



**BBB AUTISM SUPPORT NETWORK**

[www.bbbautism.com](http://www.bbbautism.com)

## **Record Keeping**

(BBB Autism; printable article #49)

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Time is money, and there's no worse waste of both than losing that all-important referral slip or medical report. File every single piece of paper you get from your doctors, therapists, insurance company, service agencies, and school. This includes assessments, evaluations, diagnostic reports, report cards, test results, IFSPs, IEPs, etc. Be especially sure to save copies of your own correspondence. You can be sure that you'll need it later, if only to impress some recalcitrant official with the depth of your organizational abilities.

A portable plastic file box with a handle can be a real boon. You can carry this box to IEP or other meetings easily and have absolutely everything right at hand. Put your documents in labeled folders or large envelopes. Typical sections include Educational, Financial, Medical, Psychological, and Social/Recreational. If an item fits two categories, file it in one folder and make a note on the outside of the other folder about where it is.

Try to file items as they are received. It's much more difficult to go through a whole pile of documents that have been tossed together.

These folders can also help you keep track of relevant articles, photocopies, and computer printouts.

### **Daily record keeping**

It sounds time consuming to keep daily records, but it can be essential for monitoring the effect of dietary changes, medications, vitamins, or supplements. It's also important for assessing behavior patterns and sleep problems.

The easiest thing to do is use a small notebook or daily planner specifically for this purpose. This journal can also be used keep track of medical, therapy, and school appointments.

It's more precise to bind a year's worth of photocopied pages with important items prelisted to jog your memory or to create a customized electronic journal on your home or notebook computer. Items that you may want to include on your journal pages, either as fill-in-the-blank listings or checkboxes, include:

-  Medications taken, with time and dose
-  Vitamins and supplements taken, with time and dose
-  Food and drink taken, with time and rough amount
-  Observable reactions to any of the above
-  Elimination (time, amount, characteristics, etc., as needed)
-  Any medical or emotional problems observed, with comments
-  ABA or floor-time sessions completed, with comments
-  Therapy appointments, with comments
-  Medical appointments, with comments
-  Recreational activities, with comments
-  Self-care activities, with comments

Depending on the individual, there may be many other items to add to this list--or far fewer may suffice.



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Other items that you should always have on file include a current profile of your child (strengths, weaknesses, abilities, areas of deficit), a list of current medical or psychiatric concerns, and a list of past concerns and how they were addressed.

Many parents and patients like to jot down a few personal notes in their daily journal as well, when they have the time. You might mention how you're feeling, how your relationships are faring, what stresses you're under--whatever helps you unwind and put the day in perspective.

Be sure to save your journal, even if it's just a list on your computer. You'd be surprised how handy the information you have gathered might be in the future. It will help you take a long-term look at what's working and what isn't. Although it's possible to become a bit obsessive about observing your child's every mood, reaction, and action, all of these things may be clues to her medical condition. Playing detective may give you the key to a breakthrough someday.

### **School record keeping**

It's especially important to save both official and unofficial documents from and about your child's years in Early Intervention programs or school. If your school is out of compliance or has not followed proper procedures with your child, you'll need to have these records at hand. Report cards, IEPs or Statements, notes from meetings with school officials, and test results can help you monitor your child's progress. They'll also help you identify techniques and settings that work best.

Of course, should you ever be forced into a due process hearing or a court battle, these records will prove invaluable.

#### **A notice to our readers...**

*The founders and contributors of BBB Autism Support Network are not physicians; we are parents contributing in a totally voluntary capacity.*

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