



FACT SHEET | U of M LEND Program

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

What are autism spectrum disorders?

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of complex developmental brain disorders. Scientists do not know yet exactly causes this problem. ASDs can impact a person's functioning at different levels, from very mildly to severely. But individuals with Autism may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most people. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary—from gifted to severely challenged. Autistic disorder is the most commonly know type of ASD, but there are others, including "pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified" (PDD-NOS) and Asperger Syndrome. Current estimates of the prevalence of ASD (the percentage of the population with ASDs) is 1/110 individuals

What are some of the signs of ASDs

People with ASDs may have problems with social, emotional, and communication skills. They might repeat certain behaviors

and might not want change in their daily activities. Many people with ASDs also have different ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to things. ASDs begin during early childhood and last throughout a persons' life. To receive this diagnosis there must be some signs of ASD before the age of 3. Because early detection and intervention for autism is so important, there is a push to make this diagnosis as early as possible.

If your baby shows any of these signs, please ask your pediatrician or family practitioner for an immediate evaluation —

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by nine months or thereafter
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months
- No words by 16 months

- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age

*This information has been provided by First Signs, Inc. ©2001-2005. Reprinted with permission. For more information about recognizing the early signs of developmental and behavioral disorders, visit <http://www.firstsigns.org> or the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/actearly.

What can I do if I think my child has an ASD?

Talk with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your doctor thinks there could be a problem, ask for a referral to see a developmental pediatrician or other specialist. The University Of Minnesota's Autism Spectrum and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Clinic provides comprehensive evaluations to patients to ensure an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan. The team reviews all aspects of the evaluation and conducts

a team summary conference with patients' parents to review findings and develop an action plan. The Clinic's staff will coordinate referral consultations to other disciplines, if necessary. The staff will also monitor developmental progress and response to intervention. To schedule an appointment call 612-626-6777; if you have questions call Desirae Rambeck at 612-624-0171. <http://www.uofmchildrenshospital.org/Autism/index.asp>

The Minnesota Department of Education helps ensure that all Minnesota families with infants, toddlers, and preschool children experiencing developmental delays or disabilities have access to early intervention services close to home. The following website allows you to search for your school district services by county. If you do not have access to the internet, you can call the MN Department of Education at 1-866-693-4769. You will then be connected with the services in your area. <http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/index.html>

If your child is already in school, you have the right to request an evaluation if not already completed. The request should be made in writing and given to the school psychologist and teacher; please keep a copy for yourself. Please note that an education evaluation does not replace a medical evaluation and diagnosis. **A medical diagnosis may still be needed to access some of the necessary.**

For more information on autism support and advocacy

- Autism Society of Minnesota
www.ausm.org
- Autism Society of America
www.autism-society.org
- Autism Speaks
www.autismspeaks.org
- ARC of Minnesota
arcmn.org
- ARC Greater Twin Cities:
www.arcgreatertwincities.org
- Pacer
www.pacer.org

Parent/sibling/family support groups

- <http://www.ausm.org/supportServices/supportGroups.asp>
- <http://www.arcgreatertwincities.org/calendar.aspx>
- <http://www.pacer.org/p2p/index.asp>
- <http://www.arcgreatertwincities.org/family-connections.aspx>
- www.aspergersmn.org

Medical autism evaluation

- Autism Spectrum and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Clinic, University of Minnesota
612-626-6777
<http://www.med.umn.edu/peds/clinneuro/autism/>
- Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Bonnie Carlson-Green
651-220-6753
www.childrensmn.org
- Fraser Child & Family Center
612-331-9413
www.fraser.org

Home-based early intervention educational therapy

- Behavioral Dimensions
Hopkins MN 55343
952-814-0207
www.behavioraldimensions.com

- Fraser Child & Family Center
Minneapolis MN 55414
612-331-9413
www.fraser.org
- Lovaas Institute-LIFE Midwest Treatment Headquarters
Minneapolis MN 55416
612-281-8331
www.lovaas.com
- MN Early Autism Project Inc (MEAP)
Maple Grove, MN 55369
763-425-0792
www.meapkids.org

Center-based early intervention educational therapy

- Autism Matters Inc.
Minnetonka, MN 55305
952-544-0349
www.autismmatters.net
- Fraser Center Based Day Treatment
Minneapolis MN 55414
612-861-1688
www.fraser.org
- Minnesota Autism Center
Minnetonka MN 55345
952-767-4200
www.mnautism.org
- Partners in Excellence
www.pieofmn.com
 - » Burnsville location
952-405-2583
 - » North St. Paul location
651-773-5988
 - » Edina location
952-358-6220
- St. David's Center for Child & Family Development
Minnetonka MN 55305
952-939-0395
www.stdavidscenter.org
- The Holland Center
Excelsior MN 55331
952-401-9359
www.hollandcenter.com
- The Lazarus Project
Minnetonka MN 55305
763-519-1197
www.lazarusprojectmn.org