

# [Autism, what it is](https://assignbuster.com/autism-what-it-is/)

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If I go out in public with my cousin, people stare. He’s seven years old and has Autism Spectrum Disorder.

If I were to ask him if he wanted to eat lunch he would imitate me, and reply, “ Do you want to eat lunch?” He might flap his hands or cry out in frustration if he was trying to communicate and failing to do so. The way he sees the world is not wrong it’s just different. It is extremely difficult to reach him and to understand what he’s seeing. In my opinion, Autism is one of the greater mysteries. There are many people like my cousin and the least we can do is attempt to understand them and to give them a chance. In the United States, about one child in every one hundred and fifty children is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The rate of Autism has increased dramatically over the years and it is impossible to say exactly how much it has increased, because of the limited reports on Autism cases. Because of the increasing precedence of Autism, the public must be informed on how it is defined, how it is diagnosed, and how it is treated. Autism is extremely difficult to define because it is different for every individual diagnosed with it. Autism is a developmental disorder that limits a child’s social skills and prevents them from having an average life in today’s world. There are multiple speculated causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

With the available information about autism it is impossible to know the sure cause. Six percent of autistic children have autism caused by a fragile chromosome given to them by their father. Generally, this will cause mental retardation but a third of the time it causes ASD. This is called fragile X Syndrome. Bernard Rimland says that genes in an autistic child with may have caused their bodies to be unable to handle toxins that are usually not toxic to children with out ASD.

The Baren Cohen Theory says that the higher the testosterone levels in the womb, the more likely the baby will turn out to have autism. Many people suggest that Autism runs in families because if a child has ASD it is more likely that his or her siblings will also carry autistic traits. It is also extremely likely that if one identical twin has ASD or shares autistic traits, then the other twin will too. Both of these facts suggest that Autism has an underlining relation to genes that could help to solve the mystery of the cause of Autism. Another theory is that some children are more genetically susceptible to certain environmental toxins that will cause Autism. Science has not yet discovered a definite proven cause of autism and the theories listed above are just that, theories.

It is important to keep searching for the cause so that it may lead way to a cure. It is very important for a child to be diagnosed as soon as possible in order to begin immediate therapies that can raise the likelihood of a full recovery. Children can be diagnosed by the age of three. Occasionally autism is related to seizures. You are much more likely to meet an autistic boy than girl, that’s because boys are much more susceptible to autism than girls.

For every autistic girl there are four autistic boys. There are multiple signs of ASD. Some children with ASD are echolalic. Echolalic is when some one learns and understands language but cannot use it in order to communicate. This may result in a person repeating the words being spoken to them as a response.

Forty percent of children with ASD do not use words at all. Autism often increases a person’s sensitivity. For example, they are sometimes abnormally ‘ picky’ about what they eat, they might only enjoy food of a certain color, or maybe they cannot eat a type of food with a certain texture. This sensitivity applies to all of their senses. Some one with autism may need to wear tight clothes like spandex, in order to feel safe and secure.

Some one with autism may be sensitive to large crowds and loud noises too. Autism can also lead to repetitive actions. For example, some one with ASD may have an obsession with stacking objects, opening and closing drawers, or even carrying a piece of trash where ever they go. Most have a repetitive behavior like flapping or even picking. A child with ASD may not respond well to affection. As babies they may not immitate words or smile at their parents.

They might struggle when hugged by a parent, or pull away from their mother’s kisses on the cheek. Some will not meet people’s eye. Some may not even turn to the sound of their names. Autistic children find social interaction difficult. For instance, they wouldn’t want to play with another child or have a conversation with them.

They wouldn’t think up imaginary games either. In my opinion, the heart of autism is the inability to socialize the way others typically do. Some people with ASD need a very particular and constant routine. They might have a melt down if asked to change something in their routine too. They do not understand the pleasure in a spontaneous action.

There are two degrees of ASD, high functioning, and low functioning. If some one has low functioning autism then they can use little language if any at all. Children with low functioning autism appear to be in their own world and might prefer to study a blank wall than to play with other children. They may ‘ freak out’ if around crowds too. They may not nod or shake their heads for yes and no.

Some people believe that their facial expression can appear to be ‘ blank’, or ‘ robotic’. Children with high functioning autism are awkward but much better off socially then those who are low functioning. Their verbal skills are appropriate for their age though they may have trouble using them in the way that most people do, and will often take common phrases literally. If some one told them to ‘ Chill’, they might believe that they were being told to ‘ Freeze’, rather than to calm down. People with high functioning autism are capable of living their lives with out assistance but may sometimes be socially handicapped.

Autism is one of five developmental disorders. The other four are, Child hood Disintegrative Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome, Rhett’s Disorder, and the Pervasive Developmental Disorder. A child with Child hood Disintegrative disorder will have average language, social interaction, and learning until the time they are around ten. By this time the child will start to back track in development. The child loses language, social interaction, and quits making up make-believe games.

Parents report that their child appears to be ‘ gone’. Chances of improvement are considerably less than for an autistic child. If a baby has Rhett’s disorder then the baby will stop developing between five and thirty months. Rhett’s disorder is allegedly caused by a gene mutation and almost always only affects girls. Rhett’s disorder always includes mental retardation and a loss of language skills. A child with Rhett’s disorder may appear autistic at first but are very different because they will be mentally retarded where as an autistic child could be extremely intelligent just unreachable.

Asperger syndrome is a form of extremely high functioning autism. People with Aspergers tend to have compulsive repetitive behaviors similar to those who have low functioning autism. They have verbal skills appropriate for their age and have average intelligence if not gifted intelligence. A person with Aspergers may notice the details rather than look at the larger picture. People with Apergers have awkward social skills and have a difficult time with making friends.

They are sometimes described as people who see the world differently than others. Pervasive Developmental disorder is basically the category where “ miss fits” with autistic qualities are placed. Any children that possess autistic qualities but do not possess enough to count as having a specific disorder are placed in this category. There are multiple developmental disorders including autism and we have yet to discover exactly how they are related if they even are at all. Autism is not curable, but it is treatable.

It is questionable whether or not certain treatments are the best, but a sure fact is that it depends on the individual being treated. When treating a child with ASD it is important to understand that verbal and academic ability may not appropriately indicate the amount of difficulties that an ASD affected person may be having. One type of treatment is the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This treatment is most effective in the first years of a child’s life, which is why it is best for a child to be diagnosed sooner as opposed to later. In this treatment, good behaviors such as responding to their names are rewarded while bad behavior is ignored. This treatment relies on repetitive training to ensure that the message was received.

Another treatment is the Developmental Individual Difference Relationship Based (DIR). This treatment attempts to relate to a child with ASD through emotions and interests. The point of this treatment is to help autistic children express themselves and emotions in a more understandable way. It is debatable on whether or not a healthier diet will help lessen the affects of autism, because autism mainly differs with the individual. Any technique that improves an autistic person’s ability to mange stress is worth trying and could help. Autism is a complex phenomenon that we are just beginning to understand.

More and more people are diagnosed with it every year and it is important to keep searching for the answer to what it means to be autistic. I look forward to the new revelations that science will bring, and hope that the lives of autistic individuals will be welcomed because our new understanding. Works Cited Allman, Toney. Autism. Farmington Hills: Lucent Books, 2010.

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