

OTHER EARLY SIGNS

- Experiences a significant loss of language or social skills that he or she once had
- Echoes what others say (echolalia) without regular spontaneous speech
- Demonstrates speech that sounds mechanical, almost robotic
- Uses limited or atypical facial expressions
- Prefers to play alone or does not show interest in other children
- May not enjoy cuddling or being touched, unless it is on his or her own terms
- Displays repetitive body movements (hand flapping, spinning)
- Fixates upon a single object, such as a spoon or book
- Cannot tolerate change in routine or environment, such as a new toothbrush or a replacement for a lost toy
- Increased or decreased sensitivity to sensory experiences (light, texture, sound, taste, smell, movement)
- Lines items up or puts things in order repeatedly
- Has excessive tantrums and is difficult to console
- Walks on tiptoes
- Unusual eating & sleeping habits
- Gives unrelated answers to questions

The presence of any one or a combination of these early signs does not necessarily mean that your child has an autism spectrum disorder. If your child demonstrates any of these signs, please discuss your concerns with your pediatrician and ask for an autism screening.

The Help Group is grateful to its community of friends and supporters who share its commitment to helping children with autism fully realize their potential.

For more information visit
www.thehelpgroup.org or 877.943.5747

The Help Group  because every child deserves a great future

Founded in 1975, The Help Group is dedicated to helping young people with autism and other special needs fully realize their potential. It is the largest, most comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States and is recognized as a leader in the field of autism. The Help Group offers a wide range of innovative autism spectrum disorder programs, and each day, more than 1000 students ages 3 – 22 attend its autism day schools. Other programs include assessment, early identification & intervention, therapeutic services, life skills coaching, transitional programs, residential programs, parent support groups, day camps, after-school enrichment and social skills programs.

The Help Group is widely regarded for its high standards of excellence, unique scope and breadth of services. Through its public awareness and outreach programs, graduate and post-graduate professional training, applied research, conferences and seminars, parent education programs, publications, and efforts at the state and national levels, The Help Group touches the lives of children with special needs and their families throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

Village Glen School · Bridgeport School
Bridgeport Vocational Education Center
Sunrise School · Young Learners Preschool for Autism
Project Six/The Commons · Advance LA/Live.Advance.LA
The Help Group - UCLA Autism Research Alliance
The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder
Kids Like Me Recreational Programs & Camps
club l.a./club l.a. TEEN · Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism
Silverlining Resale Boutique & Vocational Training Center
The Help Group Child and Family Center
The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative

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www.thehelpgroup.org  

AUTISM

Learn the Facts



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to affect
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The Help Group  building brighter futures
for young people with autism

www.thehelpgroup.org  

AUTISM - Learn the Facts

EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), commonly referred to as autism, is a group of brain-based developmental disabilities characterized by impaired social communication and interaction, and restricted, repetitive behaviors, interests or activities.

- ◆ Autism is estimated to affect 1 in every 68 children in the United States; 1 in every 42 boys; 1 in every 189 girls.
- ◆ No two individuals with autism are the same. There is a wide spectrum of symptoms that range from mild to severe.
- ◆ Autism occurs in children of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ◆ Autism may be accompanied by language impairment and/or intellectual disability.
- ◆ The causes of autism are unclear. Research suggests that the causes are complex and may include genetic, biological, and environmental risk factors.
- ◆ Increased prevalence in autism has been influenced by greater awareness, improved expertise in diagnosis, and an expanded definition. However, a true increase in the number of children with autism cannot be ruled out.

- ◆ Symptoms of autism can often be detected at 18 months or earlier, and some of the early signs may even be recognizable within the first year of life.
- ◆ When parents first suspect their child is developing differently, they should discuss their concerns with their pediatrician and ask for an autism screening, or referral to a qualified autism professional.
- ◆ Early identification and intensive early intervention can result in significant positive outcomes for many children with ASD.
- ◆ Individuals with autism can make gains throughout their lives with the support of evidence-based educational and therapeutic programs tailored to meet their challenges and strengths.
- ◆ 84% of individuals with autism in California are under the age of 22. There is a significant need for services to help young people successfully transition to adulthood with the greatest levels of independence possible.

Important history is in the making for autism as science, public policy, advocacy, best practices in education and treatment, and awareness efforts expand and intensify. Advances in these areas will improve the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families.

BY 4 MONTHS OF AGE

- Does not make eye contact or makes little eye contact
- Does not seem interested in other people
- Does not show as much interest in people as objects
- Does not react by looking at people when they are making "social sounds," such as humming or clapping
- Does not have a social smile (does not smile back at someone who smiles at them)
- Does not show interest in watching people's faces

BY 12 MONTHS OF AGE

- Does not combine eye contact with smiling
- Does not babble (or the babble doesn't sound like "talking")
- Does not look where another person is pointing
- Does not try to engage other people in what he or she is looking at or doing
- Does not engage in interactive gestures, such as giving, showing or reaching for parents
- Does not respond when his or her name is called
- Does not show a caring or concerned reaction to other people crying or in distress
- Does not use gestures, such as waving "hi" or "bye," or use the index finger to point

BY 24 MONTHS OF AGE

- Does not look toward an object that is pointed to
- Does not point to share interests with others, such as pointing to an appealing toy
- Does not imitate common activities of others, such as sweeping the floor
- Does not learn simple, new interactive routines
- Does not develop pretend or make-believe play, such as feeding a doll
- Does not use single words by 16 months
- Does not spontaneously use meaningful two-word phrases ("go car" or "look doggie") by 24 months