

Kinship Care

NEWSLETTER

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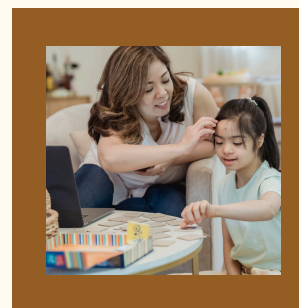
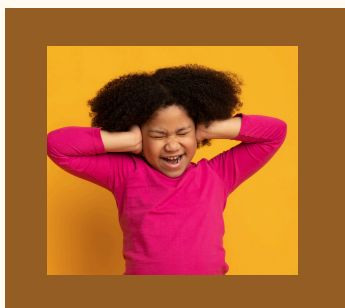
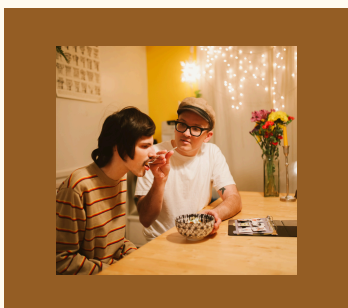
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what is
autism
spectrum
disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder. It affects children in two big ways. First, it can make it harder for them to communicate and socialize with others. Second, it causes kids to have, to varying degrees, repetitive behaviors, limited interests, inflexibility, and unusual sensory processing. Children who have autism are born with it. Symptoms can appear as early as at 6 to 18 months, in aspects of social communication. For others it may be noticeable between 12 months and 3 years. But for some it's not noticed until preschool age, when they start to have trouble interacting with other children.





what are the symptoms of ASD?



Social Communication and Social Interaction:

- Doesn't like to cuddle or hug
- Likes to play alone
- Rarely or never makes eye contact

Under the age of three:

- Doesn't answer to their name
- Doesn't give, share or show off things they like
- Doesn't use gestures to communicate
- Has limited or slow-onset language development, such as not saying two-word phrases by two years old
- Hasn't spoken a word by 18 months

Older children:

- May have trouble understanding how others feel
- May have trouble making and keeping friends
- May not understand relationships
- Has trouble reading and using body language
- Has trouble adapting behavior to fit social situations

Speaks differently than other children:

- Speaks in a flat or sing-song voice
- Repeats phrases
- Uses very formal language or a very sophisticated vocabulary
- Can talk about facts but has trouble talking about personal experience
- Has trouble carrying on a conversation and letting the other person talk

Repetitive Behaviors:

- Repeats the same action over and over again
- Focuses on small details
- Struggles with changes in their routine
- Puts toys in order instead of playing with them
- Gets extremely focused on specific topics or objects
- Has unusually low, or high reactivity to sensory stimulation
- Has strong interest in particular sensations, their look or feel

how is ASD diagnosed?



Autism is diagnosed by a medical professional. To be diagnosed with autism, a child must have symptoms that include both a lack of age-level social skills and the presence of repetitive behaviors. These symptoms must get in the way of the child's daily life. Symptoms must be present in early development, such as before the age of 5. Autism can be diagnosed in kids as young as 12 months, if symptoms have appear by that time.



AUTISM

*screening, evaluation
& diagnosis*

Evaluation services may include appointments with individual clinicians or a team of clinicians from the following professional disciplines: developmental pediatrics, psychology, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, psychiatry, audiology, nutrition, nursing, and social work.

It is best if clinicians use evidenced-based assessment tools within clinical care including use of the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule for individuals suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder. Additional cognitive, language, behavioral, and adaptive behavior testing is included as needed. Results are shared with families and recommendations are generated for medical, educational and behavioral intervention.



GOALS OF THE CLINICAL TEAM



- Provide diagnosis and medical treatment for patients with autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities, including genetic conditions affecting neurodevelopment.
- Provide support, recommendations, and resources for patients and families experiencing ongoing challenges associated with a developmental disability.
- Support families as they work to improve their child's feeding.
- Provide comprehensive care, evidence-based treatment, links to research opportunities and support to children.



