

Organizations & Advocacy

Autism Society of America

<http://www.autism-society.org>

Autism Speaks

<http://www.autismspeaks.org>

Assoc. for Science in Autism Treatment

<http://www.asatonline.org>

National Autism Association

<http://www.nationalautismassociation.org>

CDC's Autism Information Center

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd>

National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>



The Autism Awareness Ribbon

The puzzle pattern of this ribbon reflects the mystery and complexity of autism.

The different colors and shapes represents the diversity of people and families living with this disorder.

The brightness of this ribbon signals hope - hope through research and increasing awareness in people like you.



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AUTISM

A Resource Guide for Families



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What is Autism?

According to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (IDEA 2004), Autism is "a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences."

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), autism affects, on average, 1 out of 110 children in the United States. The average age of diagnosis is between 4.5 and 5.5 years.



Assessment & Evaluation

A brief observation in a single setting cannot present a true picture of an individual's abilities and behaviors. Parental (and caregiver) and/or teachers' input and developmental history are important



components of making an accurate diagnosis.

There are many differences between a medical diagnosis and an educational

determination, or school evaluation of a disability. A medical diagnosis is made by a physician based on an assessment of symptoms and diagnostic tests. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR) of the American Psychological Association (2000) a medical diagnosis of autism is most frequently made by a physician; however, there remains no medical test, blood test, or genetic test to determine a diagnosis of autism.

Determination for Special Education Services

An educational determination is made by a multidisciplinary evaluation team comprised of various school professionals. The evaluation results are looked at by a team of qualified professionals and the parents to determine whether a student qualifies for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (Hawkins, 2009).

Educational Programs & Methodologies

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP. The provision for the IEP is explicitly detailed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004).

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

PECS is an augmentative communication system designed to help individuals quickly gain a functional way to communicate (Bondy and Frost, 1994). PECS is suitable for children and adults who are non-verbal or who may speak with limited language skills, articulation difficulties, or a lack of spontaneous speech.

Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)

The TEACCH philosophy is a basic structured teaching strategy to teach persons with autism to use and capitalize on their skills. For example, teaching individuals of all ages using structure, visual schedules and work systems in a natural setting to develop more meaningful skills.

Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS)

CAPS (Henry & Myles, 2007) is a multifaceted program that allows education professionals to know at a glance a student's goals for an activity and what she needs to be successful for each task. Completed by a team, the CAPS can facilitate student independence across settings, activities and people. The structure of this programming tool gives it broad applicability for children and youth with AS. Best of all, it is simple to develop and use.