

Parenting Across the Autism Spectrum: Unexpected Lessons We Have Learned

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The Parenting Journey

- Selecting from the overwhelming choices for treatment
- Learning to become advocates for our children
- Balancing family life with marriage and siblings

The Parenting Journey

- Making time to care for ourselves
- Dealing with the public
- Learning to accept our children and ourselves
- Preparing for and coping with the time when our children leave home

Unexpected Lessons

- Early intervention is the beginning, not the end.
 - Learning continues after age 5
 - Adolescence is a time of growth
 - There is no age limit for building interests and skills





Unexpected Lessons

- Effective advocacy is more than knowing your rights.
 - Keep the focus on the child
 - Balance academic with functional skills
 - Involve your child in self-advocacy
 - Disclosure is not an all or nothing decision

** Realizing the College Dream with Autism or Asperger Syndrome: A Parent's Guide to Student Success, Palmer, 2005*

The Best Professionals...

- Encouraged us to take a deep breath
- Believed in us, as well as our children
- Were willing to think “outside the box”.
- Saw our children, not just the diagnosis.
- Connected us with resources.

Unexpected Lessons

- Raising a child on the autism spectrum is a marathon, not a sprint.
 - Self care is a necessity, not a luxury
 - Accept yourself as a “good enough” parent
 - Reclaim your sense of humor






