

NEW OAKLAND NEWS



NEW OAKLAND
CHILD-ADOLESCENT & FAMILY CENTER

Contents

- 1 *What is Autism?*
- 2 *What is Autism? ...cont., Meet the Director of Adult Services*
- 3 *KID'S ZONE: Autism Fact Sheet; Just for Kids, Fill in the Missing Words*
- 4 *6 Autism Facts Every Parent Should Know*

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www.NewOakland.org

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What is Autism?



The Child With Autism.

Most infants and young children are very social creatures who need and want contact with others to thrive and grow. They smile, cuddle, laugh, and respond eagerly to games like “peek-a-boo” or “hide-and-seek”. Occasionally, however, a child does not interact in this expected manner. Instead, the child seems to exist in his or her own world, a place characterized by repetitive routines, odd and peculiar behaviors, problems in communication, and a total lack of social awareness or interest in others. These are characteristics of a developmental disorder called autism.

Autism is usually identified by the time a child is 30 months old. It is often discovered when parents become concerned that their child may be deaf, is not yet talking, resists cuddling, and avoids interaction with others.

Some of the early signs and symptoms which suggest a young child may need further evaluation for autism include:

- No smiling by six months of age.
- No back and forth sharing of sounds, smiles or facial expressions by nine months.
- No babbling, pointing, reaching or waving by 12 months.
- No single words by 16 months.
- No two word phrases by 24 months.
- Regression in development.
- Any loss of speech, babbling or social skills.

A preschool age child with “classic” autism is generally withdrawn, aloof, and fails to respond to other people. Many of these children will not even make eye contact. They may also engage in odd or ritualistic behaviors like rocking, hand flapping, or an obsessive need to maintain order.

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...WHAT IS AUTISM?

Many children with autism do not speak at all. Those who do may speak in rhyme, have echolalia (repeating a person's words like an echo), refer to themselves as a "he" or "she," or use peculiar language.

The severity of autism varies widely, from mild to severe. Some children are very bright and do well in school, although they have problems with school adjustment. They may be able to live independently when they grow up. Other children with autism function at a much lower level. Mental retardation is commonly associated with autism. Occasionally, a child with autism may display an extraordinary talent in art, music, or another specific area.

The cause of autism remains unknown, although current theories indicate a problem with the function or structure of the central nervous system. What we do know, however, is that parents do not cause autism.

Children with autism need comprehensive evaluation and specialized behavioral and educational programs. Some children with autism may also benefit from treatment with medication. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are trained to diagnose autism, and to help families design and implement an appropriate treatment plan. They can also help families cope with the stress which may be associated with having a child with autism.

Although there is no cure for autism, appropriate specialized treatment provided early in life can have a positive impact on the child's development and produce an overall reduction in disruptive behaviors and symptoms. ❖

AACAP, Facts For Families



Autism Assessment
1-800-395-FACE
(3223)

800-395-FACE (3223)

www.NewOakland.org

Meet the Director of Adult Services



Sarva Sarvananda, MD

Dr. Sarva currently serves as the Director of Adult Psychiatric Services at New Oakland Child-Adolescent and Family Center. He has worked in various psychiatric inpatient, outpatient and day treatment settings.

Presently, Dr. Sarva is a treating psychiatrist across all New Oakland Facilities and works providing services in both the outpatient and **FACE to FACE** Crisis Intervention and Day Treatment Program. Dr. Sarva has worked for over 30 years in mental health and brings with him extensive experience in adolescent and adult psychiatry and clinical based pharmaceutical research. Dr. Sarva enjoys spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren. Also, in his free time, Dr. Sarva enjoys reading, travelling, gardening and walking his dogs. ❖

FIVE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

West Bloomfield Center
5775 W. Maple Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48322
(248) 855-1540

Livonia Center
31500 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150
(734) 422-9340

Clinton Township Center
42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
(586) 412-5321

NOW OPEN

Clarkston Center
6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
248-620-6400

Warren Center
26522 Van Dyke Ave.
Center Line, MI 48015
586-759-4400

KID'S ZONE!

AUTISM FACT SHEET: JUST FOR KIDS

WHAT IS AUTISM?

When a person has autism, it means that something in their brain is different from other peoples' brains. This causes them to act differently than other people.

People with autism sometimes have trouble understanding what other people are saying. They can have a hard time using words to say what they need, and they might end up saying the same word or sentence over and over.

Some kids with autism may be happy, but all of a sudden they will become sad or mad and might even have a tantrum. It might be because they can't tell people what they need or want.

DO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM GO TO SCHOOL?

Yes, children with autism go to school to learn just like you. You might even know someone who has autism. They could be in your class or maybe in a class that is just for them.

