

It's Not All About the Diagnosis

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Different Starting Points

- Does my child meet criteria for a diagnosis?
- Is my child diagnosis-ish?
- My child has a diagnosis.
- My child has multiple diagnoses.

Why a diagnosis?

- Helps prescribe treatment
- Opens doors for services
- Useful for communicating about your child
- Targeted resources
- Research behind treatments

**BUT WHAT DO YOU NEED, AS A
PARENT, TO GET THROUGH THE DAY
TO DAY?**

Top 10 Actions

1. Understand what's normal for developmental stage and why its important for development

What's Normal?

- Two-Year-Olds
 - Likes routine, “again!”
 - Figuring out, understanding, and better at predicting the world
 - Sequence is important

What's Normal

- Three-Year-Old
 - Stronger will, less easily distracted
 - Increased stuttering, thumb sucking, “nervous habits”
 - “Tantrum waiting to happen”
 - Gets tired easily
 - Likes to act like a baby, hear about being a baby

What's Normal?

- Four-Year-Olds
 - Discovers adults are not all-powerful (I can do bad things!)
 - Doesn't like change in important caregivers (haircuts)
 - Likes and respects boundaries and limits (“as far as the corner,” “the rule is ____”)
 - Interest in elimination (i.e., potty humor)
 - May threaten adults when upset, “I’ll hit you”
 - Starts to exaggerate/lie
 - Beginning to solve social problems

What's Normal

- Five-Year-Olds
 - Increasingly active
 - More initiative
- Six-Year-Olds
 - Paradoxical
 - Difficulty making decisions, then tends to stick strongly to decisions

What's Normal

- Seven-Year-Olds

- Increased mastery of skills
- Internalizing rules
- Tires easily
- Increased anxieties

- Eight-Year-Olds

- High energy level
- Aware of successes/failures, can be hard on themselves

What's Normal

- 9-11 Year-Olds
 - Increasing emotional intensity
 - Increased focus on rules and justice

Top 10 Actions

2. Understand what's normal for your child

What's normal for your child?

- What's your child's temperament like?
- How does your child like to experience the world?
- How does your child seem to learn best (i.e., hearing, watching, or doing)?
- Think about lining up a best day/worst day for your child – what does that tell you?
- How does your child relax?
- How does your child move through the day?

What's normal for your child?

- Thrives on structure
- Quiet
- Outgoing
- Flexible
- Energetic
- Likes affection
- Easily embarrassed
- Perceptive
- Intuitive
- Calm
- Reactive
- Strong-willed
- Persistent
- Likes to try new things
- Cautious

- Risk-taker
- Creative
- Organized
- Slow processor
- Playful
- Responsible
- Forgetful
- Spontaneous
- Focused
- Thorough
- Detail-oriented
- Intense
- Observant
- Morning person

Top 10 Actions

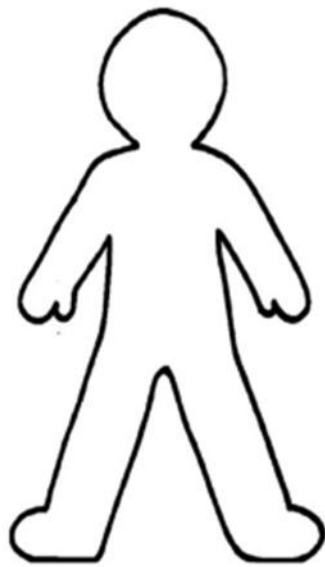
3. Understand what's normal for the diagnosis
(if applicable)

Top 10 Actions

4. Understand the “fit”
 5. Of the people involved with each other
 6. Of the interaction between the people and the situation
 7. Of the management approach with the child/behavior

Understand the “fit”

- Step back. Take what you just learned about your child. Now ask yourself, what’s normal for me? What’s normal for other people in our family?



Fit of the people involved

Mom

- Spontaneous
- Relies on strategies to stay organized (it doesn't come naturally)
- Maintains patience for a long time, then loses it
- Likes to point out what kids are doing well
- Loses track of time

Child #1 – 7 years old; 1st grade

- Fixated on interests
- Responsible
- Perfectionistic
- Helpful, likes to please
- Likes routine
- Gets distracted by screens
- Often has a firm idea/plan in mind and has a hard time being flexible
- Bothered by noises

Fit of the people involved

Child #2 – 5 years old, pre-school

- Silly
- Cooperative
- High energy
- Loves to be outside
- Loud
- Spontaneous

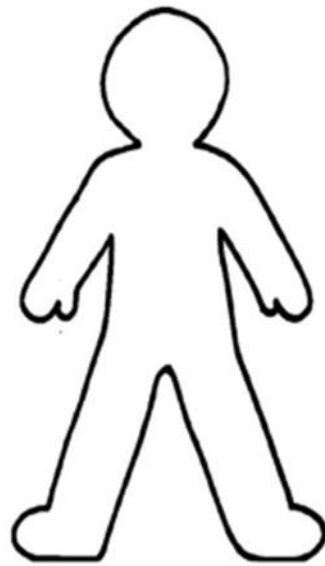
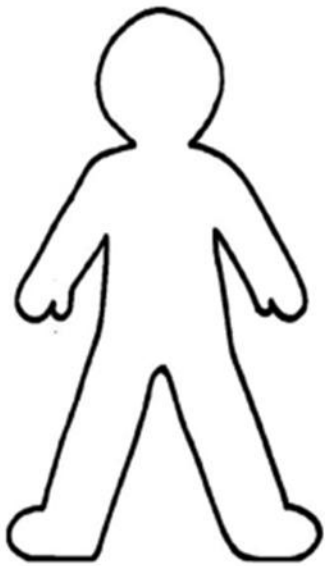
Child #3 – 10 years old, 4th grade

- Independent
- Helpful
- Irritable
- High achiever
- Easily stressed

Situational Factors – set the stage

- Pick a situation that tends to be problematic and describe it:
 - What time of day does it occur?
 - How does the day of the week impact things?
 - Where does it occur – school/home/activity/public?
 - Who is involved?
 - What is the general atmosphere or feeling of everyone around?
 - Which logistical aspects are involved?
 - What are the demands of the situation (ex., we are in church, we need to be quiet)
 - Anything else?

Homework/Dinner Prep Time



Short period
of time to get
dinner on the
table

hunger

Stressful project is due

5 year old antagonizing middle
child

Top 10 Actions

8. Modify situations and put strategies in place according to the “fit”

Fit of Management

- 4 year old telling friends stories about places they've been, things they've done, things they have that are not true. This kid is generally a high energy kid, emotionally intense and reactive. This kid likes to be silly, making potty jokes and generally has fun goofing around and being the center of attention.
 - Should the parent correct the exaggerations and lies?
 - If so, how? Think about development and fit with this kid's style.
 - What is the parent's goal?

Top 10 Actions

- Look for the snow

The 10th Action: Be the head chef



Additional Resources

- Louise Bates Ames series (Your ____ Year Old)
- Raising Your Spirited Child by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka
- Diagnosis specific groups/websites
- CFK