

# Autism

## Being Aware of Autism

The incidences of autism have recently been on the rise and many young children are being diagnosed with this disorder. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that 1 in every 150 children in America are diagnosed with Autism and that the odds are even higher in boys, being 1 in every 94 boys. One of the major concerns among society is that a lot of people are not even aware of what autism really is. Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that is found in young children in which their brain is not functioning as it should be. Autism is what is called a spectrum disorder and can have many affects on a child and autism affects every child differently. Some of the many areas that autism can affect a child can be communication, behavior, social interactions, sensory processing/modulation skills, etc.

## Living with Autism

There are many families and children within America that are currently dealing with autism. It can be a big adjustment in one's life and one's routines when a diagnosis of autism is given. There is currently no single cause or cure for autism. When children are diagnosed with autism it is life long and they will not outgrow the diagnosis. There are many supportive services available for families to learn how to best help children that are diagnosed with autism. Some of the services that might be presented could be doctors, therapist (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, developmental therapy), special education teachers, case managers, in home support services, etc. The most important thing is to continue to interact with your children and try to teach them and enhance their skills as much as possible. Children who are diagnosed with a mild form of autism may often grow up functioning normally and be able to live on their own. Children who are diagnosed with a more severe case of autism will often require some sort of assistance or support for daily activities and structure throughout their life. Supporting families and children with autism is one of the best ways to enhance their lives.

## Role of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapist can be a support service for children with autism and help them achieve better performance in the school environment or with daily life activities. When parents are referred to occupational therapist they may often have a lot of questions about autism in general or how to best help their child. The therapists are able to provide knowledge and resources to the parents in order to make living with autism a little easier. Occupational therapist will evaluate the children by observing them within their environment, outside their environment, and by talking with the parents. After the areas of needs are identified the occupational therapist can then develop goals and intervention plans for everyone involved to achieve. The most important role of the occupational therapist is to ensure that the child and family are educated and provide them with support services to enhance the child's quality of life.