

Autism

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 54 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.

Teaching Strategies:

- Create a classroom routine.
- Use preparatory commands and commands of execution to cue transitions.
- Give fewer choices.
- Use appropriate technology.
- Treat them like any other kid as much as possible

Cause:

- having an immediate family member with autism
- genetic mutations
- fragile X syndrome and other genetic disorders
- being born to older parents
- low birth weight
- metabolic imbalances
- exposure to heavy metals and environmental toxins
- a history of viral infections
- fetal exposure to the medications valproic acid (Depakene) or thalidomide (Thalomid)

Symptoms:

- Autism symptoms typically become clearly evident during early childhood, between 12 and 24 months of age. However, symptoms may also appear earlier or later.
- Early symptoms may include a marked delay in language or social development.
- The DSM-5 divides symptoms of autism into two categories: problems with communication and social interaction, and restricted or repetitive patterns of behavior or activities.