

NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

THERE IS NO ONE TYPE OF AUTISM, BUT MANY

The twelfth annual World Autism Awareness Day was on April 2, 2019. Joined by the international community, hundreds of thousands of landmarks, buildings, homes and communities around the world, light blue in recognition of people living with autism. Autism-friendly events and educational activities take place all month to increase understanding, acceptance and foster worldwide support.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in the United States today.

We know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently.¹

ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, but is about 4 times more common among boys than among girls.²

“If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism.”- DR. STEPHEN SHORE.¹



SYMBOLS:

The Autism Awareness Ribbon – The puzzle pattern reflects the complexity of the autism spectrum. The different colors and shapes represent the diversity of the people and families living with the condition. The brightness of the ribbon signals hope – hope that through increased awareness of autism, and through early intervention and access to appropriate services/supports, people with autism will lead full lives able to interact with the world on the own terms.³

FACTS:

- * In 2018 the CDC determined that approximately 1 in 37 boys & 1 in 151 girls are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
 - * Most children were still being diagnosed after age 4, though autism can be reliably diagnosed as early as age 2.
 - * 31% of children with ASD have an intellectual disability (intelligence quotient [IQ] <70)
 - 25% are in the borderline range (IQ 71–85)
 - 44% have IQ scores in the average to above average range (i.e., IQ >85).
 - * An estimated one-third of people with autism are nonverbal.
 - * Early intervention affords the best opportunity to support healthy development and deliver benefits across the lifespan.
 - * There is no medical detection for autism.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

- Children or adults with ASD might:

 - * not look at objects when another person points at them
 - * have trouble relating to others or not have an interest in other people at all
 - * avoid eye contact and want to be alone
 - * have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
 - * prefer not to be held or cuddled, or might cuddle only when they want to
 - * be very interested in people, but not know how to talk, play, or relate to them
 - * repeat or echo words or phrases said to them, or repeat words or phrases in place of normal language
 - * repeat actions over and over again
 - * have trouble adapting when a routine changes



1. <https://www.autismspeaks.org>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>
3. <http://www.autism-society.org/about-the-autism-society/history/autism-awareness-ribbon/>
4. Photos: Bing.com