

Public Library Information Literacy Lesson Plan

Title: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) - Information for Caregivers

Lesson Goal: This session will introduce participants to autism spectrum disorders (ASD) including signs, screening and diagnosis, treatments and therapies, and resources.

Introduction to topic: In 2021, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 44 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder according to 2018 data. (www.autismspeaks.org)

- 1 in 27 boys identified with autism
- 1 in 166 girls identified with autism

Parents and caregivers are often unaware of signs of autism, screening and diagnosis, treatments, therapies, resources, and support available to them to care for their children. Understanding autism is a difficult endeavor and one that will take much longer than this brief introductory session. This session will give participants an overview and opportunity to learn about autism, ask questions, and obtain information on resources available.

*This lesson is for information only; no specific diagnosis or treatment will be provided.

Lesson objectives:

1. The learner will be able to describe definitions of autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
2. The learner will be able to list potential signs of ASD.
3. The learner will be able to identify methods of screening and diagnosis for ASD.
4. The learner will be able to identify therapies and treatments for ASD.
5. The learner will be able to identify ways to find resources for ASD.
6. The learner will be able to briefly describe IEP and 504 plans for school.
7. The learner will voice further information needs about ASD.

Outline/content:

1. Definition of ASD - Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication (www.autismspeaks.org).
 - a. Developmental disability caused by differences in the brain (www.cdc.gov.)
 - b. Many sub types of autism, everyone with their own unique strengths and challenges.
 - c. People with ASD have diverse ways of thinking, learning, problem solving, behaving, communicating, and interacting in ways that are different from most other people (www.cdc.gov).

- d. People with ASD require varying levels of support – from high daily support for life skills, to minimal daily support, to those that can grow to live independently.
- e. Some people are advanced and highly verbal, and some are non-verbal.
- f. Cause – no one cause is known, but researchers have suggested genetics, environmental factors (advanced parental age, pregnancy complications, or birth complications) can put a person **at increased risk but** is not an absolute cause.

2. Potential signs of ASD

- a. Signs can begin before the age of 2. Some may meet all developmental milestones until 18-24 months then stop gaining or begin to lose skills they had (www.cdc.gov).
- b. As listed by CDC.gov and autismspeaks.org
 - Avoids or does not keep eye contact
 - Does not respond to name by 9 months of age
 - Does not show facial expressions like happy, sad, angry, and surprised by 9 months of age
 - Does not play simple interactive games like pat-a-cake by 12 months of age
 - Uses few or no gestures by 12 months of age (for example, does not wave goodbye)
 - Does not share interests with others by 15 months of age (for example, shows you an object that they like)
 - Does not point to show you something interesting by 18 months of age
 - Does not notice when others are hurt or upset by 24 months (about 2 years) of age
 - Does not notice other children and join them in play by 36 months (about 3 years) of age
 - Does not pretend to be something else, like a teacher or superhero, during play by 48 months of age
 - Does not sing, dance, or act for you by 60 months of age
 - Lines up toys or other objects and gets upset when order is changed
 - Repeats words or phrases over and over (called echolalia)
 - Plays with toys the same way every time
 - Is focused on parts of objects (for example, wheels)
 - Gets upset by minor changes
 - Has obsessive interests
 - Must follow certain routines
 - Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins self in circles
 - Has unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel
 - Delayed language skills
 - Delayed movement skills
 - Delayed cognitive or learning skills

- Hyperactive, impulsive, and/or inattentive behavior
- Epilepsy or seizure disorder
- Unusual eating and sleeping habits
- Gastrointestinal issues (for example, constipation)
- Unusual mood or emotional reactions
- Anxiety, stress, or excessive worry
- Lack of fear or more fear than expected

c. Other potential co-morbid conditions seen in common with ASD – anxiety, depression, ADHD, seizures, GI disorders.

3. Screening and diagnosis of ASD.

- a. American Academy of Pediatrics recommends screening for ASD at 18 and 24 months (about 2 years), in addition to routine developmental milestone screening (www.aap.org)
- b. If concerns on screening, further developmental evaluation by developmental pediatrician, child psychologist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, neurologist, or another specialist. The specialist may observe the child, give the child a structured test, ask the parents or caregivers questions, or ask them to fill out questionnaires. (www.cdc.gov).

4. Therapies and treatments for ASD

- a. Early intervention is the key. The goal is to reduce symptoms by targeting areas that interfere with daily life. Since everyone is different, therapy must be tailored to the individual. No two therapies are the same.
- b. Some therapies include – behavioral (Applied behavior analysis, cognitive behavior therapy), developmental (speech or occupational therapy), social-emotional therapies (social skills, emotional regulation), parent education.

