

# AI-03882 Subtle Signs of Autism

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Define Autism. What is it and what it is not . What are the pillars of autism. List 22 signs and examples of Autism. List 22 signs and examples of spectrum autism. List 22 guidelines of autism spectrum from the parental lens.

## What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a **neurodevelopmental condition** — meaning it affects how the brain develops and processes information, communication, social interaction, sensory input, attention, routines, and behavior.

Autism is called a **"spectrum"** because it appears differently in different people. Some autistic individuals need substantial daily support, while others are highly independent. Some speak fluently; others are non-speaking or minimally verbal. Some excel in pattern recognition or deep focus; others struggle more with daily functioning.

Autism is **not an illness someone catches**, and it is **not simply a personality style**. It is a difference in neurological wiring that influences perception, communication, regulation, and behavior across life.

## What Autism Is

Autism is:

1. **A neurodevelopmental difference** — present early in development, though signs may become more obvious over time.
2. **A spectrum** — traits vary widely in intensity and expression.

3. **A lifelong condition** — people do not “outgrow” autism, though skills and coping strategies improve.
4. **A different sensory experience** — many autistic people process sound, touch, light, smell, pain, and emotions differently.
5. **A communication difference** — verbal and nonverbal communication can work differently.
6. **A difference in social processing** — social rules may feel confusing, exhausting, or unnatural.
7. **Often associated with strengths** — deep focus, honesty, memory, precision, pattern recognition, creativity, or specialized interests.
8. **Often accompanied by challenges** — sensory overwhelm, emotional regulation, executive function, transitions, anxiety, or burnout.

## What Autism Is Not

Autism is **not**:

1. **Bad parenting**
2. **A discipline problem**
3. **Low intelligence** (IQ varies widely)
4. **A lack of emotions**
5. **Laziness**
6. **A choice**
7. **“Just shyness”**
8. **Always visible**
9. **The same in every person**
10. **Always severe**
11. **A mental illness** (though mental health challenges can coexist)
12. **An excuse for harmful behavior**

13. **A lack of empathy** — empathy may be expressed differently
14. **Caused by vaccines** (large scientific evidence has repeatedly rejected this claim)

## The Core Pillars of Autism

Think of autism as involving several interconnected pillars.

### 1. Social Communication Differences

Challenges interpreting or expressing social information.

Examples:

- Understanding sarcasm
- Reading facial expressions
- Maintaining back-and-forth conversation
- Understanding hidden social expectations

### 2. Repetitive Patterns & Routines

Preference for predictability and familiar systems.

Examples:

- Following routines
- Repeating phrases
- Organizing objects
- Strong resistance to unexpected changes

### 3. Sensory Processing Differences

The nervous system may be unusually sensitive or under-sensitive.

Examples:

- Loud noises feel painful
- Certain fabrics are unbearable
- Craving pressure or movement

- Strong reactions to smell or light

#### **4. Restricted or Deep Interests**

Strong focus on specific topics.

Examples:

- Trains
- Astronomy
- Maps
- Dinosaurs
- Coding
- Numbers

#### **5. Executive Function Differences**

Difficulty organizing, switching tasks, prioritizing, or regulating energy.

Examples:

- Trouble transitioning
- Difficulty planning
- Becoming overwhelmed by multiple steps

#### **6. Emotional Regulation Differences**

Emotions may feel stronger, faster, or harder to organize.

Examples:

- Shutdowns
- Meltdowns
- Anxiety around uncertainty

#### **7. Motor and Coordination Differences**

Present in some autistic individuals.

Examples:

- Clumsiness

- Unusual posture
- Fine motor difficulties

## 22 Signs and Examples of Autism

No single sign proves autism; patterns matter.

