

## Official definition of Autism:

*"Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a range of complex neurodevelopment disorders, characterized by social impairment, communication difficulties, and restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior first detected before a child is 3". (National Institutes of Health)*

A family friendly definition from CDC's ASD Homepage:

*"Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less."*

Summary is easy to understand, everyday language:

A child with autism consistently has difficulty communicating and interacting with different people and in different settings. They have an abnormal social approach which can include unusual social interactions, such as inappropriate physical contact with others or using another person as a tool or object.

A child with autism has difficulty recognizing, interpreting, and using nonverbal communication.

A child with autism has difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships with others.

A child with autism may be inflexible and resistant to changes that occur during everyday life.

A child with autism will have restricted interests and may have unusual fascinations, fixations, obsessions or fears.

A child with autism may avoid, seek, or react to sensory experiences in everyday life in unexpected and unusual ways.

Autism occurs early in life.

A child with autism will have noticeable differences that interfere with daily life.

Many of the above statements were supplied by Laura Mize at [www.teachmetotalk.com](http://www.teachmetotalk.com)  
She provides a great amount of very useful information on her website.