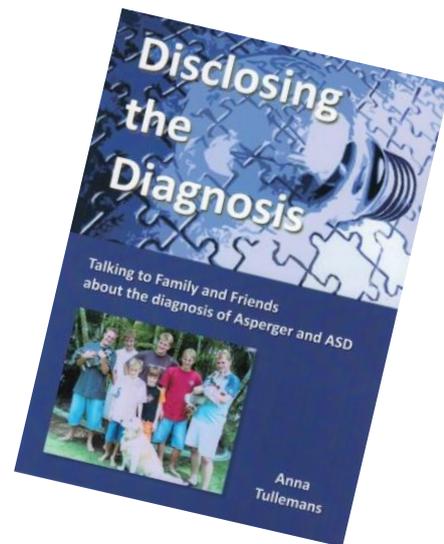




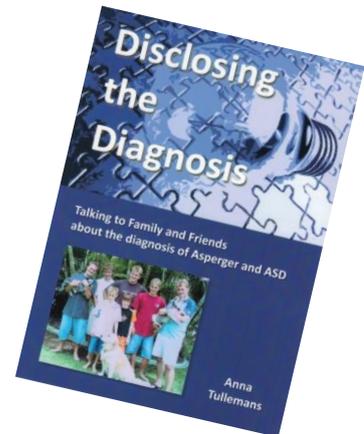
## 6 Ways Grandparents Can Make a Difference

You have the potential to make a huge difference whether you are physically near your children or not. Support, affirmation and love are what will get the parents through the challenge of raising a child with Autism Spectrum.

1. Avoid judging or blaming anyone or anything for the child's diagnosis.
  - What parent's need most is to feel supported and to feel affirmed that they are good parents and that they will be able to cope: They are not alone.
2. Remember to view the disability in perspective.
  - It does impact the way that the child learns and views the world and perceive themselves in relation to others. But it does not define the whole child. Your grandchild has unique personality and abilities, strengths and weaknesses that are his/hers alone.
3. Respect boundaries as a grandparent and remember that you are not the child's primary caregiver
  - Support your children in their efforts to come to terms with and negotiate their challenges and offer an attentive ear. What the parents need most is to feel encouraged and validated in their roles as parents. Accordingly, do not offer unsolicited opinions, research or advice. Trying to convince your children to follow a certain therapy, forwarding links to various websites, or pointing out potential treatments for your grandchild's condition may be interpreted as a lack of faith in their ability to raise their child and find the necessary resources and solutions that he needs.
4. Adhere to the limits and schedules established by the parents.
  - While many grandparents are quick to throw routines out the window as a treat for the children in their care, raising a child with Autism Spectrum often demands strict adherence to structure and routines which are essential for the proper functioning of both the child and family.



- Children with Autism Spectrum may have trouble coping with changes in schedules, food, sleeping arrangements and toileting, for example, particularly when they are away from home. Follow dietary restrictions, bedtimes, communication guidelines and other rituals enforced by the parents, no matter how odd or tedious they may seem.
5. Encourage your grandchild's independence.
- Help foster your grandchild's self-esteem by providing opportunities for them to do things for themselves, with your guidance. While the temptation is to want to facilitate everything for our children with Autism Spectrum, being overly nurturing can sabotage a child's chance to learn independently and feel the senses of accomplishment and pride inherent in mastering a goal on one's own.
6. Spend time with the siblings of the exceptional child.
- So often, home-life is centred on the child with Autism Spectrum, causing siblings to get lost in the shuffle. Special days away or planned activities with you will give siblings the relief they need from a busy household and communicate the importance of taking time for oneself. Your undivided attention will also validate feelings of self-worth and highlight the fact that they are equally as special and loved as the exceptional child.



You will find more detailed information in the book:

***Disclosing the Diagnosis – Talking to Family and Friends about the Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum***

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