

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

According to recent statistics from the Center for Disease Control, about 1 in 68 children are identified as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), making it one of the fastest growing developmental disabilities in the U.S. Unlike many psychological conditions, early diagnosis is generally reliable and crucial in terms of treatment and intervention.

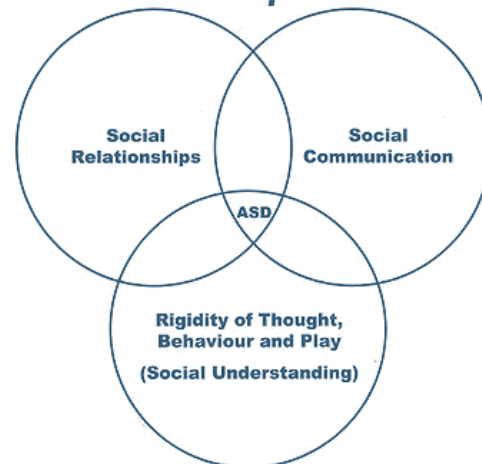
## WHAT IS ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a psychological disorder characterized by significant difficulties with social interaction, a strict adherence to rules or routines, and/or a fixation on a particular interest. The term *spectrum* refers to the wide array of symptoms, skills, and levels of impairment that individuals with ASD can display. The latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* eliminated the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome as the characteristics of Asperger's syndrome are now included under the umbrella of ASD.

## COMMON TRAITS

- Withdraw from peers/are socially isolated
- Want friends, but struggle keeping them
- Interrupt or interject with off-topic comments
- Have poorly developed fine and/or gross motor skills
- Exhibit repetitive behaviors
- Restricted/hyper focus on interests or activities
- Low frustration tolerance
- Struggle with time management/organization
- Doesn't understand social norms/cues
- May have sensory issues (sensitivity to light/sound)
- Difficulty understanding jokes/sarcasm

## Triad of Impairments



## TREATMENT

There are no medications available to treat ASD, although some students on the spectrum may take medications commonly used to treat ADHD or depression as these have a high comorbidity with ASD. The best method of treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorders is a combination of behavior modification, social skills training, and communication skills training.

## ACCOMMODATIONS/RESOURCES

- Single room
- Weekly check-ins with Disability Resources
- Assistive Technology (Kurzweil/Dragon)
- Peer Note Taker/Class Power Points
- Extended time on exams/quizzes
- Weekly Social Skills group
- Peer Mentoring

***“A disability is usually defined in terms of what is missing. But autism is as much about what is abundant as what is missing, an over-expression of the very traits that make our species unique.”***

***-Paul Collins***