Autism Spectrum Disorder

By: Kirsten Schneider, Rachel Brown & Krystle Jordan
What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

IDEA Definition:

*A developmental disability affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that affects a child’s performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual response to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has serious emotional disturbance.
Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Autistic Disorder
- Asperger’s Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Rett’s Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified
## Autism Spectrum Disorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>Extreme social withdrawal and impairment in communication; often includes stereotyped movements, resistance to change, and usually responses to sensory experiences; usually manifests before 3 years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asperger Syndrome</td>
<td>Much like mild autism, but without significant impairments in cognition and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rett Syndrome</td>
<td>Normal development for 5 months to 4 years, followed by regression and mental retardation; much more prevalent in females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Disintegrative Disorder</td>
<td>Normal development for at least 2 and up to 10 years, followed by significant loss of skills; much more prevalent in males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pervasive Developmental Disorder, not otherwise specified</td>
<td>Persons who display behaviors typical of autism but to a lesser degree and/or with an onset later than 3 years of age.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.1 on page 399 in old textbook and page 432 in new book.
Characteristics Distinguishing Autistic Children

1. An inability to relate to others in an ordinary manner
2. An extreme aloneness that seemingly isolates the child from the outside world
3. An apparent resistance to being picked up or held by parents
4. Deficits in language, including echolalia, the repetition of words or phrases
5. Extreme fear reactions to loud noises
6. Obsessive desire for repetition and maintenance of sameness
7. Few spontaneous activities such as typical play behavior
8. Bizarre and repetitive physical movement, like spinning or perpetual rocking
Good Information to Know

• Have deficits in communication, social integration, and cognition, as well as repetitive & stereotyped patterns of behavior, and some have abnormal sensory perceptions.

• Need a daily routine that rarely changes, with advanced notice if something must change.

• May have a neurological & hereditary cause, though there’s no single cause for all cases.

• Not likely that there is an “autism epidemic” and evidence does not show a relationship between the MMR vaccine and autism.
Autistic Savant

• A person with severe autism whose social and language skills are markedly delayed but who also has advanced skills in a particular area, such as calculation or drawing.

• Very uncommon but the few are featured in the media.

• Famous people with autism spectrum disorder
  * Jason McElwain
  * Heather Kuzmich
  * Jenny McCarthy’s son, Evan
  * Matt Savage
Educational Considerations

Six Areas given priority
* Communication Skills
* Age-appropriate Social Skills
* Play Skills
* Cognitive skills
* Appropriate behavior to solve problem behavior
* Functional Academic Skills

Also important
* Direct instruction of skills
* Behavior Management
* Instruction in natural settings: Gen Ed classroom
* Social Interpreting
* Coaching
Early Intervention

- Highly structured, intensive, family-involved
- Mostly focuses on severe degrees of autism spectrum disorders
- Family involvement is absolutely essential