

Autism Spectrum Disorder Fact Sheet

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. People with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from other people. Their learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives while others need less. Signs of ASD begin during early childhood and typically last throughout a person's life.



Examples of Communication Issues	Examples of Social Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delayed speech and language skills - Repeats words or phrases over and over - Reverses pronouns (says "you" instead of "I") - Gives unrelated answers to questions - Does not point or respond to pointing - Uses few or no gestures (does not wave goodbye) - Talks in a flat, robot-like, or sing-song voice - Does like to pretend during play (like pretending to "feed" a doll) - Does not understand jokes, sarcasm or teasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not respond to their name by 12 months of age - Avoids eye contact - Prefers to play alone - Does not share interests with others - Only interacts to achieve a desired goal - Has flat or inappropriate facial expressions - Does not understand personal space boundaries - Avoids or resists physical contact - Is not comforted by others during distress - Has trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
Examples of Usual Interests and Behaviors	Other Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lines up toys or other objects - Plays with toys in the same way every time - Likes parts of objects, like wheels of cars - Is very organized - Gets upset by minor changes - Has obsessive interests - Has to follow certain routines - Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins self in circles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hyperactivity (very active) - Impulsivity (acting without thinking) - Short attention span - Aggression - Causes self-injury - Temper tantrums - Unusual eating and sleeping habits - Unusual mood or emotional reactions - Lack of fear or more fear than expected - Unusual reaction to the way things sounds, smell, taste, look, or feel

What can I do if I think my child has ASD?

- ✓ Talk with your child's doctor or nurse
- ✓ If your child is younger than three years old, call Early ACCESS at 1-888-425-4371
For more information about Early ACCESS visit <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/early-access>
- ✓ If your child is three years or older, call your local school or Area Education Agency (AEA).
To find your AEA visit <http://www.iowaaea.org/>
- ✓ Contact the Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program
100 Hawkins Drive, Iowa City, IA 52242
Phone: 1-866-219-9119, ext. 1
Email: iowa-RAP@uiowa.edu
Website: www.chsciowa.org/RAP



RAP

Iowa Regional
Autism Assistance
Program

Common Medical Interventions for Children with ASD

Speech Language Therapy

- * Used to help children understand speech processes and language use in social situations
- * Can be beneficial for children who may struggle with communication or have difficulty understanding social cues when talking with others

Occupational Therapy

- * Involves physical and motor skills
- * Develops age-appropriate independence and self-care skills

Physical Therapy

- * Focuses on problems with movement that can cause limitations in daily life
- * Addresses challenges with sitting, walking running, and jumping
- * Can also improve coordination, poor muscle tones, and balance leading to better overall movement

Applied Behavior Analysis

- * Depending a child's needs, therapy can focus on teaching self-help skills, social skills, academic skills, communication, or appropriate behavior
- * A therapist determines how a child's surroundings, including people, may influence their behavior
- * Focuses on positive reinforcement
- * Teaches children how to increase their useful behaviors and decrease behaviors that may cause harm or interfere with learning
- * Uses rewards for positive behaviors rather than recognition of negative behaviors

Behavioral Health Services

- * Typically provided by social workers, psychologists, and mental health counselors
- * May be helpful for children with difficult behaviors or co-occurring disorders like ADHD, disruptive behavior disorders, depression, or anxiety
- * Can involve just the child or the entire family
- * Can help children learn new skills and behaviors or strengthen existing skills to address problematic behaviors

Sources of Information

Autism Speaks (2016) <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/treatment/what-treatments-are-available-speech-language-and-motor-impairments>

Autism Speaks (2016) http://www.autismspeaks.org/docs/sciencedocs/atn/atn_air-p_applied_behavior_analysis.pdf

CDC (2016) <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/treatment.html>

CDC (2016) <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autismfacts.html>



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