

Autism Facts

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause of autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.

In December, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their ADDM autism prevalence report. The report concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to 1 in every 110 births in the United States and almost 1 in 70 in boys.

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.

Autism Symptoms

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play Symptoms
- The characteristic behaviors of autism spectrum disorders may or may not be apparent in infancy (18 to 24 months), but usually become obvious during early childhood (24 months to 6 years).
- As part of a well-baby/well-child visit, your child's doctor should do a "developmental screening," asking specific questions about your baby's progress. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) lists five behaviors that signal further evaluation is warranted:
 - Does not babble or coo by 12 months
 - Does not gesture (point, wave, grasp) by 12 months
 - Does not say single words by 16 months
 - Does not say two-word phrases on his or her own by 24 months
 - Has any loss of any language or social skill at any age
- Having any of these five "red flags" does not mean your child has autism. But because the characteristics of the disorder vary so much, a child showing these behaviors should have further evaluations by a multidisciplinary team. This team may include a neurologist, psychologist, developmental pediatrician, speech/language therapist, learning consultant, or other professionals knowledgeable about autism.

Autism Resources for New Jersey

Autism Family Services of New Jersey realized that there are many worthwhile agencies, organizations, and contacts to assist you through your efforts to raise our children with autism. We will add to our list as time goes by, but we have selected what we consider to be the key links that you will need to get you started.

New Jersey Public and Private Agencies serving the needs of families affected by autism.

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- [POAC Autism Services](#) - a nonprofit group providing free training, services, outreach and support to children and adults with autism and their families and professionals who serve them.
- [Autism New Jersey](#) - COSAC has now become Autism NJ - Autism NJ (COSAC) is dedicated to ensuring that all people with autism receive appropriate, effective services to maximize their growth potential and to enhancing the general public's overall awareness of autism.
- [Easter Seals of New Jersey](#) - Respite, weekends, other support services specific to autism
- [NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) - State-funded services and programs
- [NJ Dept. of Health and Senior Services](#) - Early Intervention Services/guidelines for autism
- [NJ Governor's Council on Autism](#) - Research grants
- [The Autism Center at UMDNJ](#) - NJ Medical School, Diagnoses
- [Children's Specialized Hospital](#) - Diagnoses, programs, and services
- [Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund \(CICRF\)](#)