

# AUTISM

Affects 1 in Every 54 Children

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 54 children in the United States; 1 in every 34 boys; 1 in every 144 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 low-income and 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:

- ◆ Experiences a delay or change in language or social skills
- ◆ Talks in a flat, robot-like, or sing-song voice
- ◆ Shows limited facial expressions
- ◆ Uses limited eye contact
- ◆ Prefers to play alone, rather than with other children
- ◆ Repeats or echoes what others say (echolalia)
- ◆ Lines up toys or puts them in order repeatedly
- ◆ Demonstrates distress when routines change
- ◆ Displays odd body movements such as hand flapping or spinning in circles
- ◆ Shows increased or decreased sensitivity to light, sound, touch, taste, or smell
- ◆ Exhibits behavioral challenges or becomes easily frustrated

## EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM

### ■ 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

**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.**

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 high school programs for more than 1,400 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services and residential programs extends its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. Recently, The Help Group has launched programs to serve LGBTQ+ youth and homeschooled students. With more than 850 staff members, The Help Group's state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on six campuses in the Los Angeles area and Irvine.

The Help Group is widely regarded for its high standards of excellence and unique scope and breadth of services. 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 and Technology · North Hills Prep

#### Programs

The Help Group - UCLA Autism Alliance  
The Help Group - UCLA Neuropsychology Program  
The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative · Advance LA  
Project Six/The Commons · Kids Like Me Recreational Programs & Camps  
club I.a./club I.a. TEEN · Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism  
The Help Group Child & Family Center · Kaleidoscope  
The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

#### Campuses

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

For more information click here:

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

or 877.943.5747

