

Pointers For Parents

Caring For A Child With Autism

(NAPSA)—As doctors, families and schools learn more about autism, people living with autism have overcome obstacles to lead healthful, meaningful and productive lives.

However, a recent Easter Seals study found that parents of children with autism face a number of unique challenges. Nearly 80 percent are extremely or very concerned about their child's independence as an adult, compared to only 32 percent of parents of typically developing children. These parents also report they're "financially drowning," with 74 percent fearing their child will not have enough financial support when they die. Only 18 percent of parents with typically developing children share this same fear.

Fortunately, there are ways for parents of children with autism to ease their concerns. Easter Seals, the nation's largest nonprofit provider of autism services, offers these tips:

Find Programs

A basic rule for treating autism is the earlier the intervention, the better. There are a range of options for people of all ages. Generally, the best programs build on the strengths of the individual with autism and provide a structured environment and plenty of support.

Plan Ahead

Ease fears about your child's financial future by taking steps today. It's never too early to speak with a financial advisor about special-needs trusts and other options that could help care for your son or daughter later in life.

Take Time For You

Families can find respite by having a professional or a trained



Connecting with the right services can help parents care for children who have autism.

volunteer come to their home to provide support or by enrolling their child in a day or weekend program. This allows the parents to enjoy recreational, social or other important activities with siblings or with each other.

Connect With Families

You can attend an Autism Community Forum hosted by Easter Seals and the sponsor of its recent study—MassMutual. The event brings families, community service groups and support services together to learn from one another as they look at the care options available for people with autism in the area. The forums can be a good way to develop better support networks and ultimately improve care for people who have autism.

For more information and tips, visit www.easterseals.com.