1. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a complex set of neurological disorders that severely impair social and communicative functioning.
2. Autism affects about 1 in 36 children in the United States.
3. Autism is about 4 times more likely in boys than girls.
4. Autism affects children of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
5. Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means that every child with Autism has different skills, challenges, and needs.
6. While we do not know all of the causes of Autism, we have learned that there are likely many contributing factors, including genes, early brain development, and the environment.
7. Autism can be reliably diagnosed by age 2, but children may be diagnosed at earlier ages.
8. Early identification of Autism helps children get the services they need earlier.
9. There is no “cure” for Autism, but there are several interventions that can help children learn important skills that improve everyday life.
10. Children with Autism can learn and succeed in the classroom and beyond.
11. Individuals with ASD can range from having cognitive impairments to having typical or above average IQs.
12. Typical Autism behaviors include lack of interest in other people and other social challenges, stereotyped actions (hand flapping, body rocking), insistence on sameness and resistance to change.
13. In some cases, aggression or self-injurious behaviors are a typical Autism Spectrum Disorder behavior.
14. Between 30-50% of people with autism have seizures.
15. Autism was originally believed to be a form of schizophrenia brought on by a traumatic experience or bad parenting. This is not the case.
16. Autism is highly heritable. There are many genetic and environmental factors involved with autism.
17. About 15% of cases of autism can be linked to a specific gene mutation.
18. Some of the environmental factors that have been studied include medical conditions in parents, age, toxic chemicals, medications taken during pregnancy and before pregnancy.
19. It is possible to detect signs of autism in infants as young as 6-18 months.
20. A sign or early identification marker does not mean a child will go on to receive a diagnosis. It means that they need specific support services as early as possible.
21. Older babies and toddlers may fail to respond to their names, avoid eye contact, lack joint attention, or engage in repetitive movements such as rocking, or arm flapping.
22. Parents who are concerned their child is not meeting developmental milestones, should contact a developmental pediatrician and request a developmental screening.
23. There are a number of standardized tools that can inform clinical judgment about whether the diagnosis is autism or something else.
24. Scientists agree that the earlier a child receives early intervention services the better the child’s prognosis.
25. Most individuals with autism will need support and services throughout their lifetime.
26. Applied behavioral analysis (ABA), occupational, speech, and physical therapies are frequently used in Autism treatment.
27. Therapy includes teaching methods of social interaction, such as making better eye contact.
28. Medications, such as antidepressants, anti-seizure medication, or stimulants, are sometimes prescribed to treat conditions that may occur alongside Autism, such as anxiety, ADHD, epilepsy, or depression.
29. People with Autism have a greater risk of contracting other health conditions such as constipation, obesity, insomnia, and epilepsy.
30. In general, symptoms of Autism tend to involve communication skills and social behaviors, such as difficulty recognizing others' intentions and feelings or not making eye contact.
31. Lack of verbal skills is one of the most well-known symptoms of Autism.
32. Approximately 40% of people with autism are nonverbal, according to Autism Speaks—but this does not happen in every case.
33. Other signs of Autism in children include being overly sensitive to noise, throwing intense tantrums, not responding when spoken to, not pointing at interesting objects, or not playing "pretend" games by 18 months.