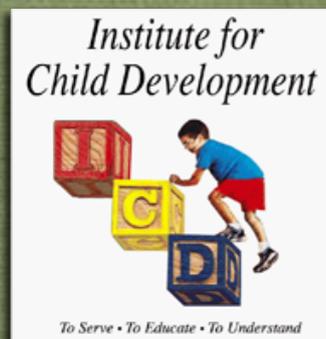




# Autism Initiative Training Series

## Module 1: Chapter 1.2 Specific Deficits in Autism

<http://bddso.icd.binghamton.edu>



# Learning Objectives

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- Identify the difference between signs and symptoms.
- Identify an example of a social interaction deficit.
- Identify an example of a communication deficit.
- Identify an example of a restricted or stereotyped behavior, interest, or activity.
- Name 3 associated features seen in autism.

# Signs and Symptoms

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- Sign- An observed behavior that indicates a medical or psychological problem
- Symptom- A characteristic reported by an individual or a caregiver that indicates a medical or psychological problem

# Autistic Disorder - Impairment in Social Interaction

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- Impairment in the use of multiple, nonverbal behaviors to regulate social interaction (APA, 2000)
  - Eye-to-eye gaze
  - Facial expression
  - Body postures
  - Gestures



# Autistic Disorder - Impairment in Social Interaction

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- Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
- Lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with others.
  - Lack showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest to others
- Absence of social or emotional reciprocity
- (APA, 2000)

# Communication Skills in Autism

- Speech, language, & communication problems
- 40% do not speak at all
- Some use alternative communicative (e.g., pictures, sign language)
- Some have echolalia
- Quality of speech may vary (Johnson, 2004)



# Restricted Behaviors, Interests and Activities

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- Different ways of reacting to environment
  - People, objects, sensory stimuli, changes
  - Repetitive motor or verbal actions
- Preoccupation with a limited number of activities, objects, interests
  - Nature of leisure and recreational activities
  - Adherence to routines
- (APA, 2000)

## Associated Difficulties

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- Uneven patterns of cognitive development
- Splinter skills
- Behavioral difficulties
- Hyperactivity/inattention/impulsivity
- Temper tantrums
- Atypical reactions to sensory stimuli
- Inappropriate affective responses

# Associated Difficulties

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- Sleep problems
- Restricted patterns of eating
- Too much or too little fear
- Self-injury
- Stereotyped movements
- Tics
- Lability of affect

● (APA, 2000)

# Myths of Autism Symptoms

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- Many suggested ‘signs’ of autism are based upon casual observation and media dramatization and are more myth than fact.
- Examples of such myths are:
  - The absence of smiling means someone has autism
  - If an individual shows affection, then the problem can’t be autism.
  - People who are socially awkward have autism.

# Misconceptions About Autism

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- Common MISCONCEPTIONS include:
  - Autism is a mental illness
  - All individuals with autism are mentally retarded
  - Individuals with autism are unruly people who choose not to behave
  - Bad parenting causes autism