Are you seeing delays in your child but scared to take the leap to get evaluated to start some early intervention services? One of the most critical things you can do for your child is to start intervention as soon as possible.

Whether they have autism, ADHD, a mild speech delay or anything that's concerning. In today's video blog, I'm discussing how important early intervention is and the first steps to take.

Hi, I'm Dr Mary Barbera, autism mom, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and bestselling author. Each week I provide you with some of my ideas about turning autism and signs of autism around so if you haven't subscribed to my YouTube channel, you can do that now.

As you may or may not know, my son, Lucas, was diagnosed with autism a day before his third birthday back in 1999. Back when my husband first mentioned the possibility of autism when Lucas was just 21 months of age, that was even earlier, that was 1998. On that day, I still remember where I was sitting in the family room of my old house, and I remember being horrified by my husband mentioning the possibility of autism. I told him on that day that I never ever wanted to hear the word autism again. 15 months later, as I prepared for the doctor's appointment, knowing Lucas would most likely get diagnosed, I had read Catherine Maurice's book, Let Me Hear Your Voice, which was published in 1993 and through that book I learned that kids with autism diagnosed and treated very intensively, starting before the age of three or at the age of three could get significantly better and could become indistinguishable from their peers or even recover.

When I asked Lucas' doctor if he could recover, he told me that because Lucas had moderate to severe autism, by that point, that he was not optimistic. That maybe if we would have brought him in earlier, maybe his chances for recovery from autism might have been better. I did a video blog on autism recovery that you may want to check out, and while I was gunning for recovery back when Lucas was very young, I learned over the past two decades that it's not such a black and white issue.

Back when Lucas was diagnosed with autism, the rate of autism was one in 500 and now it's at least one in 54 so the rate has dramatically increased. And over the past two decades, I've transformed from a confused and overwhelmed parent to a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. And I've helped thousands of children directly and hundreds of thousands, if not more, millions perhaps, um, online through my work.

And what I've learned over the years is that, you know, some kids that I've worked with are mainstreamed with no support, some are in college, some, um, have avoided the diagnosis altogether. And what I learned is that it doesn't matter if it's autism or not, the same strategies can work and they work best with very young children at the first signs. My most popular video blog to date is, Is it Autism or Speech Delay? And it has almost half a million views at this point. You may want to check that out to help you see the first signs of delays and that there isn't very much difference between autism and speech delay. My goal is to help parents and early intervention providers identify any delay as soon as possible and treat those delays.

I have seen signs and symptoms of autism reversed and in sometimes eliminated, especially when interventions, like I said, are started early and I've even seen autism prevented in some cases and I did a video blog on that as well. Here are three things you can do today instead of worrying about autism or speech delays or early ADHD signs or anything else.

Number one, learn what the typical milestones are and the red flags for autism. The CDC has, um, some early warning signs and also the general milestones you should be looking for. So it doesn't matter if you have a baby, an infant, toddler, a preschooler, or an older child, you can look at the milestones where they're, what are they supposed to be doing?

Are they supposed to be not just talking, but, what cups are they supposed to be drinking out of? How are, you know, are they supposed to be able to brush their teeth or are they supposed to, um, point to things at what age? And so, look at those milestones. Also look at the red flags. So the number one thing to do is to really keep a close eye on the milestones.

Back in, 20 years ago, I thought it was the doctor's job to keep track of milestones. And what I've learned is the more proactive parents can be in terms of looking at milestones, the better. The number two thing you can do is if you are concerned, if you find that there is a big gap between what the milestones are and what your child is doing or not doing, um, I would encourage you to schedule a sick visit with your family doctor

or another practitioner to talk about some of the delays and to get on, uh, early intervention services in place. Now, waiting lists for actual autism testing are long, but you should be able to get early intervention started if your child is under three, it's one agency, usually if they're over three, it's another agency, and if you're confused where to call, you can call your, your, you can check with your doctor about who to call for early intervention assessment and early intervention providers.

You can also call your school district and let them know that you have a three year old and who should you call? And they, they will be able to help. But you should be, especially if you're in the United States, you should be entitled to a free or very low cost. Multidisciplinary evaluation and services to get started.

Third thing you can do is learn about my unique, child-friendly ABA approach. Um, I have a free toddler guide called, Is it Autism, ADHD, Just a Speech Delay or Typical Toddler Tantrums? And you can get that for free at marybarbera.com/toddler and after you get the guide, you can also watch an online workshop to get you on the right path to help your child or your early intervention clients talk more, tantrum less, sleep in their own bed, ween off bottles and pacifiers, potty train, and a host of other issues that, um, come up with kids with autism and without autism. So in summary, intervening at the first signs of delays is critical to your child's development. I encourage you not to wait, but to start helping your child and early intervention clients by downloading my free toddler guide at marybarbera.com/toddler and, um, consider also joining my free workshop, which we'll talk all about how to get into, um, my toddler course. If you liked this blog, uh, I would love it if you would give me a thumbs up, leave a comment or share with others who might benefit, and you can subscribe to the channel for more videos like this one. Don't forget to download the free toddler guide, marybarbera.com/toddler to help you get started turning autism or signs of autism around today.

And I'll see you right here next week. .