1. **Limited eye contact** — may look away while listening.
2. **Delayed speech** — talking later than peers.
3. **Literal interpretation** — confusion with sarcasm.
4. **Difficulty making friends** — struggles reading social dynamics.
5. **Repetitive movements (stimming)** — hand flapping, rocking.
6. **Strong routine preference** — upset if schedule changes.
7. **Sensory sensitivity** — covers ears at loud sounds.
8. **Deep special interests** — intensely focused hobbies.
9. **Repeating phrases (echolalia)** — repeating words from shows.
10. **Difficulty with transitions** — distress switching activities.
11. **Parallel play preference** — near others rather than interactive.
12. **Emotional overwhelm** — crying after too much stimulation.
13. **Unusual body movements** — pacing or repetitive gestures.
14. **Strong pattern recognition** — notices tiny inconsistencies.
15. **Difficulty understanding social cues** — missing hints.
16. **Unusual tone or rhythm of speech**
17. **Strong preference for sameness**
18. **Sensory seeking** — loves spinning or squeezing objects.
19. **Intense honesty** — blunt communication.
20. **Difficulty with group settings**
21. **Fixation on fairness or rules**

## 22. Burnout after social interaction

# 22 Signs and Examples Across the Autism Spectrum

The “spectrum” means signs can range from subtle to highly visible.

1. **Highly verbal but socially exhausted**
2. **Non-speaking but communicates through devices**
3. **Gifted memory with executive struggles**
4. **Strong academics but difficulty with friendships**
5. **Very independent in some tasks, dependent in others**
6. **Extreme sensory sensitivity**
7. **Almost no sensory sensitivity**
8. **Masking/social camouflage** — mimics peers to fit in.
9. **Meltdowns under stress**
10. **Shutdowns (withdrawal/freezing)**
11. **Rigid routines**
12. **Flexible externally but internally anxious**
13. **Intense emotional sensitivity**
14. **Flat emotional expression despite deep feeling**
15. **Hyperfocus on interests**
16. **Language differences**
17. **Exceptional visual thinking**
18. **Difficulty with abstract social rules**
19. **Strong justice orientation**
20. **Socially outgoing but socially confused**
21. **Excellent technical skills**

## 22. Burnout from constant adaptation

# How an Autistic Person May Think, Behave, and Decide

### Thinking

- More detail-oriented
- Pattern-based
- Literal
- Systematic
- Deeply analytical
- Sometimes black-and-white
- Strong internal logic

### Behavior

- Prefers predictability
- May stim to regulate emotions
- Needs recovery after socializing
- Sensitive to overstimulation
- Strong attachment to routines

### Decision-Making

- Often prioritizes logic, fairness, predictability
- Avoids uncertainty
- May require more processing time
- Prefers clear rules and expectations

# 22 Guidelines for Parents Through the Autism Spectrum Lens

1. **See the child, not just the diagnosis**
2. **Assume competence**
3. **Understand behavior as communication**
4. **Reduce shame**
5. **Build routines**
6. **Prepare for transitions**
7. **Respect sensory needs**
8. **Identify triggers**
9. **Learn the child's communication style**
10. **Avoid constant comparison**
11. **Celebrate strengths and interests**
12. **Teach social skills explicitly**
13. **Use predictable language**
14. **Allow recovery time after overstimulation**
15. **Watch for burnout**
16. **Teach emotional labeling**
17. **Avoid forcing eye contact**
18. **Support independence gradually**
19. **Collaborate instead of controlling**
20. **Advocate at school and healthcare settings**
21. **Focus on long-term growth, not "normalizing"**
22. **Love consistently while adapting expectations**

**Example parental shift:**

Instead of:

“Why are they acting out?”

Try:

“What is this behavior communicating — overwhelm, confusion, sensory discomfort, anxiety, fatigue, or unmet needs?”

## Important Nuance

Not every quiet, quirky, rigid, shy, gifted, or socially awkward person is autistic. Autism diagnosis looks for **patterns across multiple domains** (social communication + repetitive/restrictive traits + sensory or developmental history + impact on functioning).

Diagnosis is usually performed by professionals such as developmental pediatricians, psychologists, neurologists, or psychiatrists using developmental history, observation, and assessments.

If you want, I can also create a **“Autism deep dive: psychology, brain science, masking, meltdowns vs tantrums, strengths, myths, adulthood, and relationships”** version in the same detailed structure.

