

# Arranging an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Evaluation

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## **How do I have my child evaluated for Autism?**

### **If your child is younger than 3 and enrolled in Early On:**

Some Early On providers can conduct screenings for autism to help you know whether seeing a diagnostic team is needed.

### **If your child has Medicaid insurance:**

Your county's Community Mental Health agency will perform the evaluation for autism. This is necessary because this is the same agency that arranges autism therapy (such as applied behavioral analysis (ABA) on page 2) if an autism diagnosis is made.

- Visit the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website to view a map of Michigan Community Mental Health Services Programs: <http://tinyurl.com/y53kaggy>. Click a county on the map or list to obtain phone numbers for access to local service providers.
- Speech, occupational, & physical therapies do not require a diagnosis through Community Mental Health and are usually available as soon as concerns for autism arise. Depending on your specific plan, you may start therapy while arranging an evaluation through your county's Community Mental Health agency to access ABA services.

### **If your child has private insurance:**

Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network require an evaluation at an Autism Evaluation Center, which involves being seen by multiple different specialists to determine whether your child meets the diagnostic criteria for autism.

- For children 1-10 years old, clinics in the Mott Children's Hospital can perform these evaluations. Please visit: <http://michmed.org/EOL9p> to find out more.
- Children aged birth to 18 can also be evaluated through Child Psychiatry. Please visit <http://michmed.org/MYY0D> to find out more.

You may be able to access therapy while waiting for this evaluation. Other insurers such as Aetna, CIGNA, HAP, or Priority Health might have different requirements for which evaluations are needed to make a diagnosis of autism. Our clinics at Mott Hospital will be able to help you with whatever diagnostic evaluation you need, but it's best to contact your insurance company and ask these questions:

- Are autism benefits, such as speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, and applied behavioral analysis (ABA), covered by my child's plan?
- If so, what tests or evaluations are needed to make the diagnosis of autism? (These might include a clinical diagnosis or tests such as the ADI, CARS, or ADOS).
- Are there limitations to where my child can be seen for this evaluation?

**Some children have been given an “educational diagnosis” of Autism by their school for their Individualized Educational Program (IEP); can families use this to get ABA and other therapies?**

No, children with an educational autism diagnosis will also need a medical evaluation, as described above, in order for their insurance company to cover speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, and ABA therapy.

**If my child has been given the diagnosis of Autism by a psychologist or other developmental professional, but they were not part of an approved center, can I still access treatments?**

- Yes. Speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, social skills groups, and psychotherapy may be covered by your child's insurance with a diagnosis from a non-approved provider. However, in order to get applied behavior analysis (ABA) covered, you will need to arrange an evaluation required by your insurance provider.
- If your child has been tested with an ADOS by a non-approved provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network might authorize coverage of ABA based on a "bridge authorization" until your child can be seen by an approved center.

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