



Early Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder

What traits are seen in children with autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is called a spectrum because there is wide variability between individuals. For example, some children with ASD speak in sentences while others communicate without words. Some children with ASD enjoy interacting with others while some prefer to be alone. Below are examples of the types of behaviors often seen in children with ASD. These are not limited to children with ASD, and not all children with ASD will demonstrate all of these signs.

- Often looks at objects or other places, rather than people's faces or eyes
- Continues with their activity when someone calls their name
- Prefers to play by themselves
- Uses people's hands as tools, such as moving them to objects to request help
- Begins to speak later than peers or loses language over time
- Repeats phrases they have heard others use or seen on a TV show
- Likes routines and feels upset with changes in their environment
- Has an intense, lasting interest in particular objects, actions, or activities
- Enjoys repetitive motions, such as rocking their body or flapping their hands
- Over- or under- sensitive to noises, smells, tastes, and light

What are the next steps?

Contact early intervention:

- Beginning services early in a child's life can help families better meet their child's needs and help improve their child's long-term skills.
- Early intervention is a nationwide program that provides services and support to children under 3 with developmental disabilities or delays.
- Contact information: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/state-text.html
- If you are already enrolled, talk to your speech-language pathologist about your concerns or contact your service coordinator about a referral for a medical diagnostic appointment.