Gemini

## What Autism Is—and What It Is Not

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong neurological and developmental variation in how a person’s brain processes information, perceives the world, and interacts with others. It is not a single, uniform condition, but a broad "spectrum" where traits, strengths, and support needs present uniquely in every individual. To truly understand autism, it is best to clarify what it is versus the common misconceptions that surround it.

What Autism IS	What Autism IS NOT
<b>A neurological difference:</b> A distinct way the nervous system is wired.	<b>A disease or illness:</b> It cannot be "cured" or "transmitted."
<b>A dynamic spectrum:</b> A unique combination of traits that can fluctuate based on environment,	<b>A linear scale:</b> It is not a straight line from "mild" to "severe."

What Autism IS	What Autism IS NOT
stress, and age.	
<b>A developmental variation:</b> It affects communication, social interaction, and sensory processing from birth.	<b>A mental health condition:</b> Though anxiety or depression can co-occur due to societal barriers.
<b>An identity:</b> For many, it shapes how they think, feel, and experience the world fundamentally.	<b>A result of bad parenting or vaccines:</b> These are thoroughly debunked myths.

## The Four Pillars of Autism

Clinical frameworks, such as the DSM-5, organize autism into core diagnostic criteria. When viewed practically, these criteria can be understood as four primary pillars:

- **Social Communication and Interaction:** Differences in reading non-verbal cues (like eye contact or body language), navigating the unwritten rules of conversation, and developing peer relationships.
- **Repetitive Behaviors and Intense Interests:** A preference for predictability, repetitive movements (stimming), or a deep, highly focused dedication to specific topics or hobbies.
- **Sensory Processing Variations:** Hyper-reactivity (oversensitivity) or hypo-reactivity (undersensitivity) to sensory inputs like sounds, lights, textures, tastes, or pain.
- **A Preference for Predictability (Sameness):** High distress caused by unexpected changes in routines, transitions between activities, or unfamiliar environments.

## 22 Signs and Examples of Autism

These signs represent classic expressions of the core pillars, often noticeable from early childhood through adulthood.

1. **Infrequent or Brief Eye Contact:** Looking away during conversations because sustained eye contact feels overwhelming or distracting.

2. **Delayed Speech Development:** A child not using single words by 16 months or two-word phrases by age two.
3. **Echolalia:** Repeating words, phrases, or script lines from movies verbatim instead of using original language to reply.
4. **Hand Flapping or Rocking:** Moving the body rhythmically (stimming) to regulate intense emotions like excitement, anxiety, or boredom.
5. **Atypical Unwritten Conversation Dynamics:** Missing the natural pauses in dialogue, leading to speaking over someone or not taking a turn to speak.
6. **Literal Interpretation of Language:** Taking idioms literally—for example, becoming genuinely confused or anxious if someone says, "It's raining cats and dogs."
7. **Intense Focal Interests:** An exhaustive, encyclopedic knowledge of a specific topic, such as complex transit systems, astronomy, or a specific historical era.
8. **Distress Over Routine Changes:** Experiencing a severe emotional breakdown or panic attack if a standard daily route to school or work is altered.
9. **Lining Up Objects:** Arranging toys, shoes, or household items in precise, straight lines rather than playing with them as intended.
10. **Atypical Response to Name:** Not turning around or acknowledging when called, sometimes mimicking the signs of hearing loss despite typical hearing.
11. **Sensory Sound Sensitivity:** Covering ears or experiencing physical distress from everyday sounds like a vacuum cleaner, hair dryer, or crowded restaurant.
12. **Tactile Food Selectivity:** Refusing entire food groups based strictly on texture (e.g., mushy, slimy, or crunchy) rather than flavor.
13. **Difficulty Deciphering Facial Expressions:** Misinterpreting a peer's look of boredom or frustration and continuing an activity or conversation anyway.
14. **Walking on Toes:** Frequently walking on the balls of the feet without a structural orthopedic cause.

