

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time Dramaturgical E-Hand-Out

Autism is a neurological disorder that typically appears by 3 years of age. The symptoms of autism involve three major areas of development and **impact a child's abilities to:**

- **Engage in reciprocal social interactions with others**
- **Communicate with others in developmentally appropriate ways**
- **Participate in a range of activities and behaviors typical of the child's age and stage of development**

One of the hallmarks of autism is that the characteristics vary significantly among different children with autism. **No two children with autism are the same.**

The term **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**, which is frequently used in literature and professional discussion of autism, is not a medical term and is usually used to describe three of the disorders, **Autism, Asperger Syndrome**, and **PDD-NOS** (Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified), because these three disorders share **common characteristics that can be manifested on a continuum** from mild to severe.

"[I]t's about the things that Christopher does. As long as a story's about the things that people do to each other then they will always be dramatic."

- Simon Stephens

"We would never ask if a character in a novel was a correct representation of a cellist or a lesbian or an archbishop. There is no such thing. And the same is true for people who are given the label 'disabled'. They are as various and individual as any other group in society."

- Mark Haddon

Some Common Characteristics Seen in Persons With Autism	
Challenges With Social Interactions:	
◆	Challenges interpreting nonverbal language
◆	Difficulty with pretend play
◆	Rigid adherence to rules
◆	Poor eye gaze or avoidance of eye contact
◆	Few facial expressions and trouble understanding the facial expressions of others
◆	Poor judge of personal space – may stand too close to other students
◆	Trouble controlling emotions and anxieties
◆	Difficulty understanding another person's perspective or how their own behavior affects others
Communication Challenges	
◆	Often delayed in expressive and receptive language; may not speak at all
◆	Very literal understanding of speech; difficulty in picking up on nuances
◆	Echolalia – may repeat last words heard without regard for meaning
◆	Lack of pretend play
Behavior Differences	
◆	Unusually intense or restricted interests in things (maps, dates, coins, numbers/statistics, train schedules)
◆	Unusual repetitive behavior, verbal as well as nonverbal (hand flapping, rocking)
◆	Unusual sensitivity to sensations – may be more or less than typical students
◆	Difficulty with transitions, need for sameness
◆	Possible aggressive, disruptive, or self-injurious behavior; unaware of possible dangers