

## **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

*With the increased emphasis on screening for developmental delays in infants and children up to five years of age, we can expect our families to be experiencing more interruptions into their home lives. Developmental disorders such as Asperger's, Rett Syndrome, childhood disintegration, etc., being now included with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), has increased the prevalence of autism diagnoses. Causes and cures are still elusive, but it is thought early intervention will benefit the child and family; thus, the push for early detection with screening tests by the health professionals—primarily pediatricians, preschools, and kindergartens.*

**How is ASD diagnosed?** - Primarily by developmental milestones for infants and children up to and including age five years that may be found in, “**A Guide to Your Child’s Development**”, authored by Doernbecher Children’s Hospital, Oregon Health & Science University (877-346-0640 or 503-346-0640). There are many different testing materials used by the various health and educational providers.

**What are the diagnostic criteria used?** - For the diagnosis, four basic pieces of information must be present: 1) social dysfunction; 2) restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities; 3) must be present in early childhood; 4) must cause significant impairment in important areas of current functioning.

**What may some of the daily symptoms be?** - Poor stress management (anxieties, or the opposite extreme), inattention and hyperactivity, fine motor and gross motor difficulties, language disorders, cognitive abnormalities, etc.

**Can these behaviors be minimized?** - Yes, to some extent, but no cures have been documented (Some apparent cures may have resulted from improper diagnoses). There have been some early intervention programs such as **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)** that was modified from the **Young Autism Project (YAP)** where claims of cures have come, but questionable research methods have plagued its reliability. Medications have proven to help peers and adults to tolerate the autistic child; but they have not proven to cure or benefit the child significantly educationally.

Moore Academy has experienced and degreed staff in special education who understand children with behavioral and learning differences. Our educational and life skills are adapted to each child's individual needs. The one-on-one nature of home schooling is one of the beneficial aspects along with the work/service education that we promote. These are the basics of many of the most successful programs for these children.

***Resource: Autism Speaks <https://www.autismspeaks.org>***