



Know the signs of autism

Autism, now referred to as Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), affects about 1 in 44 children in our country today, according to the CDC. ASD is a developmental disability that can affect how a person interacts with others, learns, and behaves. For some people, the symptoms are severe. Others can lead fairly normal, independent lives.

Although experts don't know what causes ASD in many cases, they do know that treating it early can help improve symptoms. Many children with ASD show some signs between one and two years of age.

Now is a great time to learn the early signs of ASD and talk to your child's physician if needed.

Some signs to watch for are if your child:

- Doesn't respond to their name
- Doesn't point, wave, or gesture
- Doesn't look people in the eye or respond to facial expressions
- Doesn't like physical contact with others
- Has obsessive interests in only a few activities
- Repeats words or phrases over and over, often without knowing what they mean
- Performs repeated body movements such as rocking, spinning, or twirling hands or fingers
- Gets very upset with change or differences in routines
- Is very interested in organization, such as lining things up in a certain way
- Talks in a "robot-like" voice with no emotion or change in tone

Keep in mind that one child with ASD will not have exactly the same symptoms as another child with ASD. The number and severity of symptoms can vary a lot.

If your child has one of these signs or you notice any unusual behavior, it doesn't mean your child has ASD. But, you should talk with your child's doctor if you are concerned or have questions about your child's well-being.

