



WHAT IS

AUTISM



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) is a diagnosis that describes significant social, communicative & behavioral challenges.

People with Autism handle information in their brain differently than typically developing peers.



Autism affects each person in different ways and can range from very mild to severe. People with autism share some similar symptoms, such as problems with social interaction, difficulties with communication, and repetitive/stereotypical behavior.

RED FLAGS OF AUTISM

A person with autism may:



- Not respond to their name by 12 months of age
- Not point at objects to show interest (point at an airplane flying over) by 14 months
- Not play "pretend" games (pretend to "feed" a doll) by 18 months
- Avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
- Have delayed speech and language skills
- Repeat words or phrases over and over (echolalia)
- Give unrelated answers to questions
- Get upset by minor changes
- Have obsessive interests
- Flap their hands, rock their body, or spin in circles
- Have unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel
- Repetitively line up objects

CURRENT AUTISM STATISTICS



Boys vs. Girls

- Autism is almost 5 times more common among boys (1 in 54) than among girls (1 in 252).



What % of Americans have Autism

- Studies in Asia, Europe, and North America have identified individuals with an ASD with an average prevalence of about 1%. A recent study in South Korea reported a prevalence of 2.6%.



About 1 in 6 children in the U.S. had a developmental disability in 2006-2008, ranging from mild disabilities such as speech and language impairments to serious developmental disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and autism.

The probabilities of having more than one child with Autism

- Parents who have a child with an ASD have a 2%-18% chance of having a second child who is also affected.



WHO CAN DIAGNOSE A CHILD WITH AUTISM

- Neuropsychologist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Behavioral Pediatrician
- Neurologist



HOW AUTISM AFFECTS A CHILD

At School

- Attention
- Transitions
- Language skills
- Peer social skills
- Academic skills
- Following directions
- Inappropriate behaviors



At Home

- Life Skills (getting dressed, toileting, brushing teeth, bathing)
- Family relationships
- Independently playing toys/games appropriately
- Requesting of preferred items/activities
- Cleaning up after oneself
- Feeding
- Inappropriate behaviors

PROVEN TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Applied Behavior Analysis

- Increases skills by breaking them down to most basic, achievable parts & building from there
- Decreases repetitive, stereotypic behaviors
- Increases language, play, and social skills



Speech-Language Pathology

- Increases language and functional communication
- Maximizes gesturing, verbalization, or augmentative & alternative communication
- Increases requesting and expression of wants and needs
- Improves speech intelligibility & social skills

Occupational Therapy

- Strengthens gross & fine motor skills
- Increases sensory processing skills
- Targets cognitive flexibility & activities of daily living
- Increases social appropriateness

Physical Therapy

- Focuses on age-appropriate development of gross motor skills
- Improves strength, coordination and balance, & motor planning

Social Work

- Primarily treats high-functioning Autism
- Increases appropriate social interactions
- Improves life skills

North Shore Pediatric Therapy

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