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**Resource Page**

**Helpful Links:**

- Is it late blooming, or is there a speech and language delay?  
<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/late-blooming-or-language-problem/>
- CDC Ages and Stages
  - <https://agesandstages.com/>
- CDC Developmental Milestones
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers - Screening Tool
  - [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/community\\_physicians/\\_documents/patient-information-docs/form\\_mchatr.pdf](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/community_physicians/_documents/patient-information-docs/form_mchatr.pdf)

**Who Diagnoses ASD?**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is typically diagnosed by a team of professionals who specialize in developmental and behavioral assessments. The diagnosis process involves comprehensive evaluations, interviews, and observations to determine whether an individual meets the criteria for ASD. The professionals who commonly diagnose autism include:

1. **Pediatricians:**
  - a. These doctors often play a crucial role in the initial screening and identification of potential signs of autism in young children. They may refer the child to specialists for further assessment and diagnosis if developmental concerns are present.
2. **Child Psychiatrists or Child Psychologists:**
  - a. These mental health professionals have expertise in assessing and diagnosing developmental and psychological disorders in children, including autism. They conduct in-depth evaluations, which may involve standardized tests, behavioral observations, and interviews with parents or caregivers.

**3. Developmental Pediatricians:**

- a. These specialists have specialized training in developmental and behavioral issues in children. They are experienced in diagnosing and managing conditions like autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

**4. Neurologists:**

- a. In cases where there are concerns about neurological aspects or associated conditions, such as epilepsy or other neurological disorders, a neurologist may be involved in the diagnostic process. Also they tend to have shorter waitlists than developmental pediatricians

**5. Licensed Clinical Psychologists:** Psychologists with experience in working with children and adolescents can also be part of the team assessing for autism. They are trained in using standardized assessments and conducting psychological evaluations.

It's essential to have a comprehensive evaluation conducted by a multidisciplinary team to ensure an accurate diagnosis and to consider all aspects of the individual's development. Early diagnosis and intervention are essential for providing appropriate support and services to individuals with autism and their families. If you suspect that you or someone you know may have autism, it's important to reach out to a healthcare professional or pediatrician to discuss your concerns and seek a referral to appropriate specialists for a thorough evaluation.

**Please Note:** Parents have the right to request a second opinion or to seek a referral for a diagnosis without the PCPs approval. Also, some insurance companies have specific criteria for the ASD diagnosis prior to approving ABA services. As such, it's always best practice to seek a diagnosis from a speciality provider, or a team of providers.

**Local Provider List:**

<b>Provider's Name</b>	<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Affiliation / Location</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Jennifer Cope, MD	Neurologist	Ridgewood, NJ	(201) 444-0868
Hugh Bases, MD	Developmental Pediatrician	Midland Park	(201) 444-2309
Aseel Al-Jadiri, MD	Developmental Pediatrician	Hackensack Meridian Health	(551) 996-5555
Rose Merola, MD	Neurodevelopmental Specialist	Saint Peter's University Hospital	(908) 233-3720

Jeffrey Kornitzer, MD	Pediatric Neurologist	Neuroscience Institute	(973) 326-9000
Judy Woo, MD	Pediatric Neurologist	Bergen Passaic Pediatric Neurology	(201) 796-9500
Krina Shah, APN	Nurse Practitioner	Child Development Center, Morristown	(973) 971-5227
Romana Kulikova, MD	Pediatric Neurologist	NJ Pediatric Neurology Institute	(908) 232-0200
Eileen Dolan, MD	Developmental Pediatrician	Hackensack Meridian Health / The Institute for Child Development at Hackensack University Medical Center	(551) 996-5555
Aliza Alter, MD	Pediatric Neurologist	Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery / Saint Barnabas	(973) 322-7580
Kavitha Velicheti, MD	Pediatric Neurologist	JFK Neuroscience Institute / Hackensack Meridian Center	(732) 321-7010
Kathleen Selvaggi-Fadden, MD	Pediatric Neurology	Goryeb Children's Hospital / Child Development Center	(973) 971-5227
Children's Specialized Hospital (Any Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician or Neurologist) - They are booked and not taking any clients via waitlist, but parents are advised to call every Friday to check for cancellations. <b>Phone: (888) 244-5373</b>			

