



CLAYTON'S LITTLE STEPS FOUNDATION INC.

Newly Diagnosed

Welcome to a community that understands. Whether your child was just diagnosed with autism or you're beginning to notice developmental differences, you are not alone.

Clayton's Little Steps was created by parents who have walked this path, navigating therapies, paperwork, and the unknown. We understand how it feels, and we are here to help you take those first steps with confidence and hope.

At Clayton's Little Steps Foundation, our mission is to empower families with children facing autism, chromosomal abnormalities, and special needs. We strive to provide vital support, build a strong community, raise awareness, and organize impactful events.

Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental difference that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others, and experiences the world around them. The word *spectrum* is important. It means that autism looks different for every individual.

Professionals often describe autism by three levels of support:

- Level 1 – “Requiring Support”: Individuals may need some help with social interactions, planning, or flexibility, but are often able to function independently with the right accommodations.
- Level 2 – “Requiring Substantial Support”: Individuals may have more noticeable challenges with communication and daily routines and benefit from consistent therapies and structured environments.
- Level 3 – “Requiring Very Substantial Support”: Individuals may have significant communication or behavioral differences and need help with most areas of daily living and safety.



Empowering families, building community, inspiring hope. One step at a time.

No two people on the spectrum are the same, and every child brings their own personality, strengths, and potential.

Autism isn't caused by anything a parent did or didn't do. It reflects differences in brain development that influence how a person perceives and responds to the world. These differences can create challenges, but they also shape the unique ways children with autism think, learn, and connect.

With early intervention, the right support, and a community that believes in them, children with autism can thrive, grow, and shine in their own incredible ways. Our community includes children at every level of support. Some who need structured daily assistance, and others who are learning to advocate for themselves as young adults.

What to Expect After a Diagnosis

Hearing the word “autism” can bring many emotions. It is okay to feel all of them. We know in the beginning it can feel like a lot of information. Take it slow, you don't have to do everything at once.

Here is what can come next:

- Collect your evaluation paperwork
 - You will need it for therapy referrals, school support, and insurance coverage
- Learn about therapy options
 - Common interventions include Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Speech Therapy, and Occupational Therapy
- Contact your insurance provider
 - Ask what autism services are covered, what documentation they need, and whether you must use in-network providers
- Apply for benefits
 - Georgia families may qualify for the Katie Beckett (TEFRA) Medicaid Program, which helps cover therapy costs regardless of income



Key People You May Meet

As you begin this journey, you'll meet a variety of professionals who each play an important role in supporting your child's development. Understanding who they are and what they do can help you feel more confident and prepared.

- **Developmental Pediatrician** – Specializes in evaluating and diagnosing developmental differences such as autism, ADHD, or learning delays. Often coordinates care between other specialists.
- **Neurologist** – Focuses on the brain and nervous system. Some children see a neurologist to rule out or monitor conditions that can occur alongside autism, such as seizures, motor differences, or sleep challenges.
- **Geneticist** – May recommend testing to identify genetic conditions that can help explain your child's developmental profile or guide future care.
- **BCBA (Board-Certified Behavior Analyst)** – Designs and oversees behavioral and learning programs using principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).
- **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)** – Works on communication skills, language development, and social interaction.
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)** – Helps your child develop fine motor skills, sensory processing, and independence in daily tasks (like dressing, eating, or handwriting).
- **Physical Therapist (PT)** – Focuses on movement, strength, balance, and coordination.
- **Psychologist / Counselor** – Provides emotional and behavioral support for children and families navigating diagnosis, anxiety, or transitions.
- **School Psychologist / Special Education Coordinator** – Supports your child's educational plan, including IEP meetings, assessments, and accommodations within the school system.

Each professional adds a piece to your child's care puzzle. Together, they form a team dedicated to helping your child grow, learn, and thrive.



Helpful Starting Resources

- Autism Speaks Resource Guide: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/resource-guide>
- Parent to Parent of Georgia – training, peer mentors, and waiver help: <https://www.p2pga.org/>
- CDC “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” milestone tracker app and resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/index.html>
- Autism Society – advocacy and support groups: <https://autismsociety.org/>
- Babies Can’t Wait (Georgia) – early intervention for children under 3: <https://dph.georgia.gov/babies-cant-wait>

You’re Not Alone

Every family’s journey is different, and that’s okay. You don’t have to know everything right now. Take it one step at a time and remember that small progress is still progress. Clayton’s Little Steps Foundation is here to walk beside you with guidance, resources, and community. Our foundation was born from our family’s journey with autism. We know how intimidating those early days can feel, and we also know the incredible joy and growth that follow when the right support is in place.

If you ever feel lost or overwhelmed, reach out. We can help you connect to local therapies, funding options, and other parents who understand.

Contact Us

ClaytonsLittleSteps.com

ClaytonsLittleSteps@gmail.com

Connect With Us

Instagram: [@Claytons Little Steps](https://www.instagram.com/Claytons_Little_Steps)

Facebook: [/ClaytonsLittleSteps](https://www.facebook.com/ClaytonsLittleSteps)



Empowering families, building community, inspiring hope. One step at a time.