

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social interactions and social communication, by restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior and by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences. The term “spectrum” reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism. Autism’s most obvious signs tend to appear between 2 and 3 years of age. In some cases, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. Some developmental delays associated with autism can be identified and addressed even earlier.

