

# Know the signs of autism

Autism affects about 1 in 68 children in our country today, according to the CDC. Autism is a developmental disability that can affect how a person interacts with others, learns, and behaves. For some people, the symptoms are severe. Others can lead fairly normal, independent lives.

Although experts don't know what causes autism in many cases, they do know that treating it early can help improve symptoms. Many children with autism show some signs between one and two years of age.

Now is a great time to learn the early signs of autism and talk to your child's physician if needed. Some signs to watch for are if your child:

- Doesn't respond to his or her name
- Doesn't point, wave, or gesture
- Doesn't look people in the eye or respond to facial expressions
- Doesn't like physical contact with others
- Repeats words or phrases over and over, often without knowing what they mean
- Performs repeated body movements such as rocking, spinning, or twirling hands or fingers

- Has obsessive interests in only a few activities
- Gets very upset with change or differences in routines
- Is very interested in organization, such as lining things up in a certain way
- Talks in a "robot-like" voice with no emotion or change in tone

If your child has one of these signs or you notice any unusual behavior, it doesn't mean your child has autism. But, you should talk with your child's doctor if you are concerned or have questions about your child's well-being.

