

Parent First Steps Guide

What to Do When You Notice Something Different About Your Child

You have noticed something. Your child is not speaking as much as other children the same age. Or they are struggling in school despite trying hard. Or something about their behaviour feels different. This guide tells you exactly what to do next — step by step, in plain language.

First: Take a breath. Noticing something is the most important step. Early action almost always leads to better outcomes. You are doing the right thing.

1

Trust Your Instinct

Parents know their children better than anyone. If something feels different, it is worth exploring. You are not overreacting — you are being a good parent.

- Write down what you have observed — be specific
- Note when it started and how often it happens
- Note situations where it is better or worse
- Talk to your partner or a trusted family member

2

Talk to Your Paediatrician

Your child's paediatrician is the first professional to consult. They can rule out physical causes (like hearing loss for speech delay) and refer you to the right specialist.

- Bring your written observations to the appointment
- Ask specifically about developmental milestones
- Request a hearing test if speech is a concern
- Ask for a referral to a child psychologist if needed
- Do not accept 'wait and see' without a clear reason

3**Get a Professional Assessment**

A proper assessment by a qualified child psychologist or developmental paediatrician is essential. This tells you exactly what your child needs and rules out other conditions.

- Ask for a comprehensive developmental assessment
- Bring all previous reports and school feedback
- The assessment usually takes 2-3 sessions
- Ask the assessor to explain results clearly
- Request a written report with specific recommendations

4**Understand the Support Available**

Once you have clarity on what your child needs, you can access the right support — therapy, school accommodations, home strategies, and parent guidance.

- Research what therapy your child needs (speech, OT, behaviour)
- Talk to your child's school about accommodations
- Connect with other parents who understand your situation
- Ask about home strategies you can start immediately
- Contact Ficen for guidance on next steps

5**Take Care of Yourself**

Parenting a child with developmental differences is demanding. Your wellbeing matters too — for you, and for your child.

- Join a parent support group — you are not alone
- Accept help when it is offered
- Celebrate small wins — progress is not always linear
- Talk to someone if you are feeling overwhelmed
- Remember: you are your child's greatest advocate

Common Questions Parents Ask

Q: Is it my fault?

No. Neurodevelopmental conditions are not caused by parenting. They are differences in how the brain develops — not a result of anything you did or did not do.

Q: Will my child be okay?

With the right support, most children make significant progress. Early intervention is key. Many adults with ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities live full, successful lives.

Q: Do I need a diagnosis first?

A formal diagnosis helps access services and school accommodations. But you can start seeking support and guidance before a diagnosis is confirmed.

Q: How long does therapy take?

This varies by child and condition. Many children show meaningful improvement within 6-12 months of consistent therapy. Progress is not always linear — celebrate every step.

Q: What if I cannot afford therapy?

Talk to us — we can guide you toward the most effective and affordable options available in Trivandrum and across Kerala.

**You do not have to figure this out alone. Talk to our team for free — no pressure, no cost. Call or WhatsApp: 6238747182 · contact@ficen.info · ficen.in
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