15. **Difficulty Sharing Interest:** Rarely pointing out objects of interest (like an airplane in the sky) to share the experience with a parent or peer.
16. **Indifference to Pain or Temperature:** Not reacting to a deep scrape or walking outside in freezing temperatures without wanting a coat.
17. **Difficulty with Imaginative Peer Play:** Preferring to sort, organize, or build alone rather than participating in cooperative pretend play with others.
18. **Unusual Vocal Modulation:** Speaking in a monotonic, flat voice, or using a highly formal, adult-like cadence from a young age.
19. **Strong Attachment to Particular Objects:** Carrying a specific, non-traditional item everywhere (like a specific piece of string or a smooth rock) for comfort.
20. **Difficulty Transitioning Activities:** Showing high resistance or emotional distress when told it is time to stop playing and clear up for dinner.
21. **Resistance to Physical Affection:** Pulling away from unexpected hugs or light touches, preferring deep pressure or physical space instead.
22. **Overlooked Dangerous Situations:** Wandering toward deep water or a busy street without showing awareness of the safety risks involved.

## 22 Signs and Examples of Spectrum Autism (Nuanced & Internalized)

The autism spectrum is vast. Many individuals—particularly girls, adults, and those with high cognitive profiles—do not show obvious, classic signs. Instead, they often internalize their traits or consciously mimic typical behaviors. This is often referred to as "masked" or internalized autism.

1. **Social Masking:** Explicitly studying, practicing, and copying peer behaviors, facial expressions, and gestures to blend in socially.
2. **Camouflaging Exhaustion:** Experiencing profound, unexplainable fatigue after a standard day of school, work, or socializing due to the mental effort of masking.
3. **Hyper-Focus on Social Rules:** Memorizing social interactions like a script or manual, leading to deep anxiety when an interaction goes off-script.

4. **Subtle or Invisible Stimming:** Channeling the need for movement into hidden actions, like wiggling toes inside shoes, tensing muscles, or skin-picking.
5. **Hyper-Empathy:** Feeling the emotions of others or even the "pain" of inanimate objects so deeply that it becomes emotionally overwhelming.
6. **Internalized Meltdowns (Shutdowns):** Responding to overwhelm by becoming completely silent, unresponsive, and retreating inward rather than crying out or showing aggression.
7. **Deep Executive Dysfunction:** Struggling immensely with initiating tasks, organizing steps, or managing time, despite being highly intelligent.
8. **Social Monologuing:** Talking at length about a favorite topic because sharing information feels like connection, while missing subtle cues that the listener wants to change the subject.
9. **Social Mimicry in Attire:** Choosing clothing strictly based on what a chosen peer group wears to avoid standing out or drawing attention.
10. **Intense Sensitivity to Injustice:** Becoming deeply distressed or vocal about unfair rules, cheating, or systemic dishonesty, even when it does not affect them personally.
11. **Subtle Audio Processing Delays:** Hearing words perfectly fine but needing a few extra seconds to mentally translate the sounds into meaningful language.
12. **Camouflaged Sensory Overload:** Intentionally leaving a busy room or party to spend extended time in a quiet restroom just to reset sensory inputs.
13. **Preference for Clear, Direct Text Communication:** Preferring emails or texts over phone calls because written communication removes the need to decode real-time tone and body language.
14. **Deep Burnout Periods:** Experiencing cyclical phases of complete physical and mental exhaustion where previously easy tasks become impossible to complete.
15. **Perfectionism Driven by Social Anxiety:** Over-preparing for tasks or conversations to an extreme degree out of fear of making a social mistake.
16. **Asymmetric Skill Profiles:** Possessing advanced, expert-level skills in a specialized technical area while finding basic daily living tasks incredibly

difficult.

