



ABOUT AUTISM

Autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by social impairments, cognitive impairments, communication difficulties, and repetitive behaviors. It can range from very mild to very severe and occur in all ethnic, socio-economic and age groups.

Males are four times more likely to have autism than females. Some children with autism appear normal before age 1 or 2 and then suddenly "regress" and lose language or social skills they had previously gained. This is called the regressive form of autism.

Autism is estimated to affect one in 88 children in the United States (1 in 54 boys). It is also estimated that 40% of children with autism cannot speak.

Individuals with autism typically have difficulties with:

- *verbal/non-verbal communication*
- *social interactions*
- *leisure or play activities*
- *repetitive behaviors*

Other forms of autism include:

ASPERGERS SYNDROME (AS): higher-functioning autism.

PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER-NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED (PDD-NOS): milder form of autism.

➤ IMPORTANT FACT: No Two Children With Autism Are Alike.

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AUTISM BEHAVIORS

Some distinct behaviors in autism may include:

- no eye contact.
- unable to speak, or answer questions.
- seems deaf.
- social challenges, or inability to understand social cues.
- sensory dysfunction (may dislike loud noises, bright lights, certain clothing, touch)
- fixation on narrow interests, specific items, ideas, people, and/or topics.
- demonstrate low to no sensitivity to pain, or oversensitivity to pain.
- have no fear of real danger or understanding of consequences.
- have odd fears, or fear things of little danger.
- take figurative language in a literal way.
- repeat your words, your questions and your body movements.
- need, or possess, a picture system to communicate.
- have meltdown triggers.
- may not be potty-trained -- may be wearing a diaper or pull-up.
- fecal smearing is not uncommon.
- head-banging, self-biting, self-hitting or other self-injurious behavior
- may not have toys in his/her room, or in the house **(for example, a child may be more interested in lining up random household objects than playing with toys.)**
- spin objects, or watch spinning objects.
- have extremely narrow food preferences.
- inflexible to change.
- walk on toes.
- have little understanding of danger or consequence.
- older children & adults: may appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or defiant.
- children & adults: may enter another person's home without understanding consequence.
- may rock back and forth, flap hands, flick fingers, hum, or make other noises.
- **may not respond to name, or verbal commands.**
- **attracted to water.**
- **may bolt into traffic.**

