

# EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM

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

## ■ BY 4 MONTHS OF AGE

- Does not make eye contact or makes little eye contact
- Does not seem interested in other people
- 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, babbling, or gesturing
- 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, such as showing objects
- 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,” using the index finger to point, or reaching for parents

## ■ BY 24 MONTHS OF AGE

- Does not use single words by 16 months
- Does not point to share interests with others, such as pointing to an appealing toy
- Does not copy actions or words
- Does not learn simple, new interactive routines such as peek-a-boo
- Does not develop pretend or make-believe play
- Does not use meaningful two-word phrases (“go car” or “look doggie”) by 24 months



Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest, most innovative and comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States serving children, adolescents and young adults with special needs related to autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional challenges.

The Help Group’s nine specialized day schools offer pre-K through transition age programs for more than 1,100 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services, vocational and residential programs and affirming support for LGBTQIA+ young people extends its reach to more than 6,000 youth and their families each year. With more than 700 staff members, The Help Group’s state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on four campuses in the Los Angeles area.

The Help Group is widely regarded for its high standards of excellence and unique scope and breadth of services. Through its public awareness and outreach programs, university partnerships, applied research, graduate and postgraduate professional training, conferences and seminars, parent education programs, publications, and public policy efforts, 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.

At the heart of its efforts is the commitment to helping young people fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives.

### Schools

Village Glen School · Bridgeport School · Bridgeport Vocational Education Center  
Sunrise School · Young Learners Preschool · STEM<sup>3</sup> Academy  
Summit View School · Westview School of Arts · North Hills Prep

### Programs

The Help Group Child & Family Center  
The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder  
Advance LA · Kaleidoscope · Project Six/The Commons · club i.a./club i.a. TEEN  
Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism · Kids Like Me Recreational Programs and Camps

### University Partnerships

The Help Group - UCLA Autism Alliance  
The Help Group - UCLA Neuropsychology Program  
The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative



### Campuses

CULVER CITY · SHERMAN OAKS EAST / WEST · VALLEY GLEN · VAN NUYS

### Administrative Offices

13130 Burbank Boulevard | Sherman Oaks, CA 91401

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

For more information visit  
[www.thehelpgroup.org](http://www.thehelpgroup.org)     
or 877.943.5747

# AUTISM

Affects 1 in Every  
36 Children

## Learn the Facts



[www.thehelpgroup.org](http://www.thehelpgroup.org)   

# AUTISM - Learn the Facts



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

- ♦ Today, autism affects 1 in every 36 children in the United States. Autism is four times more common in boys than 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. Children from minority groups tend to be underdiagnosed or diagnosed later.
- ♦ Autism may be accompanied by language impairment and/or intellectual disability. Some children with autism possess average to above average intellectual abilities.
- ♦ 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. It is unclear that these factors totally account for the increase.
- ♦ Symptoms of autism can often be detected at 18 months or younger.
- ♦ Early identification and intensive early intervention can result in significant positive outcomes for many children with autism.
- ♦ There is a significant need for services to help young people successfully transition to adulthood with the greatest level of independence possible.
- ♦ Individuals with autism can make gains with the support of evidence-based educational and therapeutic programs tailored to meet their challenges and strengths. Gains can be made throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

## Know the Signs

When parents first suspect their child is developing differently, they should discuss their concerns with their pediatrician and ask for an autism screening or a referral to a qualified autism professional.

Some of the signs include:

- ♦ Slower to learn language or expected social skills
- ♦ It is hard to tell what your child is feeling by looking at their face
- ♦ It is hard to catch your child's eye, or they often don't make eye contact when trying to communicate
- ♦ Does not use much body language (e.g., pointing) to help let people know what they want or need
- ♦ Does not show much interest in other children
- ♦ Voice sounds different than other children (e.g., more flat in tone or sing-song like)
- ♦ Lines up toys or puts them in a particular order repeatedly
- ♦ Gets upset during transitions or when typical routines change
- ♦ Often makes repetitive body movements, such as hand flapping or spinning in circles
- ♦ Seems more or less sensitive to light, sound, touch, taste, or smell
- ♦ Loses skills they used to have (e.g., stops saying words)
- ♦ Exhibits behavioral challenges or becomes easily frustrated