

**HOW PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM ACCESS SERVICE: THE
RECOLLECTION OF EIGHT FAMILIES**

by

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Abstract

Autism Spectrum Disorder has an increasing prevalence in children; diagnostic tools have become more refined and children are diagnosed younger. Parents of children with ASD learn to cope with challenges. It was hypothesized that many parents in the lower mainland of British Columbia are self-educating instead of learning from healthcare professionals. It was also hypothesized that parents are unaware of the resources available to them after receiving a diagnosis, and are therefore seeking help for their child and assembling services in much the same way they self-educated themselves. Eight families were interviewed about their experiences post-diagnosis. It was observed that families varied greatly in emotional response and were provided with information from a physician. However, few actually used the information provided to achieve a service assembly. This qualitative research revealed that families experience relational strain and parents desired a resources to guide, support, and educate them throughout their autism journey.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, relationship strain, parent and family education, qualitative method.