

## Autism Fact Sheet

- An autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be defined as a **lifelong and complex developmental disability** that occurs as the result of a neurological or brain disorder.
- Autism impacts an individual's ability to **communicate, interpret language, and interact with others**.
- The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that as many as **1 in every 59 children** in the United States has autism.
- The **primary characteristics** associated with autism are:
  - Challenges in social communication and interactions such as:
    - Back and forth interactions and exchanges
    - Interpreting nonverbal communication
    - Developing relationships with peers
  - Restricted or repetitive patterns of behavior such as:
    - Fascination with objects or topics of interest
    - Inflexibility
    - Repetitive movements with the body and/or speech
    - Over or under sensitivity to sensory stimulation
- The first signs of ASD are typically present **before the age of 3**.
- Autism is seen in **all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds**, but prevalence rates suggest it is **more common in boys**.
- The term autism **spectrum** disorder is used because the **range of symptoms** can occur in any combination and can range from mild to very severe. In other words, autism affects individuals **differently and to varying degrees**.
  - Every individual with ASD is **unique in their abilities and challenges**.
  - **"If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism."** – Dr. Stephen Shore, professor and self-advocate
- **Famous individuals with autism** include David Campion, Emily Dickinson, Bill Gates, Dr. Temple Grandin, Thomas Jefferson, Steve Jobs, Michelangelo, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jerry Seinfeld, Satoshi Tajiri and Andy Warhol