



IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO BUILD A TEAM

In life, every one of us needs a village (or a team) to turn to, to feel a part of, to have a connection with, and to give and receive support from. If there is a child with learning needs in the family, members of this village can be a lifeline for the caretakers. Village members usually include: a spouse, best friend, neighbor, extended family members, etc. These are the individuals who provide a listening ear, a knowing nod, occasional child care, and perhaps even a meal. There are also professional members of the village who can offer invaluable support. These can include a special educator, pediatrician, therapist, etc. These caring individuals can offer helpful suggestions about teaching a child in school, ideas about developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) goal, and ideas to build motivation, in addition to having a listening ear when you need one.

How do you build your team? Who should you invite, and how do you invite them in? Where can these people and/or groups be found?

It's all about open and honest communication....

Confide in your partner and other close family members who share your concerns. Be on the "same page" with your significant other, voice your worries, listen to your partner's thoughts, and support one another. Prioritize your concerns together; make a "to do" list and plan!

Invite a trusted friend for a cup of coffee, and talk things over. Confide in family members and include those who rally and help you with what you need. People who offer to prepare a meal or help out with child care are those you want on your team, not those who tell you what to do or how to do it.

A professional counselor or therapist can help separate real concerns from imagined worries and help develop ways to cope with those difficult tasks of life. (Lists of professionals can be found in the CAR Autism Roadmap™ Resource

Directory.)

Parent support groups can play a major role to help you learn what is available in your community. Local neighborhood parent support groups can be found through your child's school or through websites, including this one. (Check out the CAR Autism Roadmap™ Resource Directory to find the group closest to you.)

National and local groups offer support at meetings online and by sponsoring family events. Find a list of national organizations below.

In all the dealings you will have with the education, medical, and behavior health systems, and with all the organizations you will interface with, there will be those individuals who will stand apart from the crowd; those you will feel a special connection with; those who will have your child's interests at heart. You will feel their trust and their sincerity. These will be your "go to people," the ones you will discuss your thoughts with, the ones you can be relaxed with, whose opinions you will value.

When there is a child with learning needs, members of the "village" (or team) can be a lifeline to a family. These are the relationships to cultivate and to nurture.

Related Articles:

- [Finding Support From Friends and Family after a Diagnosis](#)
- [Grandparents Have Feelings Too!](#)

Recommended Link:

- [CAR Resource Directory \(search for Support Groups and Mental/Behavioral Health, Psychotherapy/Counseling\)](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Autism Society of America](#)
- [Autism Speaks®](#)

The Center for Autism Research and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia do not endorse or recommend any specific person or organization or form of treatment . The information included within the CAR Autism Roadmap & trade; and CAR Resource Directory & trade; should not be considered medical advice and should serve only as a guide to resources publicly and privately available . Choosing a treatment, course of action, and/or a resource is a personal decision, which should take into account each individual's and family's particular circumstances .