WHAT ARE KIDS WITH AUTISM LIKE WHEN THEY GET OLDER?

Lots of people with autism can learn to do all sorts of things when they grow up. They might have a job at a grocery store or as an artist or even working on a computer. Even though autism never goes away, many people with autism learn to make friends, do a job and have a very happy life.

HOW SHOULD I ACT AROUND SOMEONE WITH AUTISM?

Just remember people with autism aren't that much different from you. Just like you, they can do some things better than others. Just like you, they have lots of different feelings. They might feel happy, sad, excited, frustrated, proud, lonely, or loving - just like you. It is important to know that even if someone with autism acts different from you or your friends, they still have feelings and they care about other people. You should always try to be a caring person too! So just be yourself when you're with someone who has autism. You may even make a new friend! ❖

FACE to FACE Crisis Intervention and Assessment Program

800-395-FACE (3223)

Fill in the Missing Words

1. When a person has autism, it means that their _____ is different from other peoples' brains.
2. People with autism sometimes have trouble _____ what other people are saying.
3. Children with autism might _____ in a different way than other kids.

4. Sometimes kids with autism might become sad or mad all of a sudden because they can't tell people what they _____.
5. People with autism aren't much _____ from you.
6. People with autism have _____ and care about other people.
7. Be _____ when you're with someone who has autism.

FEELINGS
PLAY
BRAIN
YOURSELF
NEED
DIFFERENT
UNDERSTANDING



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6 AUTISM FACTS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

Although the severity of autism can vary widely, many children with the neurological disorder -- which typically appears in the first three years of life -- have problems speaking, interacting with others, sharing affection, and learning. Thanks to the tireless efforts of parents and advocates, public awareness of autism has grown tremendously since it was first identified in 1943, but it is gaining even more attention today than ever before. Researchers are beginning to make progress in unraveling this baffling disorder, and the number of resources available for families is increasing. Here are six facts about autism that every parent should know.

1. RATES ARE ON THE RISE

Autism is ten times more common today than it was in the 1980s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than three in 1,000 children in this country have autism to some degree. Although there seems to be an autism epidemic, most experts attribute the increasing prevalence to improved diagnosis and reporting. The definition of autism has been expanded in the past decade to include a wider spectrum of problems with communication and social interaction. However, there may be additional, unknown reasons for the spike in autism rates, and researchers are investigating everything from environmental toxins to viruses to food allergies.

2. KIDS ARE GETTING DIAGNOSED SOONER

There's no laboratory or medical test for detecting autism, so doctors must rely on behavioral signs. In the past, many were reluctant to label a child as autistic until symptoms became obvious. And while no one is yet diagnosing autism in children in the first year of life, doctors can now make a reliable assessment by 24 months -- when a child's brain is still rapidly developing, which will help with intervention and treatment.

3. AUTISM IS A GENETIC DISORDER

Although autism was once believed to be the result of improper parenting, researchers now believe that genes -- not psychological factors -- are to blame. Experts believe that autism is the result of multiple genes -- anywhere from three to 20 -- interacting with each other. This may explain why the symptoms and severity of the disorder vary greatly. These genes may cause a baby's brain to develop abnormally in utero or make him more susceptible to unknown triggers. Although the genes linked to autism have not yet been pinpointed, intense research is under way.

4. THERE IS NO KNOWN SCIENTIFIC LINK BETWEEN VACCINES AND AUTISM

There's been widespread controversy about a possible connection between vaccines and the soaring autism rates. Although one small, heavily

publicized British study published in 1998 suggested a link, ten of the 13 authors publicly retracted the findings, saying they were unreliable. (The lead researcher reportedly had a conflict of interest because he was also working with lawyers filing a suit against vaccine manufacturers.)

5. LARGE HEAD SIZE IS A RED FLAG

Recent findings published in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggest that the brains of children with autism develop differently from an early age. Researchers discovered that most infants who were later diagnosed with autism had small head circumferences at birth but had heads -- and brains -- much larger than normal by 6 to 14 months. Regardless, don't panic if your baby's head size is above the norm. Some babies just have big heads.

6. EARLY TREATMENT IS CRUCIAL

There is no known cure for autism, but intensive therapy helps a child learn a wide range of skills -- from making eye contact to hugging to having a conversation. One of the biggest remaining challenges is the shortage of trained therapists and spots in special-education programs and schools for children with autism. While there's still much about autism that remains a mystery, research scientists are making new discoveries every day. ❖

800-395-FACE (3223)

FACE to FACE 7 Step Approach to Family Crisis Assessment & Intervention

www.NewOakland.org