

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Autism Society of America
1-800-328-8476

Autism Society of Washington
PO Box 111624
Tacoma, WA 98411-1624
253-223-8885 (phone)
253-503-1557 (fax)

Website: www.autismsocietyofwa.org
Email: info@autismsocietyofwa.org
Listserve: listserv@autismsocietyofwa.org

Autism Speaks

website: www.autismspeaks.org
Our goal is to change the future for all who struggle with autism spectrum disorders.

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Offices are located throughout the State. Call our main office toll-free at 1-800-572-7368 (v/tty) for the office closest to you.

*Children and youth with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education.
IDEA 2004*

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Parent Training and Information Program

Tips for Parents of Children with Autism

Statewide Parent Training and Information Center
6316 So. 12th St.
Tacoma, WA 98465
(253) 565-2266 (v/tty)
1-800-5-PARENT (v/tty)
Fax: (253) 566-8052
E-mail: pave@wapave.org
Website: www.wapave.org

Third Decade of Service

What is Autism?

Autism is a severely incapacitating, lifelong developmental disability, which usually appears during the first three years of life. It occurs in approximately 5 out of every 10,000 births and is four times more common in boys than in girls. Autism has been found throughout the world in families of all racial, ethnic and social backgrounds.

What are the symptoms of autism?

- ◆ Slow development or lack of physical, social and learning skills.
- ◆ Immature rhythms of speech, limited understanding of ideas and use of words without attaching the usual meaning to them.
- ◆ Abnormal responses to sensation. Sight, hearing, touch, pain, balance, smell, taste, the way a child holds his body – any one or a combinations of these responses may be affected.
- ◆ Abnormal ways of relating to people, objects and events. Typically, children with autism do not respond appropriately to adults or other children. Objects and toys are not used as normally intended.

In IQ testing, approximately 60% of children with autism have scores below 50, 20% between 50 and 70 and 20% greater than 70. Most show wide variations in performance on different tests at different times. Many children with autism have distinct skills in music, mathematics or in using spatial concepts (for example, working jigsaw puzzles), but are severely retarded in other areas.

Are there education programs for children with autism?

Yes. They are not, as a rule, called “autistic”; but there are programs geared for the unique needs of “autistic-like children”. To learn about services in your area, check with the special education program in your school district.

REMEMBER the program should fit the child; not the child fit the program.

Should every child with autism be in one of these programs?

No. Every child should be in the program that is appropriate for his/her needs no matter what their disability is.

REMEMBER no two children are alike.

What kind of services do these programs offer?

Typically, they offer, but are not limited to, speech/language therapy (This is on-going and administered daily by the teaching staff under the direction of the therapist.) Occupational and/or physical therapy, social work in the areas of family counseling or group therapy, and adaptive physical education may also be part of the special education program. Also, be sure transportation is included on the IEP under related services (WAC 392-172).

How do I get my child with autism into an educational program?

Because you know your child has autism, you have had a medical work-up. Take these results to the person in your school district who is in charge of special education (you can get the name and set up an appointment by calling the school district administration office.) The school will do some additional testing or do an evaluation and with your input make a recommendation for program placement. Be sure pre-vocational or vocational training is a part of the recommendation.

REMEMBER all children have special needs.

What kind of teaching staff and how large should the staff/student ratio be?

Whenever possible, staff should be knowledgeable about autism and have working experience in this arena. The staff/student ratio depends on the educational level and unique needs of the child. At preschool level, it is felt that the 1-1 or 1-3 is preferable. At the elementary level, 1-3 is preferable. At the high school or middle school level, 1-5 seems to work best.

AGAIN REMEMBER the total program must meet the needs of the individual child.

As the parent of a child with autism, here are some things to look for in a program:

- Room size, location in the building, (for sound level), space for group activities, and area for one-to-one tutoring.
- Teacher and aide ratio: appropriate student/teacher ratio for ages/needs of children.
- Peer models for behavior, verbal and social skills, a variety of role models in classroom.
- Academics included in the program, when appropriate.
- A specially designed behavior - changing plan, including parent involvement, if needed.
- Social skill development.
- Pre-vocational and vocational training.
- Parent involvement (in the classroom and/or parent/teacher meetings on a regular ongoing basis).
- Related services, including transportation.
- Opportunity to work and play with all children.
- Year round school, (extended school year ESY).