

Our Vision:

All Coloradoans affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders will have ready access to the services and supports they need to be safe, educated, healthy, productive and able to pursue happy and fulfilling lives.



What we do!

ASC's locally based, professional staff serves individuals with ASDs, families, providers and policy makers throughout the state of Colorado by providing the most current and accurate information and referrals; implementing programs that promote quality of life; advancing legislation to increase funding for treatment and support; and heightening community awareness of the need for assistance and services.

ASC has four main programs:

- Information and Referral - We help people in the here and now with professional, knowledgeable answers - *we answer the call!*
- Education - We offer speaking engagements, provider trainings, and informational seminars for the community.
- Policy - Spearheaded over a dozen laws resulting in over \$50 million in supports that have benefited tens of thousands of Coloradoans.
- Community Enrichment - We host social and educational events - with child care provided!

1 out of every 110
children will be
diagnosed with an
autism spectrum disorder.

Your Support is Needed!



87 cents of every dollar donated goes to support our programs!

Your **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION*** helps us improve the lives of all affected by autism.

*Donations of \$300+ per year qualify for the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit - visit our website to learn more!

Please contact us about donating, volunteering and other ways to get involved!

720.214.0794 or 1.877.COLO.ASD
www.AutismColorado.org
550 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 100
Lakewood, CO 80226-3316

Sources:

- JFK Partners (an interdepartmental program of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine). Email to ASC. 10 Jan, 2008.
- *Colorado Autism Commission Report - Executive Summary*. Denver: Colorado Autism Commission, 2010.

AUTISM SOCIETY

Colorado

*Improving the Lives of
All Affected by Autism*



The Autism Society of Colorado (ASC)
is a chapter of the Autism Society

What is autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorders are developmental disabilities that cause substantial impairments in the areas of social interaction, communication, and behavior often characterized by the presence of restricted interests and/or repetitive behavior. In short, Autism Spectrum Disorders affect the brain's normal development of social and communication skills.

Presentation can range from an individual who appears to be completely cognitively impaired, with no communication strategy, no give and take social interaction and melt-down behaviors; to an individual who is extremely bright, talks a lot and is socially awkward; and everything in between.

The term Autism Spectrum Disorder includes Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified and Asperger's Syndrome.

Are there treatments?

Yes, and they are most successful when geared toward each individual's particular needs. While many symptoms can be improved, most people with autism will have some symptoms throughout their lives. A variety of effective therapies are available, including:

- behavioral interventions
- speech-language, occupational and physical therapies
- vocational training and mentoring
- social and recreational opportunities
- lifestyle interventions (nutrition/diet, exercise, medication, etc.)



Is there a cure?

There is currently no known cure. Early, intensive and appropriate treatments, however, can greatly improve behavior, development of functional skills, communication and IQ.

What else do I need to know?

- ASC can help by providing current and accurate information and resource referrals.
- Autism is a biological disorder of brain development, which is identified through behavioral observation — there are no medical tests to diagnose autism.
- Biological and environmental factors appear to play an important role. There is a strong genetic component, though the actual genetics of the disorders are unknown.
- All routine pediatric exams should include a developmental screening.
- Any loss of language or social skills should be evaluated.
- Evaluations, however thorough and well meaning, cannot predict a child's potential.
- Autism occurs in males about four times more than in females.

What do I look for?

Red Flags for Identifying ASDs May Include:

Social Interaction:

- Shows a lack of empathy
- Does not make friends; is withdrawn
- Prefers to be alone rather than with others
- May not respond to eye contact or smiles
- May actually avoid eye contact
- May treat others as if they are objects
- Does not play interactive games

Communication:

- Does not point to direct others' attention
- Does not adjust gaze to look where others are looking
- Cannot start or sustain a social conversation
- Develops language slowly or not at all
- Repeats words or memorized passages
- Does not refer to self correctly
- Uses nonsense rhyming
- Communicates with gestures instead of words

Response to Sensory Information:

- Has heightened or low senses
- Seems to have a heightened or low response to pain
- May withdraw from physical contact because it is over stimulating or overwhelming
- Does not startle at loud noises
- May find normal noises painful and hold hands over ears
- Rubs surfaces, mouths or licks objects

Play:

- Shows little pretend or imaginative play
- Does not imitate the actions of others
- Prefers solitary or ritualistic play

Behaviors:

- Has a short attention span
- Uses repetitive body movements
- Shows a strong need for sameness
- "Acts up" with intense tantrums
- Has very narrow interests
- Demonstrates perseveration (repetitive behaviors)
- Shows aggression to others or self
- Is overactive or very passive

Language Milestones:

- Babbling by 12 months
- Gesturing by 12 months (pointing, waving)
- Single words by 16 months
- Two-word spontaneous phrases by 24 months (not just echoing)