

AUTISM FACT SHEET

Autism Spectrum Disorder ASD is a term to classify a range of Pervasive Developmental Disorders PDD which include Autism, Asperger's, PDD-Nos Not otherwise specified or Atypical Autism.

ASD is a lifelong neurologically based developmental disorder. It is extremely complex and can present in many different ways. This is why it is a "spectrum disorder". For this reason it can be difficult to diagnose.

There are 3 main characteristics: significant delays/impairments to social development; delayed and/or unusual communication; repetitive ritualistic behavior.

The causes are unknown but a family has a 5-10% chance of having a second child with Autism. It is 3:1 more common in boys.

I have heard the rate to be from 1 in 165 to 1 in 105. It is becoming more common and the occurrences are growing. Many people think there are multiple issues, bio-chemical, environmental like pollutions, inability to naturally detox the body, unusual sensitivities, inability to absorb nutrients, PANDAS, Lymes disease, ... Most families have tried a gluten or wheat free, milk or casein free diet.

Children with Autism may have no apparent physical abnormalities. Their behaviours however differ from the norm.

Examples of Social Impairments;

- poor eye contact,
- treats people as objects;
- will not initiate social interaction; has difficulty reading others facial expressions, body language and gestures;
- prefers to play alone or will only parallel play
- doesn't share objects
- aloof behaviour, appears socially awkward
- may react negatively to affection, or may be overly affectionate to people they don't even know
- may not want comforting when hurt
- lack awareness of others, their feelings, their personal space

Communication Impairments:

- delayed development or no speech
- echolalia, or parroting speech
- speaks using memorized clips from movies
- speaks in a monotone without rhythm or change in pitch

- limited use and understanding of jesters
- poor language comprehension
- fails to initiate or maintain conversation
- takes speech for literal meaning

Repetitive, ritualistic behavior:

- attachments to unusual objects
- preoccupation with objects, or certain subjects of interest
- stereotypical motor behavior as hand flapping, or clenching, spinning or rocking
- lining up objects
- need to sameness, routine, rituals
- marked distress over changes to trivial things
- self injurious behavior

Other features include:

- unusual or disturbed sleep pattern
- very restrictive diet
- odd responses to sensory input
- may be over or under stimulated to all 5 senses
- difficulty toilet training
- may be overactive or very passive
- may show aggression and have tantrums
- may have extreme or unusual fears
- may hold objects close to eyes or use peripheral vision to view things.

Autism ONTARIO key focus areas are Awareness, Advocacy and Support

- Research
- Identifying best practices
- government relations (initiated the RDSP program for families)

Membership -quarterly magazine called Autism Matters with articles from families, research, educational practices,etc

Membership provides a good way to feel apart of a whole, it is also a way you can be counted. Government needs to hear from our families, to know there are unmet needs.

Thanks for being a caring community!

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<http://www.autismontario.com/client/aso/ao.nsf/GreyBruce/GreyBruceHome>