



# Receiving a Developmental Disability Diagnosis

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## *Fact Sheet*

Seek early intervention.

An individual (or parent of a child) knows his/her (or the child's) body better than anyone else. Therefore, it is very important to talk to your doctor (or your child's doctor) about any changes or concerns you may have during your child's development. Early diagnosis and early intervention may slow down the progression or severity of many diseases or conditions. In addition, early treatment may provide comfort to the individual experiencing discomfort.

Keep documentation.

With diagnostics, it is very important that your doctor has an accurate account of what changes or symptoms have occurred. As time passes by it can become harder to recall events or details of events; therefore, keeping a journal and copies of medical reports can be very helpful. In addition to diagnostics, it is very important to document how the individual responds to prescribed treatments and share this with your doctor as well.

Register with national foundations.

If you or your child is diagnosed with a disabling condition that has a national foundation, it is very important that you register with this foundation. The purpose of the registration is to provide statistics that drive the funding for the services. If the numbers are large enough in an area a local chapter may be organized. This can be of great support to you. Your doctor should be able to refer you to specific national foundations.

Support development of local chapters.

National foundations are aware of areas where there is not a local chapter. National foundations often have toll free numbers and websites and are prepared to assist individuals who live in such an area. With funding limitations assistance may be prioritized according to the severity of an individual's condition.

Focus on global needs.

Many of the national foundations do not have a local chapter in St. Mary's County. The Resource Coordination Program does not want this to discourage individuals or parents. Many of these disabling conditions exhibit similar symptoms; therefore, even though the origin of the disabling condition varies, the individual needs are often global. There are providers located in St. Mary's County that can help with these global needs. Unfortunately, programs do have limited funding; therefore, individuals will be prioritized according to the severity of his/her condition. Hence, once again it is very important to register with national foundations because numbers truly do affect the funding stream.

Ask questions and seek local support.

Request written material from the applicable national foundation and your doctor. In addition, you may inquire about local support groups. The Internet is an excellent resource for information. Importantly, share your new knowledge with your (your child's) doctor and do not change your or your child's treatment regimen without consulting with the doctor first.

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*For more information:*

- SMCHD Resource Coordination Program- 301-475-4389