



WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability; signs typically appear during early childhood and affect a person's ability to communicate, and interact with others. ASD is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum condition" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause of autism, but increased awareness and early diagnosis/intervention and access to appropriate services/supports lead to significantly improved outcomes. Some of the behaviors associated with autism include delayed learning of language; difficulty making eye contact or holding a conversation; difficulty with executive functioning, which relates to reasoning and planning; narrow, intense interests; poor motor skills' and sensory sensitivities. Again, a person on the spectrum might follow many of these behaviors or just a few, or many others besides. The diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is applied based on analysis of all behaviors and their severity.

Nearly a quarter century ago, the Autism Society launched a nationwide effort to promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life. National Autism Awareness Month is celebrated in April each year. It represents an excellent opportunity to promote autism awareness, autism acceptance and to draw attention to the tens of thousands facing an autism diagnosis each year.

DID YOU KNOW? The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most recognized symbol of

the autism community in the world. Autism prevalence is now one in every 68 children in America.

DID YOU KNOW that something that seems as simple as going to the movies is not an option for many families affected by autism? The Autism Society is working with AMC Theatres to bring special-needs families every month.

Know the signs: Early identification can change lives

Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes. For more information on developmental milestones, visit the CDC's "Know the Signs. Act Early" site. -

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>.

Sources:

<http://exceptionallives.org/contact-us/>

<http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>

<http://www.autism-society.org/what-is/>

<http://autismcaresfoundation.org/>

