

Autism is one of a group of serious developmental problems called autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that appear in early childhood- usually before age 3. Though symptoms and severity vary, all autism disorders affect a child's ability to communicate and interact with others.

Symptoms to look for:

Problems in three crucial areas of development: social interaction, language and behavior.

- Fails to respond to his or her name
- Has poor eye contact
- Appears not to hear you at times
- Resists cuddling and holding
- Appears unaware of others' feelings
- Seems to prefer playing alone
- Starts talking later than age 2
- Loses previously acquired ability to say words or sentences
- Doesn't make eye contact when making requests
- Speaks with an abnormal tone or rhythm

AUTISM



- May repeat words or phrases verbatim
- Performs repetitive movements such as rocking, spinning, or hand flapping
- Develops specific routines or rituals
- Becomes disturbed at the slightest change in routine or rituals
- Moves constantly
- May be unusually sensitive to light, sound and touch and yet oblivious to pain
- May be fascinated by parts of an object, such as the spinning wheels of a toy car

Best Practices:

No cure exists for autism, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" treatment. The range of home-based and school-based treatments and interventions of autism can be overwhelming. Treatment options may include: behavior and communications therapies, educational therapies and medications. Alternative therapies include: creative therapies, special diets, and chelation therapy.

Screening Tools/Resources

Screening Tools:

- Due to the complex nature of autism, numerous screening tools exist. Here are some of the links that can be used for screening purposes.
www.firstsigns.org/screeings/tools

Resources:

- www.nami.org
- www.nimh.nih.gov
- www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov
- www.cenpatico.com



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