

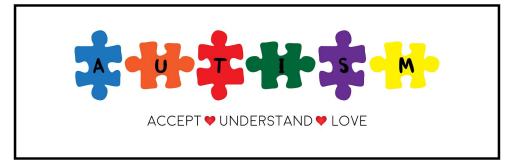
Autism Spectrum Disorder

What is Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?¹

Autism Spectrum Disorder, also known as Autism, is a developmental disorder that affects every 1 in 68 children in the US. It is characterized by:

- Impaired communication ability (may be verbal, partially verbal, or non-verbal);
- Impaired social interaction;
- Restricted and/or repetitive interests (includes repetitive actions; verbally repeating words, phrases, or sentences (i.e. perseverating on a topic)
- Sensory issues—over or under sensory stimulation

However Autism is a spectrum, meaning that a child can be affected in many different ways.

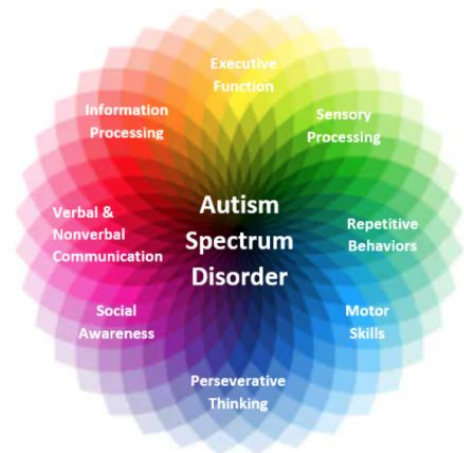


What are some signs of ASD?

Again, each child is different and presentation will vary greatly from case to case. Common areas of difficulty for children with ASD are communication, behavior, and social interactions.

Some of the most common behaviors a child with ASD might exhibit are:

- Difficulty saying their name
- Difficulty expressing their needs or wants
- Repeating certain words or phrases often
- Avoiding eye contact or lacking facial expressions
- Laughing or crying at inappropriate times
- Appearing aloof or uninterested during activities
- Self-stimulating activities such as flapping their hands or twitching fingers.



What are terms that I might hear my doctor use when talking about ASD?

- **AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication system-** ACC is a program that works with children on the spectrum who can't rely on speech to communicate. Alternative forms of communication are utilized such as manual signs and gestures, writing, and pictures to allow the child to express themselves.
- **Sensory Integration-** This is a term that is used to describe how the brain interprets and processes information. It encompasses how we interpret different sounds, smells, tastes, feelings, and textures. Children with ASD often have difficulties with processing some of

this information. Different interventions can be implemented by a Doctor or PT in order to address these difficulties.

- **Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)**- ABA is a therapy program based on learning and behavior. It helps children with ISD increase their language and communication skills, improve their attention span and focus, improve their social skills, memory, and academics, and decrease difficult behaviors.

Good Resource of other common terms and phrases associated with ASD:

<http://autism-support.org/characteristics-for-autism/glossary-of-terms/>

What can physical therapy do for children with ASD?²

Physical therapists are movement specialists and will tailor treatment specific to your child's needs. In general, physical therapy can help your child with ASD work on COORDINATION, POSTURE, general MOTOR SKILLS, and SENSORY activities. Physical therapy can work with and educate parents/caregivers on appropriate, safe activities to do at home in order to help your child.

What activities can I do with my child?

Make sure to discuss different activities that you can do at home with your child with your PT. Your PT will give you individualized activities that will help address your child's goals. These could be related to strength, coordination, balance, or even sensory interventions to do at home.



ASD Resources:

Having a child with ASD can be difficult, but you are not alone! There are many great resources out there that you should take advantage of. Here are a few:

- **Support groups:**
 - [AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP OF GENESEE COUNTY](#)
 - **GLEAN** (Genesee-Livingston Educational Autism Network) Start Coaches Newsletter: [GLEAN START Coaches Newsletter](#)
 - **Autism Support and Resource Center:** [Welcome to the World of Autism - Home](#)
 - **Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START) Project:** [START Project](#)
- **Summer Camps**
 - [POWER Camp - Welcome to the World of Autism](#)

- List of all Special Need Friendly Camps in Michigan
https://www.needymeds.org/camps/list_aos_camps/MI/State

Citations:

1. <https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/about-autism/>
2. <https://www.choosept.com/symptomsconditionsdetail/physical-therapy-guide-to-autism-spectrum-disorder>
3. <https://www.choosept.com/symptomsconditionsdetail/physical-therapy-guide-to-autism-spectrum-disorder>
4. <https://www.asha.org/njc/aac/>
5. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/developmental-disabilities/Pages/Sensory-Integration-Therapy.aspx>
6. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/applied-behavior-analysis-aba-0>