FAMILY SUPPORTS

teachers & respite care



teachers

Teachers can use a variety of strategies to help children with autism, including:

- **Visuals**: Visuals can help students with autism understand lessons.
- **Concrete language**: It's often better to be direct and use less language.
- **Patience**: It's important to be patient and give ASD children extra time to process information.
- **Routines**: Children tend to perform repeated self-stimulatory behaviors.
- **Sensory bins**: Provide a great opportunity to learn and explore through hands-on tactile play.
- **Student retreat zone**: Designate a corner of the classroom as a "Student Retreat Zone" with sensory toys, picture books, and calming activities.
- **Integrate interests**: People with autism tend to have very focused interests, so teachers can take advantage of these interests to encourage learning.
- **Provide a safe space**: Teachers can provide a safe space for children with autism and minimize background noise and distractions.

School Tool Kit Resource for Teachers: [Autism Speaks](#)

Educator Resources: [Resources for Educators](#)

respite care

- Respite is planned or emergency care provided to a child or adult with special needs to provide temporary relief to family caregivers caring for that child or adult.
- Caregivers get a much-needed break from the demands of caregiving. Still, respite care has also been shown to positively impact many individual and family outcomes, including reduced stress, decreased fatigue, increased family quality of life, lowered social isolation, and improved relationships.
- Respite is provided across the lifespan to individuals with various special needs. Multiple sources fund respite care, which can occur in numerous settings, including facilities, community settings, and the homes of individuals with special needs.

Respite Care Agency: [Respite Care Assoc of WI](#)



HELPFUL LINKS

*family & caregivers
advocacy groups*



family & caregivers

As a relative caregiver, you have to learn how to navigate transitioning from your role as a child's relative to a new parenting role. For assistance, please click on the links below for resources.

[Wisconsin Family Connections Center](#)

[Virtual Group: Kinnect Relative Caregivers of Children](#)

[Virtual Group: Trauma Informed Parenting](#)

[Wisconsin Kinship Navigator](#)

[Relative Caregiver Free Training Series -- Champion Classrooms](#)

[Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network](#)

[Waisman Center -- Autism Hub](#)

agencies & advocacy groups

The Autism Center: Research Lab at the Child Mind Institute is an integrated clinical center and research lab dedicated to supporting toddlers, children, adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder and related challenges [Child Mind Institute](#)

Autism Society South Central Wisconsin: questions, concerns, need support or don't know where to turn to get your Autism related questions answered? We are here to help! Our Assistance Coordinator is here to connect you to the services and support you need to help you on your Autism journey.

[Autism Society South Central Wisconsin](#)

WI FACETS: Wisconsin's resource for assisting families of children with disabilities.

- Free online training year-round on topics related to special education rights and responsibilities, parent support, and disabilities.
- Provide free one-to-one special education support to families of children with disabilities.

[WI FACETS](#)



HELPFUL LINKS (continued)

*therapists, parent
support, childcare*



therapists

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) launched a service to support structure for families of children with delays, disabilities, special health care needs, or mental health conditions. **Wisconsin Wayfinder: Children's Resource Network** includes a user-friendly website and toll-free helpline that lets families easily connect with real people – dedicated children's resource guides – who will help navigate through the essential services and supports that will enable their children to thrive.

[Wisconsin Wayfinder: Children's Resource Network](#)

- **The Well Badger Resource Center:** Offers therapy services for autism spectrum disorder

[Well Badger Resource Center](#)

- **Autism Society South Central Wisconsin:** Autism Treatment Providers

[Autism Society South Central Wisconsin](#)

- **Child Mind Institute:** Therapies help autistic kids build skills and reduce behaviors that interfere with learning and communication. [Child Mind Institute](#)

parent support

- Having a child with special health care needs sets parents on a different journey than the one that was originally expected. Fortunately, many parents have "gone before" and can be a source of strength, hope, direction, and help. [Parent to Parent of Wisconsin](#)

childcare

Reach Dane: Head Start is a comprehensive child development program that focuses on promoting school readiness through positive social and educational skill development.

[Reach Dane -- Head Start](#)





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[Dane county relative kinship resource group](#)