**What Types of Testing?**

**ADOS II**

The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS-2) is a widely used standardized assessment tool designed to assist professionals in diagnosing autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It is considered one of the gold-standard assessments for autism evaluation and is used by clinicians, psychologists, and researchers in various settings. The ADOS-2 is an interactive, semi-structured assessment that involves direct observation of the individual's behavior and communication skills. It focuses on the social and communicative behaviors associated with autism. The assessment is typically administered by a trained professional who engages the individual in a series of play-based and social interaction activities. Key features of the ADOS-2 assessment include:

1. **Modules:** The ADOS-2 offers different modules based on the individual's age and language level. There are four modules ranging from toddlers to adults. The specific module used depends on the developmental age and expressive language abilities of the person being assessed.
2. **Activities:** During the assessment, the professional engages the individual in various standardized activities that are designed to elicit specific social and communicative behaviors. These activities may involve playing with toys, engaging in conversations, or participating in pretend play scenarios.
3. **Observation:** The trained professional closely observes and records the individual's behavior and responses throughout the assessment. The evaluation is based on predefined criteria and scoring guidelines.
4. **Scoring:** The ADOS-2 provides standardized scoring algorithms that help the professional rate the individual's behaviors. The scoring helps in determining the likelihood of an autism spectrum diagnosis and provides information about the individual's strengths and challenges related to social communication.
5. **Diagnostic Classification:** The ADOS-2 is just one component of a comprehensive autism evaluation. It is typically used in conjunction with other assessments, interviews, and clinical observations to arrive at a final diagnosis.

It is important to note that the ADOS-2 should only be administered by professionals who have received appropriate training and certification in its use. The results of the assessment should be interpreted carefully, considering all relevant information from multiple sources, to ensure an accurate diagnosis and appropriate support and intervention for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

### **Neuropsychological Evaluation**

A neuropsychological evaluation, also known as a neuropsych evaluation, is a comprehensive assessment of an individual's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functioning. It is typically performed by a trained neuropsychologist and involves the use of standardized tests, questionnaires, interviews, and observations to assess various aspects of brain function and behavior. The primary goal of a neuropsychological evaluation is to identify and understand how an individual's brain is functioning and to assess any potential neurological or psychological difficulties. It provides valuable information about cognitive strengths and weaknesses, as well as any cognitive impairments or changes resulting from brain injuries, neurodevelopmental disorders, neurodegenerative diseases, or other neurological conditions. The evaluation may cover a wide range of cognitive functions, including but not limited to:

1. **Memory:**
  - a. Assessing short-term memory, long-term memory, and working memory.
2. **Attention and Concentration:**
  - a. Evaluating the ability to sustain attention, shift focus, and divide attention.

3. **Language:**
  - a. Examining verbal comprehension, expressive language, and language processing.
4. **Executive Functions:**
  - a. Assessing skills related to planning, organization, problem-solving, and decision-making.
5. **Visuospatial Abilities:**
  - a. Evaluating skills related to spatial perception and visual processing.
6. **Motor Skills:**
  - a. Examining fine and gross motor abilities.
7. **Emotional and Behavioral Functioning:**
  - a. Assessing emotional regulation, personality traits, and coping strategies.

The neuropsychological evaluation typically involves an initial interview to gather background information, followed by the administration of various standardized tests tailored to the individual's specific needs and concerns. The evaluation process can take several hours or spread out over multiple sessions, depending on the complexity of the case.

After completing the assessment, the neuropsychologist analyzes the data and prepares a detailed report summarizing the findings, including an interpretation of the individual's cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The report may also provide recommendations for intervention, treatment, or further evaluations if necessary. Neuropsychological evaluations are valuable in many clinical contexts, such as diagnosing and planning interventions for neurological disorders (e.g., traumatic brain injuries, stroke, epilepsy), evaluating cognitive changes in aging populations, identifying learning disabilities and developmental disorders, and assisting in the diagnosis and treatment planning for conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorders. It is essential to note that a neuropsychological evaluation is a specialized assessment that requires highly trained professionals, typically neuropsychologists, with expertise in administering and interpreting the tests accurately.

### **Next Steps:**

Once a learner receives a diagnosis of ASD, their family may contact our office if they're interested in receiving ABA therapy at your location. **FUNDamental Development ABA, LLC is currently accepting new clients and there is NO WAITING LIST for daytime clients.** We are in network with the following insurance providers:

1. Blue Cross Blue Shield
2. Horizon (Commercial Plans & Medicaid)
3. Aetna
4. Cigna

If you or your families have any questions about the screening or diagnostic process, please feel free to contact me directly. Thank you for your commitment to supporting families!

Warmly,

**Lanna Hecht, M.S., BCBA**