

What are the First Steps?

Allow for time and space.



Children with development needs will take more of your time and energy. We all aim as parents to stay calm, consistent and kind. There is no one who manages this all the time. The more need a child has, the harder, and the more important this is.

Arrange someone to talk to regularly about your child - a family member, friend, or support group who will be there as the child grows up, who can be your sounding board and your shoulder to cry on. Be kind to yourself and seek out all the help that is available from people around.

Allow time in your day to be with your child, and especially in the beginning, time in your week to learn about their needs. There are courses and support groups available, and needs-based financial support if you need to alter your working pattern.

Be with your child and be their voice.



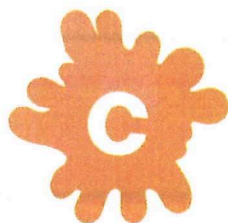
Set aside time each day to be with, and play with your child. Turn off screens and spend time alone with your child doing something you both enjoy.

Children know when they are different, even if they cannot express it, and this can be really hard. Stay alert to what they are experiencing so you can voice it aloud and those around them understand.

E.g. "I can see you need some space. Let's go outside."

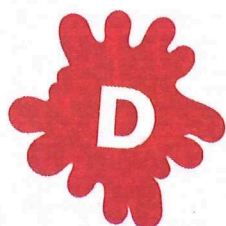
This will give them the confidence to be their own voice as they get older.

Celebrate good times.












How you think about, and talk about your child will tell them who they are. Keep talking to your child, and those around your child about the things that make you proud, and the times you enjoy. Encourage them in the things they love doing that make them feel proud of themselves. Balance the difficult times by making the most of the good.

Don't wait for a diagnosis - describe what you see.



Decide with your child, and those around your child, what you are going to call their needs and how you are going to describe them to others. Talk openly and positively with your child about what helps, and show them it's ok to be different. Your child is unique and their needs will constantly change as they grow. No one knows your child better than you.

What is currently available for families?

Service	Devon	Torbay
Therapy Resources	 Child and Family Health childandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk	
Support at home and in the community	 Early Help Devon dcfp.org.uk	 0-19 Team 01803 210 200 0to19torbay.co.uk
Support at school	 Devonias devonias.org.uk	 Sendias Torbay sendiastorbay.org.uk
Workshops supporting children with different needs	 Neurodive facebook.com/neurodivetraining	
	 Devon Education Services devoneducationservices.co.uk	
	 Parental Minds Parental Minds offers Skills Workshops for parent caregivers , school staff and professionals. parentalminds.org.uk	
Time to talk	 Tissues and Issues tissuesandissues.org/home	

We've been asking lots of parents what they wish they'd known from the beginning. Turn over for an ABCD summary of what they said.

Register with First Steps Peer Support Network!

We offer a safe place for parents/caregivers to be heard and somewhere to exchange ideas, hints and tips with other parents/caregivers. We share information on Local and National mental health services.

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