



How to Track Progress When It Doesn't Look Like Progress

A Real-Life Guide for Parents Who Feel Like Nothing's Changing

(But Know, It Probably Is)

Why This Guide Exists

Progress isn't always clean.

It doesn't always look like words, milestones, or breakthroughs.

Sometimes it looks like:

- One less meltdown this week
- Making it through dinner without bolting
- Playing near a sibling for two whole minutes

But when you're in the grind every day, it's easy to miss the wins — or feel like nothing is working.

This guide helps you:

- Spot the invisible wins
- Track patterns that actually matter
- Stay grounded when everything feels stuck

Because your kid is moving forward — even when it doesn't look like it.

Step 1: Redefine What Counts as Progress

Forget the checklist. Instead, look for:

Tiny shifts in behavior

From full-blown shutdowns to silent withdrawal

From pushing you away to looking at you when they need help

More consistency, not perfection

Three days in a row with no bedtime fight

Using a visual aid *without* being prompted

Faster recoveries

Still upset — but calmed down in 10 minutes instead of 45

Needed fewer tools to self-regulate

New reactions to old triggers

Tolerating a sound they used to hate
Walking away instead of hitting

If it's different than it was last month?

That's progress.

Step 2: Use a Simple Tracking System

You don't need a spreadsheet. You just need a system that works *for you*.

Option A: The “3-Word Daily Journal”

Every day, jot down:

- 1 win
- 1 hard moment
- 1 thing you noticed

Example:

“Calm bedtime. Screamed at dog. Asked for help tying shoes.”

In 10 seconds a day, you're building a pattern log.

Option B: Weekly Snapshot

Once a week, write:

- What improved
- What stayed the same
- What got harder

It's not about judgment. It's about clarity.

Step 3: Reflect Monthly — Not Daily

Weekly progress can feel messy. Monthly patterns are where the gold is.

Ask yourself:

- What can they do now that they couldn't last month?
- What's showing up more often?
- What's *not* happening anymore?

Let that be your fuel — not how hard the day was.

Step 4: Share the Right Stuff With the Right People

Your notes are powerful. They:

- Help your interventionist or BC fine-tune the plan
- Give you actual data to bring into team meetings
- Remind you what's *actually* happening, not just what feels hard today

 Tip: Send a weekly summary to your support team. Doesn't have to be formal. Just real.

"Hey, here's what I've noticed this week. Let me know if that lines up with what you're seeing!"

Bottom Line

Progress isn't loud.

It doesn't post itself on Instagram.

But it's happening — every time your kid does something that used to be impossible, confusing, or terrifying.

Track what matters.

Celebrate what's different.

Trust what you see.

Because no one knows your kid like you do. And *you* are allowed to say, "We're getting somewhere," even when no one else sees it yet.