

Tulsa Autism Next Steps Checklist

A free guide for Tulsa and Broken Arrow parents · tulsaautism.com

1. Diagnosis and early signs

- Write down what you notice (speech, play, eye contact, repetitive movements, sensory reactions) with dates and short videos.
- Ask your child's pediatrician for a developmental screening and bring your notes.
- **Under age 3:** refer your child to **SoonerStart**, Oklahoma's free early intervention program for infants and toddlers (birth to 3) with developmental delays. Anyone can make a referral, and you do not need a diagnosis first. Find your county office or refer online at oklahoma.gov/health (search "SoonerStart").
- Ask for a full diagnostic evaluation by a qualified clinician (for example, a developmental pediatrician or licensed psychologist). Keep a copy of the written report, because insurance and therapy providers will ask for it.

2. Insurance and SoonerCare

- Call your insurance company and ask: "Does my plan cover autism diagnosis and ABA, speech, and occupational therapy? Do I need prior authorization or a referral?" Write down the date, name, and reference number.
- Oklahoma law (36 O.S. § 6060.21) requires many state-regulated health plans issued or renewed on or after Nov. 1, 2016 to cover screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism. Employer self-funded plans may follow different rules, so ask your HR or benefits office.
- **SoonerCare** (Oklahoma Medicaid) covers medically necessary ABA for members under 21 with an autism diagnosis, with prior authorization. Check eligibility or apply at mysooner.org.
- Keep one folder (paper or digital) for the diagnosis report, insurance cards, authorizations, and bills.

3. School services and the IEP

- **Age 3 and up:** ask your public school district (for example, Tulsa or Broken Arrow Public Schools) for a special education evaluation **in writing** (email or letter). Keep a copy.
- In Oklahoma, the school's initial evaluation and eligibility decision must be finished within **45 school days** after you sign consent. The evaluation is free.
- If your child qualifies, the school writes an **IEP** (Individualized Education Program), and you are part of the IEP team. Bring your notes and outside reports to the meeting.
- Free help with evaluations and IEPs: **Oklahoma Parents Center**, the state's Parent Training and Information Center, toll-free 1-877-553-4332, oklahomaparentscenter.org.

4. Therapy options

- **ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis):** builds communication, daily living, and social skills and reduces behaviors that get in the way. Ask who supervises (a BCBA) and how parents are included.
- **Speech therapy:** helps with talking, understanding, social communication, and AAC (picture or device-based communication).
- **Occupational therapy (OT):** helps with fine motor skills, sensory needs, feeding, and self-care.
- Ask every provider: current waitlist, insurance accepted, location and hours, parent training, and how progress is measured. It is fine to talk with more than one clinic.

5. Local contacts

The Sunshine Academy

ABA therapy
304 N Beech Circle, Broken Arrow, OK 74012
Phone: 918-900-6237
thesunshine.academy

Tulsa Sunshine Center

Speech and occupational therapy
2221 West Detroit Street, Broken Arrow, OK 74012
Phone: 918-615-6492
tulsasunshinecenter.com

Not sure where to start? Fill out the short form at tulsaautism.com/get-help and a local clinic will call you back.

Tulsa Autism Guide is a local parent guide from Tulsa-area providers The Sunshine Academy and Tulsa Sunshine Center. This checklist is general information, not medical or legal advice. Program rules change, so check with each agency for current details. Updated October 2026.