

# WHAT IS AUTISM?

## TODAY, 60 FAMILIES IN AMERICA WILL LEARN THEIR CHILD HAS AUTISM.

According to a 2009 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as many as one out of every 110 children today will be diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

The Autism Society estimates that 1.5 million Americans and their families are now affected. Autism is costing the U.S. at least \$35 billion annually.

Autism knows no racial, ethnic or social boundaries and can affect any family regardless of income, lifestyle or education. The chances of knowing a person or family affected by autism are increasing every single day.

Although the overall incidence of autism is consistent around the globe, it is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls.

## AUTISM IS TREATABLE. HELP THE AUTISM SOCIETY IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ALL AFFECTED BY AUTISM TODAY.



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301.657.0881 or 1.800.3AUTISM  
www.autism-society.org  
United Way/CFC #11808

AUTISM

*imagine  
the possibilities*



*imagine...* A toddler who can't tell you where it hurts or why he is upset.  
... The 8-year-old who is socially awkward and can't relate to her peers.



... The teenager with a developing body, but limited access to programs that help him grow and explore.

... The parents who lose sleep over who will provide care for their adult child with autism after they are gone.

*You are not alone.* The Autism Society advocates for effective services and supports, offers reliable information, and provides a nationwide network of chapters so that parents, professionals, and those on the autism spectrum can meet, share resources and experiences, attend conferences, and receive the latest information.

*imagine*

*imagine...*

...early intervention services that are available to all children who need them.

...a world that celebrates differences and accepts unique learning and communication styles.

...a teenager who receives transition services that promote self-sufficiency and productivity.

...adults with autism living interdependently in their communities with the supports they need to live with dignity and respect.

...hope that solutions are available throughout the lifespan that lead to effective treatment and the highest quality of life.

*the future.*



*The Autism Society  
can't do it alone.*

We need those on the autism spectrum, their families and the professionals who work with them to join our efforts to increase awareness and change how autism is treated.

**Become a member today.**

imagine... a lifetime full of services, resources and support.

## ABOUT AUTISM

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. It is defined by a certain set of behaviors and falls under the diagnostic category of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder. It is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees.

Two individuals, both with the same diagnosis, can act completely different from one another and have varying capabilities. It is important to understand that, whatever the diagnosis, people with autism can learn, improve in functioning, and show improvement with appropriate treatment and education.

Autism can be diagnosed in children as young as one by observation using proper questionnaires and screening tools. A developmental pediatrician, neurologist or psychiatrist familiar with developmental disorders can make a diagnosis.

Studies have shown that early diagnosis and early intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes and better levels of functioning for those on the autism spectrum.



## SOME EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM INCLUDE:

- Lack of or delay in developing spoken language
- Stereotyped or repetitive use of language
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, finger-flicking, twirling objects, exhibiting complex whole-body movements)
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects
- Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals

There are many myths and misconceptions about autism. Contrary to popular belief, many children with autism do make eye contact; it just may be less often or in a different way. While sensory stimulation is processed differently in some children, they can, and do, show and give affection; patience and understanding are needed to recognize and appreciate their unique forms of expression. Many children on the autism spectrum can develop good functional language and others can develop some type of communication skills. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but symptoms may lessen as the child receives appropriate treatment. The Autism Society firmly believes that autism is treatable and, through early intervention, those with autism can live full, productive lives.

## who is the Autism Society?

Founded in 1965, the Autism Society is the oldest and largest nationwide grassroots autism organization. The Autism Society's mission areas include:

**ADVOCACY** The Autism Society is dedicated to increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum. We advocate on the local, state and federal levels.

**EDUCATION** The Autism Society's *Autism Advocate* magazine reports on legislation, research and important topics about living with autism. Since 1970 we have delivered trusted information and referral services to the autism community. Today, this service, Autism Source™, encompasses a free web-based resource directory and trained staff accessible online or via a toll-free number. The Autism Society also hosts a comprehensive website and the largest annual national conference on autism spectrum disorders.

**SUPPORT** The Autism Society's nationwide network of local chapters provides community support and education to families, people on the spectrum and professionals. Autism Source™ staff provide nationwide referrals and other assistance to those who may not know where to turn when faced with the challenges of autism across the lifespan. Reach us at 800-3AUTISM or [info@autism-society.org](mailto:info@autism-society.org).

**SERVICE** The Autism Society is dedicated to increasing access and availability of appropriate services for those on the autism spectrum across the lifespan.

**RESEARCH** The Autism Society is a leader in the support of identifying and fostering treatment-guided research initiatives. We are committed foremost to translating research results into applied practices that improve the everyday lives of those on the autism spectrum.



## MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Join the Autism Society and add your voice to the growing number of families and professionals helping those with autism. You can help!

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

- \$25 ~ Household       \$150 ~ Professional  
 \$50 ~ International       \$1,500 ~ Lifetime  
 \$75 ~ Champion

### DONATION LEVELS:

- \$25     \$50     \$100     \$500     \$1,000

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

(By providing your e-mail, you will receive our e-newsletter. Your e-mail will be kept confidential.)

### PAYMENT INFORMATION:

- Check     Visa     MC     AmEx

NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_

CARD # \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

To join, please mail or fax the attached form, or go to our website, [www.autism-society.org/join](http://www.autism-society.org/join), and join online using our secure server. Please mail or fax to: The Autism Society  
P.O. Box 96223  
Washington, DC 20090-6223  
Fax: 301-657-0869

Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowable under the law. Thank you for your support!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.AUTISM-SOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.AUTISM-SOCIETY.ORG)