

# AUTISM INSTITUTE

The Florida State University College of Medicine



The FSU Autism Institute was established to coordinate and promote research, education and service related to autism spectrum disorders. The specific aims of the Autism Institute are:

- » to promote interdisciplinary research that advances scientific knowledge of autism spectrum disorders;
- » to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and clinical/educational practice;
- » to build the capacity of primary care and other service providers, educators, employers, family members, and individuals with autism spectrum disorders to improve outcomes through research and training; and
- » to maximize the use of innovative video and computer information technology in research, education, and service related to autism spectrum disorders.



## In the Spotlight



Someday your doctor may be able to examine your infant, notice a telltale physical characteristic and say, "Your child has autism – but we've caught it early, so don't worry."

[Read More...](#)



## Contact Information

- ✉ **Amy M. Wetherby, Ph.D.**  
Director  
1940 North Monroe Street, Suite 72  
Tallahassee, FL 32303
- ✉ **Karen Robins**  
Office Manager
- ☎ Phone: (850) 644-4367
- ☎ Fax: (850) 644-3644

Autism is an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of disorders referred to as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) or Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The terms PDD and ASD are used interchangeably. They are a group of neurobiological disorders that affect a child's ability to interact, communicate, relate, play, imagine, and learn. These disorders not only affect how the brain develops and works, but may also be related to immunological, gastrointestinal, and metabolic problems. Signs and symptoms are seen in early childhood. The term spectrum is important to understanding autism because of the wide range of intensity, symptoms and behaviors, types of disorders, and considerable individual variation. Children with ASD may have a striking lack of interest and ability

Overview

Social Interaction

Communication

Repetitive Behaviors and Restricted Interests

Regulatory and Sensory Systems

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Autism Spectrum Disorders

Developmental Milestones

Screening and Diagnosis

Parent Reflections

RED FLAGS FOR ASD



This video clip shows a wide range of intensity, symptoms, and behaviors in children affected by ASD. The signs are as varied as the number of children affected. These signs can be subtle or, to the untrained eye, easy to miss.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

1

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RED FLAGS FOR ASD



DSM-IV-TR™ or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision, is a handbook used widely by medical professionals in diagnosing and categorizing mental and developmental disorders. It is published by the American Psychiatric

Screening is a quick and simple way to monitor a child's typical development. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends routine developmental screening and surveillance of all children from birth through school age to identify those at risk for atypical development. Screening tools are brief measures (often in the form of a parent questionnaire) that distinguish children who are at risk for developmental delay or disorders, such as ASD, from those who are not. Screening can be conducted by healthcare providers, clinicians, educators, childcare providers, and parents. A screening should be used on all children whether or not they are showing obvious signs of developmental delay or disorders, in order to determine whether the child should be evaluated for a specific

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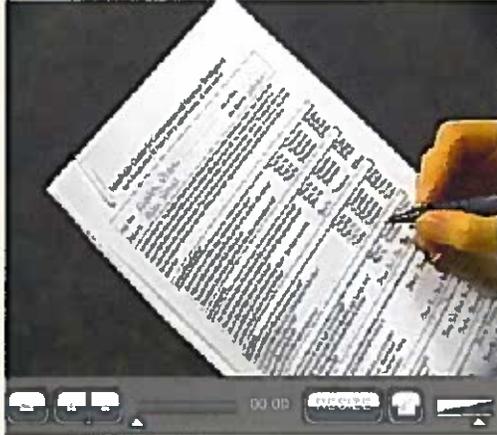
Autism Spectrum Disorders

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In this video clip you will hear about the importance of using accurate screening tools. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends routine developmental screening and surveillance of all children from birth through school age to identify those at risk for

Screening and Diagnosis

1

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 R: Copyright © 2009 by NBC Universal, Inc. All rights reserved. (Excerpt from Today Show)

RED FLAGS FOR ASD



In this video clip you will see a child at risk for ASD receiving an evaluation, which incorporates observation, parent interviews, and standardized tests, including the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), the gold standard tool for diagnosing ASD.

**Behavioral** interventions or approaches for treating autism spectrum disorders (ASD) fit within the framework or are derived from applied behavior analysis (ABA). ABA was developed in the late 1960s and is now used to help children with ASD change their behavior to more adaptive ways of responding to situations. ABA uses behavioral methods to measure behavior, teach functional skills, and evaluate progress. In ABA approaches, an adult will systematically encourage certain responses from a child and then respond in planned ways designed to either increase or decrease certain behaviors. Behavioral approaches measure progress and modify strategies based on the data collected. Some of the behavioral treatments have incorporated developmental principles, so you will see

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Developmental

Structured Teaching and Supports

Clinical Therapies

Toddler Treatment Models

Discrete Trial Training

Lovaas Model

PECS

Pivotal Response Training

Positive Behavior Support

Verbal Behavior



**Discrete Trial Training (DTT)**

1 2 3 4

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[Download Treatment Description](#)



This 2-year-old child with ASD practices imitation drills using the strategies and principles of DTT. Generally, children on the autism spectrum don't imitate the actions of others spontaneously. Imitation is vital when learning new tasks and play skills. Imitation drills are designed to

The same 2-year-old child is now working on a drill with which she is not familiar (banging blocks). The therapist gives her the S<sup>D</sup> (command), "do this" and shows her how to bang blocks, and then waits for a response. When the