-funded Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P), are available for free download on Autism Speaks Tool Kits webpage.

Behavioral challenges are a common problem for children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Many children with ASD have challenges managing certain behaviors such as aggression or not following directions in addition to experiencing limitations in communication or social skills.

The experts of the Autism Speaks Autism Treatment Network (ATN) and the AIR-P have addressed how parents and families can help improve their child's behavior with [The Introduction to Behavioral Health Treatment](#) which provides an overview of in-home strategies as well as tips to teach and increase desirable behaviors and decrease [behavior problems](#). This tool kit also provides an overview of professional behavioral treatments families can seek out from qualified professionals.

The accompanying Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) tool kit, also released today, is an informational guide designed to provide parents

with a better understanding of ABA, how their child can benefit, and where and how they can find ABA services. The U.S. Surgeon General and the [American Psychological Association](#) both state that evidence-based ABA is a "best practice" in the treatment of autism spectrum disorder.

Behavioral treatments for children with ASD require a high degree of repetition and reinforcement in both home and therapeutic settings. Parents are provided concrete tips on reinforcing positive behaviors, opportunities to recognize and reward appropriate behavior and guidance on implementing strategies such as time outs. These tool kits give parents proven strategies to manage the ABCs of their child's behavior, including what (A) antecedes or comes before the adverse behavior, (B) what the behavior is that you'd like to change, and (C) consequences of that behavior.

With supports from ATN/AIR-P experts, parents can become effective partners in helping their children to learn skills to replace problem behaviors, increase their positive behaviors and maintain them over time, and generalize or transfer positive behaviors from one situation to another as they improve their cognitive, academic, social and self-help skills

[Toilet training](#) can be challenging for any parent, however for many children with ASD, toileting skills can be further complicated by physical or medical difficulties associated with toileting. Children with ASD may lack the language skills to understand or communicate, may lack gross or fine motor skills required to facilitate toileting from undressing to navigating a toilet, and may not be aware of typical body cues to recognize when they need to use the toilet, among other possible issues. Toilet Training: A Parent's Guide, provides tools on how to best integrate routines, rewards and the use of visual schedules.

"If your child with ASD presents with challenging behaviors, or has difficulty acquiring new skills know that you are not alone," said Autism Speaks Vice President of Clinical Programs Clara Lajonchere, Ph.D.

"The goal of these latest behavioral tool kits is to empower families with effective strategies to create more positive behaviors and increase a child's ability to better participate in their therapeutic programs and family life. Consistent behaviors can significantly improve quality of life for both the child with autism and their families and improve quality of life for everyone."

All of the tool kits reiterate that learning new behaviors can take time and provide guidance on when it's time to confer with specialists, modify rewards, and revisit your strategies.

"Parents are encouraged to bring these tool kits to the attention of their behavioral specialists who can help families customize their prompts, visual tools and strategies to complement the child's therapeutic program," says ATN/AIR-P Medical Director Dan Coury, M.D.

The ATN tool kits were inspired by the success of the popular Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit for newly-diagnosed families. In 2011, ATN and AIR-P published the first of its tool kits to provide guidance to families and providers. Taking the Work Out of Blood Work: Helping Your Child with an [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) – A Parent's Guide and the companion provider's guide offer clear guidance for families and medical providers to help make necessary medical procedures less stressful. The ATN and AIR-P also produced the Medication Decision Aid Tool Kit to help families understand more of the choices and considerations involved in considering medications in collaboration with their child's doctor. Earlier this year, the ATN released Sleep Strategies for Children with Autism: A Parent's Guide and Treating Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Tool Kit for Dental Professionals. These tool kits are free of charge and available to download on the Autism

Speaks Tool Kits web page. Additional tool kits in development are also listed there.

Development of these tools is the product of on-going activities of the Autism Treatment Network, a funded program of Autism Speaks, and its participation as the [Autism](#) Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P). AIR-P is supported by cooperative agreement UA3 MC 11054 through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Research Program to the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Provided by Autism Speaks

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