Autism Awareness

Autism (also known as autism spectrum disorder, or ASD) is a mental, emotional, and behavioral disorder that usually develops within the first three years of a child’s life. The disorder has a wide range of symptoms that may vary from mild to severe. Children with autism may:

- Struggle to communicate verbally
- Rarely or never make eye contact or smile
- Have difficulty expressing empathy or interpreting the emotions of others
- Exhibit repetitive behaviors (rocking back and forth, head banging, or repeating words)
- Have a learning disability or speech development issue
- Have a limited range of interests or become intensely fixated on specific objects
- Struggle to adjust to a small change in their environment or daily routine

Children with autism are more likely to develop other conditions, such as depression, anxiety, gastrointestinal disorders, sleep disorders, or seizures. If a family has one autistic child, it increases the odds that they will have a second child on the autism spectrum.

Children with autism process information in ways that make it harder for them to learn social skills and absorb knowledge. Parents can help children manage these challenges by:

- Learning about autism and the specific areas where a child may need additional support.
- Determining what specific situations are most likely to trigger a child’s stress or cause them to become upset or act out.
- Being patient and learning to appreciate their child’s unique perspective on the world.

If you are concerned that your child may have symptoms of autism spectrum disorder:

- Talk with your child’s pediatrician about any concerns. A physician can assist with making a diagnosis or refer you to appropriate resources.
- Seek help from friends or family members who may have children on the autism spectrum or from a parenting support group.
- Contact LifeMatters for support and assistance. Help is available 24/7/365.

Call LifeMatters® by Empathia toll-free anytime. 1-800-367-7474

Assistance with Life, Work, Family, and Wellbeing • 24/7/365
Call collect to 262-574-2509 if outside of North America
Visit LifeMatters® online at mylifematters.com
facebook.com/lifematterseap
Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.

The above information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of medical advice.