

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Overview

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. It is characterized by a spectrum of differences in social communication, behavior and sensory processing. Every person with autism has their own unique strengths and requires different levels of care and support.



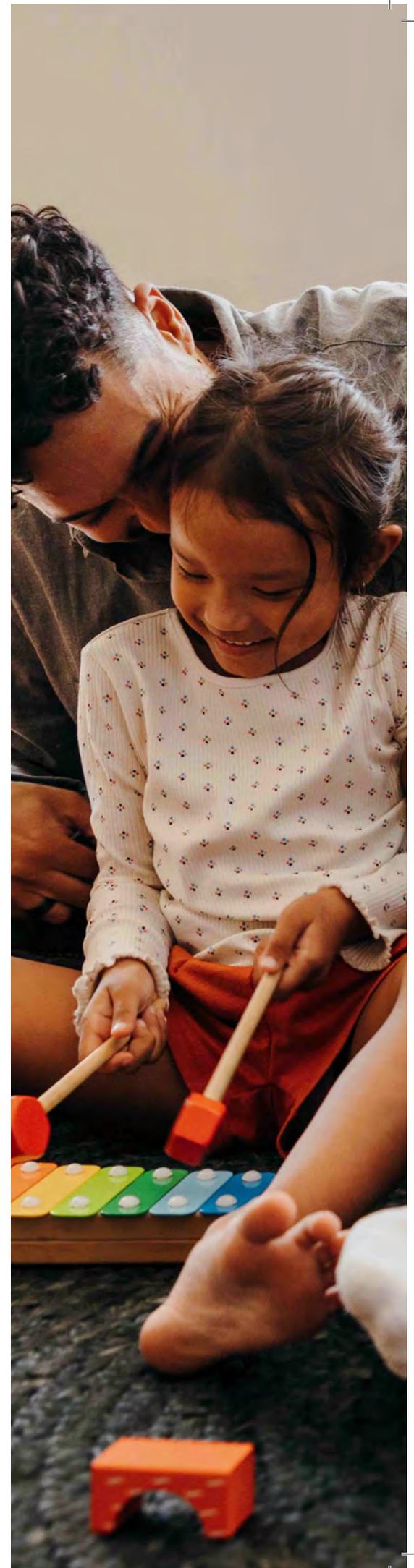
## Key Characteristics

- **Social Communication:** People on the spectrum may experience differences or difficulties in understanding and using verbal and nonverbal communication
- **Behavior:** Individuals with ASD may engage in repetitive behaviors (known as stimming) and have very specific interests
- **Sensory Processing:** Heightened or lowered sensitivity to things like lights, sounds, flavors, textures, fabrics and other external stimuli



## Diagnosis and Support

- Individuals on the spectrum may require support with a variety of skills including:
  - **Expressive language:** the ability to express wants and needs, whether through vocal language, modified signs or gestures, picture communication or use of speech-generating devices
  - **Receptive language:** the ability to understand the communication of those around you
  - **Social skills:** includes communicating with peers or unfamiliar people, navigating community environments and community safety rules, sharing emotions and thoughts, understanding and navigating social relationships and self-advocacy skills
  - **Daily living skills:** daily hygiene routines, dressing, feeding, maintaining their environment and participating in home routines
  - **Emotional regulation skills:** the ability to identify emotions in yourself and others and identifying and implementing strategies to cope with various emotions
- Research shows that early diagnosis and interventions for ASD are more likely to have long-term positive effects on mental health and quality of life.
- Diagnosis involves a comprehensive evaluation by health care professionals.
- Support and interventions, such as therapy and educational programs, can help individuals learn new skills and manage any difficulties they are experiencing.





## Educate, Support and Embrace

Understanding ASD promotes **inclusivity** and **support** for individuals on the spectrum and their families. Learn more and join us in fostering an inclusive community.

For reliable information  
and resources, visit

[AutisticAdvocacy.org](https://www.AutisticAdvocacy.org)

and

[ThinkingAutismGuide.com](https://www.ThinkingAutismGuide.com)



**Pediatric  
Collaborative**

*the  
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