17. **Atypical Comfort Objects in Adulthood:** Relying on discreet sensory items, like a weighted blanket or a specific textured keychain, to self-soothe.
18. **Challenging Eye Contact Dynamics:** Looking fixedly at a person's mouth, nose, or between their eyes to fake eye contact without having to experience the intensity of looking into their eyes.
19. **Deep Vulnerability to Social Manipulation:** Taking people completely at their word, which can make it hard to spot hidden motives, sarcasm, or malicious intent.
20. **Peripheral Social Observation:** Standing on the edges of a social group, closely observing how others interact before attempting to join in.
21. **Sensory Issues with Subtle Textures:** Being unable to concentrate or relax if a clothing tag is scratching against the skin or if clothing fits unevenly.
22. **Deep Internal Self-Doubt:** Growing up with a constant, pervasive feeling of being "different" or "alien" without understanding why, often leading to secondary anxiety.

## 22 Parental Guidelines for Navigating the Autism Spectrum

Raising an autistic child requires shifting the focus from trying to "fix" or alter behavior to understanding, supporting, and accommodating their unique neurology.

1. **Accept the Neurological Reality:** Embrace your child exactly as they are. Autism is a fundamental part of how they experience the world, not an obstacle blocking a typical child.
2. **Investigate the Root Cause of Behaviors:** Look beyond a surface-level behavior. A meltdown is almost always a reaction to pain, sensory overload, communication frustration, or fear—not intentional defiance.
3. **Prioritize Emotional Regulation Over Compliance:** Focus on helping your child feel safe and calm rather than forcing them to obey a command immediately during times of high distress.

4. **Validate and Support Stimming:** Recognize that hand flapping, rocking, or vocalizing helps regulate their nervous system. Never suppress safe stimming behaviors just to look typical.
5. **Create Predictable Environments:** Use visual schedules, countdown timers, and clear step-by-step explanations to prepare your child for changes in routine.
6. **Accommodate Sensory Needs Proactively:** Keep sensory tools on hand—like noise-canceling headphones, seamless socks, or sunglasses—to help manage challenging public spaces.
7. **Value All Forms of Communication:** Remember that typing, using picture boards (AAC), gestures, and behavior are all valid ways to communicate. Speech is not the only way to express a thought.
8. **Encourage Specialized Passions:** Treat your child's intense interests as profound strengths. Use these topics to build connection, teach new skills, and foster self-esteem.
9. **Design an Explicit Sensory Safe Space:** Set up a quiet, low-stimulus area at home (like a small tent or a cozy corner) where your child can go to reset when overwhelmed.
10. **Protect Your Child from Autistic Burnout:** Balance structured activities and therapies with plenty of downtime where your child can relax without any social or performance demands.
11. **Teach Self-Advocacy Early:** Help your child learn to identify their needs and speak up for themselves, teaching them phrases like, *"It's too loud here, I need to step outside."*
12. **Be Intentional with Language Choices:** Use clear, direct sentences. Avoid heavy sarcasm, idioms, or vague requests like "be good," which can be confusing to interpret.
13. **Focus on Individual Milestones:** Celebrate your child's growth based on their personal timeline rather than comparing them to typical developmental milestones.
14. **Consult Autistic Adults:** Read books, watch videos, and listen to the perspectives of autistic individuals. They provide invaluable insight into what

your child may be experiencing internally.

15. **Collaborate Closely with Educators:** Build a supportive team by sharing what works best at home with teachers and therapists to ensure consistency across environments.
16. **Be Mindful of Transitions:** Give clear warnings before ending an activity. Use phrases like, *"In five minutes, we are closing the book and putting on shoes."*
17. **Acknowledge the Reality of Co-Occurring Conditions:** Watch for related issues like sleep challenges, GI distress, or anxiety, as physical discomfort can significantly impact behavior.
18. **Choose Strengths-Based Therapies:** Select interventions that focus on building communication, independence, and coping skills rather than trying to mask autistic traits.
19. **Presume Competence:** Always assume your child understands you, can learn, and is capable of growth, regardless of whether they speak or show immediate responses.
20. **Model Healthy Self-Care:** Recognize that parenting requires significant energy. Pacing yourself and seeking support prevents burnout and helps you show up fully for your child.
21. **Protect and Defend Boundaries:** Advocate firmly for your child's needs with family members, medical professionals, and strangers who may misunderstand their behavior.
22. **Focus Comfort Over Social Norms:** If a specific accommodation—like wearing headphones at dinner or skipping a busy family gathering—keeps your child regulated, prioritize their comfort over social expectations.

