

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

April is for Autism Awareness!

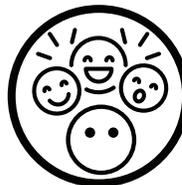
by Staci Jackson, M.A., CCC-SLP



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability which refers to several conditions that until recently were diagnosed separately including: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder and Asperger syndrome. ASD is characterized in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors. People with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn differently from most other people. Each autistic individual is unique. Many ASD people have exceptional abilities in visual skills, music, and academic skills. Some may have an intellectual disability while others have normal to above average intelligence. Some ASD persons may require significant help in their daily lives while others can live independently.

In April, many families, communities, and organizations celebrate National Autism Awareness Month to raise awareness about autism and promote advocacy for ASD people. Understanding the signs and basic facts about autism is the first step to awareness.

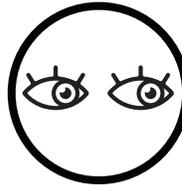
The signs of ASD begin early during childhood and typically last throughout the person's life. Some signs include:



- No babbling or gesturing by 12 months
- Not saying single words by 16 months



- Not pointing to objects to show interest/not looking at objects when another person points at them



- Avoiding eye contact
- Repeating or echoing words or phrases in place of normal language



- Repeating actions over and over again
- Having trouble adapting when a routine changes



- Having unusual reactions to the way things smell, taste, look, feel, or sound
- Having loss of any language or social skills they once exhibited

Understanding basic facts about autism can promote understanding and acceptance of ASD persons.

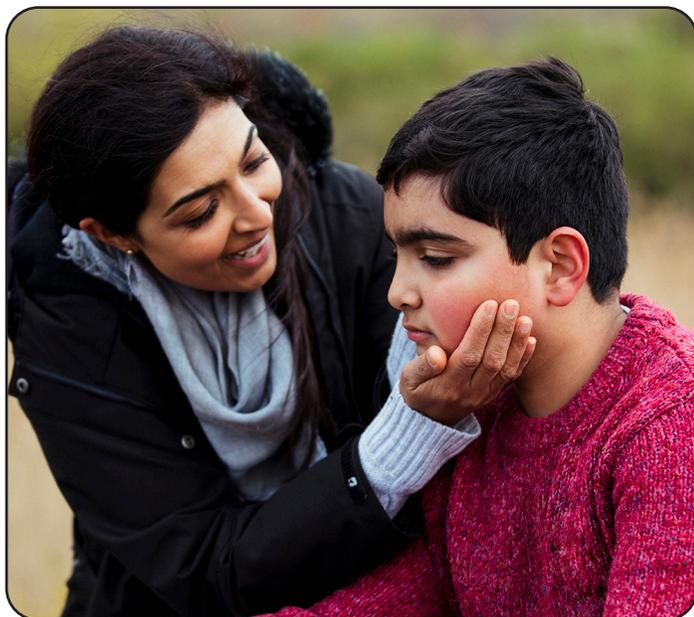
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Did you know...

- Autism affects 1 in 54 children and 1 in 34 boys.
- Autism is one of the fastest-growing developmental disorders in the US.
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism.
- Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average.
- ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups but is 4.3 times more common among boys than among girls.
- Early diagnosis and intervention can reduce the lifetime cost of care by 67 percent.

How can you help?

- Put on the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon – It's the most recognized symbol of autism. Show support for people with ASD by wearing the ribbon.
- Consider doing the Autism Speaks Walk. There are walks in many states during the month of April.
- Help your community host *Light It Up Blue* where buildings around the globe shine bright blue lights in honor of individuals and families affected by autism.



For more information about autism, visit these websites:

www.autismspeaks.org

www.autism-society.org

www.asha.org

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>

Resources:

www.autismspeaks.org
www.autism-society.org
www.asha.org

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