

Understanding Autism and Developmental Disorders

What is Autism?

- Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders that affect a person's ability to communicate, understand language, play and relate to others.

The Autism Spectrum

- There are 5 disorders classified under the umbrella category officially known as Pervasive Developmental Disorders:
 - Autism
 - Asperger Syndrome
 - Rett Syndrome
 - Childhood Disintegrative Syndrome
 - Pervasive Developmental Disorder

Three Areas Children with Autism have difficulty:

- Social Interaction
- Communication
- Behavior

Social Symptoms

- May have difficulty engaging in give-and-take interaction
- May seem indifferent to other people, prefer to be alone
- May resist attention or passively accept physical affection
- May struggle to interpret social cues, gestures, and expressions
- May have difficulty regulating emotions

Communication Difficulties

- May have delayed language
- May use language in unusual ways
- May carry on a monologue on a favorite subject
- May have difficulty understanding body language, tone of voice