M365 Copilot

Here's a clear, structured, and practical overview you can use for learning, caregiving, or training others.

## What is Autism (ASD)?

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** is a **neurodevelopmental condition** that affects how a person:

- Communicates
- Interacts socially
- Experiences and responds to the world

It is called a **“spectrum”** because it presents **differently in every individual**, ranging from subtle differences to more noticeable support needs.

## **What Autism is NOT**

- Not a disease or illness (it is a lifelong condition, not something to “cure”)
- Not caused by bad parenting
- Not a mental illness like depression or anxiety (though these may co-occur)
- Not a lack of intelligence (many autistic individuals have average or high IQ)
- Not always visible
- Not the same in every person

## **Core Pillars of Autism**

These are the foundational domains clinicians use:

### **1. Social Communication Differences**

- Difficulty with back-and-forth conversation, tone, or body language

### **1. Restricted & Repetitive Behaviors**

- Repeating movements, routines, or focused interests

### **1. Sensory Processing Differences**

- Over- or under-sensitivity to sound, touch, light, etc.

### **1. Cognitive and Processing Differences**

- Unique thinking styles, attention patterns, and learning profiles

## 22 Signs & Examples of Autism (General)

1. Limited eye contact
2. Delayed speech or language development
3. Prefers playing alone
4. Difficulty understanding emotions
5. Repeats words or phrases (echolalia)
6. Strict adherence to routines
7. Intense interest in specific topics
8. Sensitivity to loud sounds
9. Unusual reactions to textures
10. Difficulty with transitions
11. Limited gesture use (pointing, waving)
12. Trouble understanding sarcasm or humor
13. Repetitive movements (hand-flapping, rocking)
14. Appears not to respond when name is called
15. Avoids physical touch or seeks excessive pressure
16. Fixation on parts of objects (e.g., spinning wheels)
17. Challenges in making friends
18. Difficulty sharing or taking turns
19. Strong need for predictability
20. Meltdowns when overwhelmed
21. Literal interpretation of language
22. Unusual tone or rhythm in speech

# 22 Signs & Examples Across the Autism Spectrum

(Showing variability from subtle to more noticeable traits)

1. Highly verbal but struggles socially
2. Nonverbal or minimally verbal
3. Extraordinary memory for details
4. Difficulty organizing tasks
5. Overly formal or “robotic” speech
6. Very intense, narrow interests
7. Hypersensitive hearing (hears faint sounds others miss)
8. Hyposensitive (seeks strong sensory input)
9. Appears “quirky” or socially awkward
10. Needs visual schedules to function
11. Strong pattern recognition skills
12. Difficulty reading facial expressions
13. Social exhaustion after interaction
14. Talks *at* people rather than *with* them
15. Avoids group settings
16. Strong preference for solitude or structured interaction
17. Difficulty with imaginative play
18. Exceptional talent in math, art, or music (in some individuals)
19. Struggles with executive functioning (planning, time management)
20. Notices patterns others miss
21. May mask traits (camouflaging behavior in adults/teens)
22. Experiences anxiety when routines are disrupted

# 22 Practical Guidelines for Parents (Autism Spectrum Lens)

## **Communication & Understanding**

1. Use **clear, simple language**
2. Give **extra processing time**
3. Use **visual supports** (charts, schedules)
4. Avoid sarcasm unless explained
5. Break tasks into small steps

## **Emotional Support**

1. Validate feelings, even during meltdowns
2. Learn triggers (sensory and social)
3. Create a calm-down routine
4. Differentiate meltdown vs tantrum
5. Model emotional expression

## **Structure & Routine**

1. Maintain predictable routines
2. Prepare for transitions in advance
3. Use countdowns ("5 minutes left")
4. Keep a structured environment

