

# Autism

## For Teachers

### What is Autism?

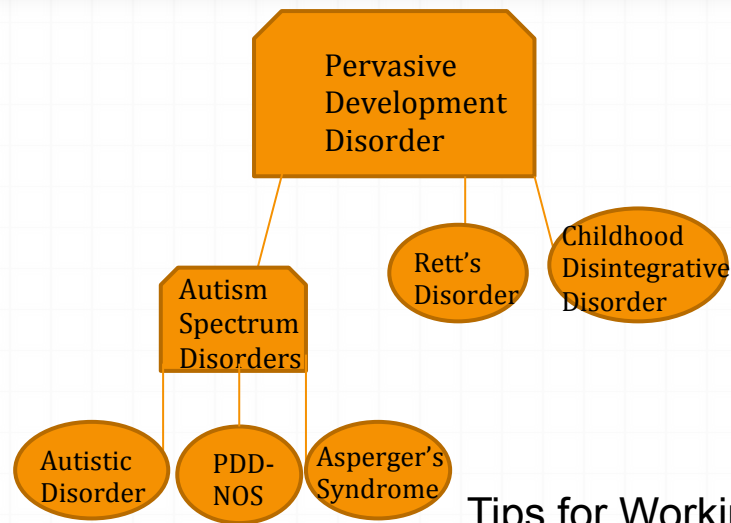
Autism is a developmental disorder; that makes communicating and interacting with people more difficult. Everyone with autism is different, and because of this it is called a spectrum disorder. People with autism have the same thoughts and feelings as other people, but they show it differently because their brains are wired differently. They have a difficulty adjusting to change and will get upset over it. Autism can affect everyone, but is four times more common in boys than girls. Autism is challenging at every stage of life, but one of the hardest is middle school. Specifically for boys because they have all these new feelings and emotions, but don't know how to deal with them in age appropriate ways.

### Helpful Resources

[http://www.asw4autism.org/pdf/next\\_steps.pdf](http://www.asw4autism.org/pdf/next_steps.pdf)

### Different Types

There are five different types of disorders on the autism spectrum. These include, Sensory Processing Disorder, PDD-NOS, Asperger's, and High Functioning, and Low Functioning Autism. Sensory processing disorder is where people are very sensitive to the five senses, it can cause problems with speech and motor skills. PDD-NOS stands for Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. People with PDD-NOS have autistic characteristics, but they don't have the Autistic disorder. With autism there is a delay in communication but with Asperger's there is a difference. People with Asperger's symptoms are often not as severe, but this does not mean they always have it easier. People with Asperger's a lot of times want to fit in and make friends but just have a more difficult time with the process.



### Why it's Important to Know

People with autism can have a very hard time in school. They can have so many gifts, but not know or understand how or when to use them. One thing that can make school really difficult for them is bullies. Try talking to your class and explaining autism to help prevent bullying from happening. People with autism have a really hard time adjusting to change. If possible it would be helpful to give as much notice before if you will be gone or if there is a change in schedule.

### Tips for Working with Students with Autism

- When individuals with autism have an outburst or are misbehaving they are almost never trying purposely be manipulative or scheming, most of the time something happened that just made them upset. This can be caused by environmental changes.
- If there is a group project or assignment, try to have groups already picked so the person is not left out.
- Be careful with idioms and figures of speech, they often take them literally.
- An increase in difficult behaviors or outbursts usually means an increase in stress.

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## For Students

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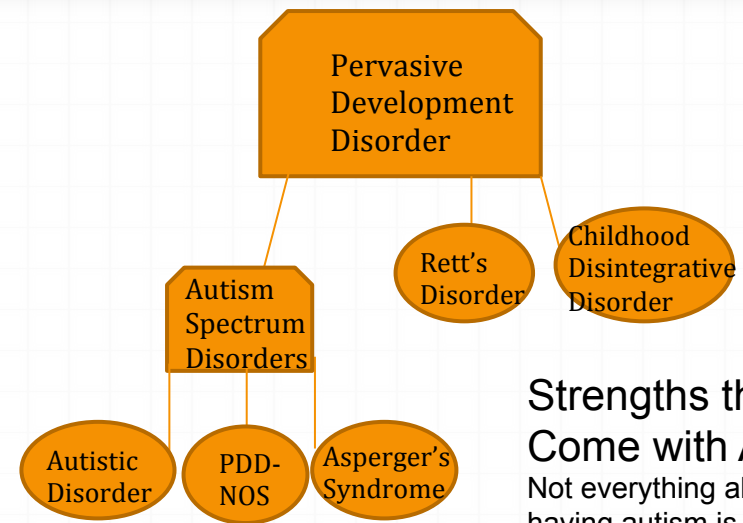
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### Famous People with Autistic Traits

There are about 48 million people in the world with autism, even some very successful people. Here are a couple of famous people that have shown autistic traits. It is impossible to know if some of these people really had autism, but by analyzing their personalities you can see they show autistic traits. One of these people was Albert Einstein, he came up with the equation  $E=mc^2$ . Another famous person thought to have autism is Mozart, he was a very famous composer. A fictional character thought to have autism is Sherlock Holms. All the things that made him a great detective, plus his incapability to relate to other people make a lot of professionals think he has autistic traits.



### Living well With Autism

Life with autism can be difficult. From trying to make friends, to understanding change, just going to school can be challenging and scary. If you know someone with autism, don't be mean to them or make fun of them, they have feelings too. If you have autism, don't let it hold you back. You can do anything you put your mind to.

### Strengths that Come with Autism

Not everything about having autism is bad, there are a lot of good things that come with having it. One strength that comes with autism is the amazing ability to stay focused for long periods of time. It helps them to be able to get challenging tasks done. Another strength is the ability to make logical decisions in almost any situations. They don't let impulse or other influences change their decisions. With this strength they are able to successfully get through situations without getting pulled off their original course. When they think or dream they dream in 3-D, other people only dream in 2-D, because of this they can see many things that others can't.