



Autism and Related Pervasive Developmental Disorder Facts

- Autism is defined by symptoms reflecting delayed development or regression in development associated with:
 - Multisensory Attention Reflexes: Development first relies upon subcortical sensory/reflex experiences that allow us to attend to our environment in ways that charge and discharge the brain.
 - Sensory Difficulty: The child may exhibit sensitivity in a hyposensitive or hypersensitive manner. Significant sensory integration problems are usually evidenced.
 - Communication: The child may not understand many words; the child may exhibit echolalia (repeats statements or “echoes” what is heard); the child may speak in a monotone voice (speech lacks intonation), or uses gestures more than words to communicate both needs and wants.
 - Social Interaction: The child may not exhibit interest in peers; the child displays minimal imitative behavior, side by side or solitary play with unusual objects; the child may demonstrate limited eye contact; the child may not respond when spoken to.
 - Stereotypic Behaviors: The child may demonstrate behaviors that are ritualistic and routine oriented; the child may engage in self-stimulatory behaviors such as hand flapping, staring at hands or lights, or spinning objects...
 - Memory: Decreased consolidation of immediate and short term memory traces resulting in the need for heightened repetition of stimuli; long term memory consolidation is usually better developed due to the excessive repetition of stimuli.
 - Mood: Heightened lability of mood and poor control of impulses can be evidenced, particularly regarding change or transition and increasing difficulty with language.
- Autism is neurological in origin.
- EEG (electrophysiological dysrhythmias) are often evidenced, especially dysrhythmias in the language brain (i.e., epileptic aphasia).
- Immune disturbances and gastrointestinal disturbances have also been linked to autism in some cases.
- Food Sensitivities: The child may be described as exhibiting particular eating habits or episodes of diarrhea or constipation. Casein (dairy) and gluten (wheat, rye, barley...) sensitivities are often evidenced. Dietary intervention may be helpful.
- Autism is defined as a syndrome that can affect multiple brain areas producing pervasive developmental symptoms.
- Autism is a spectrum disorder. Its expression ranges from very severely impaired to those who are mildly affected.
- Intelligence range is wide spread from mentally deficient to gifted intellect.
- Pervasive Developmental Disorders can occur in approximately 1 in 80-100 births.
- Autism is 4 times more common in boys than in girls.

- Autism is found throughout the world in families of all races, ethnic and social backgrounds.
- Autism can be diagnosed by a licensed neuroscientist and/or medical developmental specialist treated in an interdisciplinary fashion.

Autism and related disorders can be helped. Holistic intervention, which includes the biological, psychological, educational, social and spiritual well being of the individual can be most beneficial, particularly with early intervention. The development of brain cells (neurons) and neuronal connections are dependent upon biological and external/environmental cues. Assessment and treatment, particularly with early intervention, can alter genetic predisposition or acquired illness/injury, promoting health and quality of life.