

# **April is Autism Awareness Month**

**Did you know...**

- Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means that every individual with ASD has different skills, challenges, and needs.**
- Autism affects 1 in 44 children in the United States.**
- Autism affects all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.**
- Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability.**
- Boys are four times more likely than girls to have autism.**
- Nearly 2/3 of children with Autism have been bullied.**
- Individuals with Autism are loyal, non-judgemental, and trustworthy friends.**

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## Did you know...

- **Autism is a spectrum disorder**

People with autism can be a little autistic or very autistic. Thus, it is possible to be bright, verbal, and autistic as well as mentally retarded, non-verbal and autistic. A disorder that includes such a broad range of symptoms is often called a spectrum disorder; hence the term "autism spectrum disorder." The most significant shared symptom is difficulty with social communication (eye contact, conversation, taking another's perspective, etc.).

- **People with Autism are different from each other**

If you've seen *Rainman* or a TV show about autism, you may think you know what autism "looks like." In fact, when you've met one person with autism you've met ONE person with autism. Some people with autism are chatty; others are silent. Many have sensory issues, sleep difficulties and other medical problems. Others may have social-communication delays, and that's it.

- **Individuals with Autism have many strengths and abilities**

It may seem that autism is a wholly negative diagnosis. However, individuals on the Autism Spectrum have a great deal to offer the world. People with autism are among the most forthright, non-judgemental, passionate people you will ever meet.

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**Did you know...**

## **Famous people with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- **Bob Dylan**, musician
- **Dan Aykroyd**, actor, comedian, screenwriter, musician
- **Ladyhawke (Phillipa "Pip" Brown)**, Indie singer, songwriter
- **Woody Allen**, brilliant director and actor
- **Daryl Hannah**, actress best known for roles in *Splash* and *Blade Runner*
- **Satoshi Tajiri**, creator of Pokémon
- **Temple Grandin**, designer of humane food animal handling systems
- **Christopher Knowles**, American poet
- **Matthew Laborteaux**, actor on *Little House on the Prairie*
- **James Durbin**, *American Idol* front runner - Season 10
- **Jasmine O'Neill**, author of *Through the Eyes of Aliens*
- **Bhumi Jensen**, Thai prince
- **Dylan Scott Pierce**, wildlife illustrator
- **Courtney Love**, actress

## **Famous people believed to have been Autistic**

- Bill Gates
- Andrew Jackson
- Isaac Newton
- Thomas Jefferson
- Albert Einstein
- Vincent van Gough
- Steven Spielberg
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Amadeus Mozart
- Hans Christian Andersen

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## **What Is Autism? What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors.

Autism appears to have its roots in very early brain development. However, the most obvious signs of autism and symptoms of autism tend to emerge between 2 and 3 years of age.

## **What Causes Autism?**

There is no one cause of autism just as there is no one type of autism. It appears to be caused by a combination of autism risk genes and environmental factors influencing early brain development.

Each individual with autism is unique. Many of those on the autism spectrum have exceptional abilities in visual skills, music, and academic skills. About 40 percent have average to above average intellectual abilities. Indeed, many persons on the spectrum take deserved pride in their distinctive abilities and “atypical” ways of viewing the world. Others with autism have significant disability and are unable to live independently.

## **Facts About Autism**

- In the United States, the number of children diagnosed with autism has increased significantly. In 2000, 1 in 150 children were diagnosed each year and in 2018, 1 in 44 children.
- Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability.
- Autism is four times more common among boys than girls.
- Autism affects all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
- Autism is not degenerative. Individuals with ASD can continuously learn and improve their skills.