## **Sensory Awareness**

1. Identify sensory sensitivities
2. Provide sensory tools (headphones, fidgets)
3. Create a safe, quiet space

## **Social Development**

1. Teach social skills explicitly

2. Practice role-playing scenarios
3. Encourage safe, supportive friendships

### **Growth & Advocacy**

1. Focus on strengths, not just challenges
2. Advocate in school and healthcare settings

## **Helpful Perspective**

- Autism is not something to fix—it's something to **understand and support**
- Many autistic individuals thrive when the environment **adapts to them**, not the other way around
- Strengths often include:
  - Deep focus
  - Honesty
  - Creativity
  - Pattern recognition
  - Specialized expertise

If you want, I can turn this into:  A printable caregiver guide

A training document for teachers or clinic staff

A checklist you can use with your son's clinic planning

Just tell me 

Copilot

Below is a comprehensive, structured, deeply detailed guide to Autism and Autism\_Spectrum\_Disorder, grounded in authoritative sources including the CDC, Mayo Clinic, and NIMH.

All factual claims are cited.

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### What Autism Is

Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder, ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how a person communicates, interacts socially, processes sensory

information, and engages in patterns of behavior. It is present from early development and varies widely in presentation, hence the term spectrum.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov) +2

Key defining features include:

- Differences in social communication and interaction
  - Restricted or repetitive behaviors, interests, or sensory patterns
  - Symptoms that affect daily functioning

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## What Autism Is Not

Autism is not:

- ~~✗~~ A disease
  - ~~✗~~ Caused by parenting style
  - ~~✗~~ Caused by vaccines (this has been conclusively disproven)  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - ~~✗~~ Something a child “grows out of”
  - ~~✗~~ A behavioral choice or defiance
  - ~~✗~~ A single uniform condition — it is a spectrum

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## Pillars of Autism (Core Domains)

These pillars reflect the diagnostic domains recognized by DSM-5 and major health organizations.

1. Social\_Communication  
Difficulties with reciprocal interaction, understanding social cues, and using language socially.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
2. Restricted\_Repetitive\_Behaviors  
Repetitive movements, routines, fixated interests, or sensory patterns.  
[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
3. Sensory\_Processing\_Differences  
Over- or under-sensitivity to sound, touch, light, taste, or movement.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
4. Developmental\_Impact  
Symptoms appear early and influence learning, behavior, and daily

functioning.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)

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## 22 Signs of Autism (General ASD) with Examples

All items begin with a Guided Link as required.

- Limited\_eye\_contact — avoids or inconsistently uses eye contact.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
  - Delayed\_speech — late talking or loss of previously used words.  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Does\_not\_respond\_to\_name — by 9–12 months. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Limited\_gestures — few waves, points, or nods. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Difficulty\_with\_back\_and\_forth\_conversation — may monologue or not respond. [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
  - Flat\_or\_unusual\_tone — robotic or sing-song speech. [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
  - Limited\_shared\_interest — doesn't show objects to others. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Difficulty\_understanding\_emotions — struggles to read facial expressions.  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Preference\_for\_solitary\_play — plays alone even when others are nearby.  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Repetitive\_movements — hand-flapping, rocking, spinning. [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Rigid\_routines — distress at small changes. [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Fixated\_interests — intense focus on topics like numbers or wheels.  
[nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
  - Lines\_up\_objects — arranges toys instead of playing. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Sensory\_sensitivity — strong reactions to sound, textures, or lights. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Unusual\_body\_movements — toe-walking, stiff posture. [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Difficulty\_with\_transitions — trouble shifting activities. [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
  - Echolalia — repeating words or phrases. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Unusual\_play\_patterns — focuses on parts of toys. [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Delayed\_learning\_skills — uneven cognitive development. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Hyperactivity\_or\_inattention — difficulty sustaining attention. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
  - Unusual\_eating\_patterns — limited foods or texture aversions.  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)
  - Sleep\_difficulties — trouble falling or staying asleep. [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
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## 22 Signs of "Spectrum Autism" (Milder / High-Support-Needs Variants)

These reflect presentations often seen in individuals previously labeled "Asperger's" or "high-functioning autism."

I'm sorry, I'm having trouble responding to requests right now. Let's try this again in a bit.