5. Resources for ASD – (provide handout)

- a. Centers for Disease Control – <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>
- b. Autism Speaks – <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>
- c. American Academy of Pediatrics - <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/autism/>
- d. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry - https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Autism_Resource_Center/Home.aspx
- e. Florida Department of Health - https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/people-with-disabilities/bright-expectations/conditions/autism.html?utm_source=frywj_floridahealth.gov&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=fdoh_az_index

- f. Your pediatrician or family doctor can help point you in the right direction.
 - g. Within the above websites, other resources and support are identified.
 - h. There are many social media groups which can offer support.
6. Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans for school
- a. According to the FL Dept. Of Health “The IEP is a document that is designed to meet your child’s unique educational needs. It is not a contract, but it does guarantee the necessary supports and services that are agreed upon and written for your child” (www.floridahealth.gov.)
 - b. A 504 is a plan that describes accommodations for a student with a disability to receive services within a public school system.
 - c. This is a way for the public schools to support students with different learning needs to receive an education on par with students without disabilities.
 - d. ESE (exceptional student education) specialists and resources within the public-school systems – <https://www.pcsb.org/ese>.
 - e. Step up for students provides scholarships for students with disabilities – <https://www.sufs.org>
7. Questions and/or recommendations for further learning sessions
- a. Open class for discussion or questions
 - b. A questionnaire will be emailed to evaluate the program and provide an opportunity to voice concerns or recommend other educational interests.

Summary:

Autism spectrum disorders involves a complex combination of screening, diagnosis, treatment, therapies, and support. It is difficult to provide a “complete” picture of autism, each person presents in a unique way. This informational session was to provide an overview of autism, hitting the highlights of categories. For any concerns about a loved one who may have autism, speak to your physician, and get screened. A major portion of caring for a loved one with autism is support not only from medical professionals, but also from other parents who can understand the challenges you face.

Materials/Space requirements/Handouts:

Materials:

Paper to print resources and other material on handouts

Computer to present presentation via power point
Screen or interactive white board to project presentation

Pens and paper available for note taking

Pamphlets from local autism resources if available

Email address for pre and post surveys

Space requirements:

Quiet meeting room with closed door

Chairs and tables or desks available for participants to take notes

Ability to access technology to project presentation

Table available for autism display/ resource pamphlets and handouts

Space for children's toys, games, books if children present with adult

Handouts:

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control – <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>
- Autism Speaks – <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>
- American Academy of Pediatrics - <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/autism/>
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry - https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Autism_Resource_Center/Home.aspx
- Florida Department of Health - https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/people-with-disabilities/bright-expectations/conditions/autism.html?utm_source=frywj_floridahealth.gov&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=fdoth_az_index
- Pinellas County School Board Exceptional Student Education – <https://www.pcsb.org/ese>
- Step Up for Students – <https://www.SUFS.org>

Potential signs of autism

(www.cdc.org)

- Avoids or does not keep eye contact
- Does not respond to name by 9 months of age
- Does not show facial expressions like happy, sad, angry, and surprised by 9 months of age
- Does not play simple interactive games like pat-a-cake by 12 months of age
- Uses few or no gestures by 12 months of age (for example, does not wave goodbye)
- Does not share interests with others by 15 months of age (for example, shows you an object that they like)
- Does not point to show you something interesting by 18 months (about 1 and a half years) of age
- Does not notice when others are hurt or upset by 24 months (about 2 years) of age
- Does not notice other children and join them in play by 36 months (about 3 years) of age
- Does not pretend to be something else, like a teacher or superhero, during play by 48 months (about 4 years) of age
- Does not sing, dance, or act for you by 60 months (about 5 years) of age
- Lines up toys or other objects and gets upset when order is changed
- Repeats words or phrases over and over (called echolalia)
- Plays with toys the same way every time
- Is focused on parts of objects (for example, wheels)
- Gets upset by minor changes
- Has obsessive interests
- Must follow certain routines
- Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins self in circles
- Has unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel
- Delayed language skills
- Delayed movement skills
- Delayed cognitive or learning skills
- Hyperactive, impulsive, and/or inattentive behavior
- Epilepsy or seizure disorder
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- Gastrointestinal issues (for example, constipation)
- Unusual mood or emotional reactions
- Anxiety, stress, or excessive worry
- Lack of fear or more fear than expected

Assessment:

Assessment of the lesson will be a pre lesson survey to measure the participant's baseline knowledge of objectives and a post lesson survey to determine increased knowledge of the objectives.

- As participants sign up for the lesson, a pre survey will be sent to their email to determine baseline knowledge. Based on results, information presented in each objective can be tailored to the audience.
- After the lesson, a post survey will be sent via email to attending participants to evaluate if an increase in knowledge from baseline occurred and to identify additional learning needs regarding ASD.
- Based on results of the post lesson survey, future lessons can be modified, or additional lessons developed.

Pre lesson survey:

Prior to attending the lesson *autism spectrum disorders (ASD) - Information for caregivers*, please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 (no knowledge) to 4 (knowledgeable) about your present understanding of autism spectrum disorders.

1. What is your current understanding of autism spectrum disorders (ASD)?
 - No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable

2. What is your current understanding of signs and symptoms of ASD?
 - No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable

3. What is your current understanding of testing and diagnosis of ASD?
 - No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable

4. What is your current understanding of therapies and treatments for ASD?
 - No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge

- Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable
5. Do you know how to find resources pertaining to ASD?
- No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable
6. What is your current knowledge of IEP and 504 school plans for ASD?
- No Knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - Some knowledge
 - Knowledgeable
7. In the space provided below, please describe why you are interested in attending this lesson.
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Post lesson survey:

Thank you for attending *Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) - Information for Caregivers*. We would appreciate it if you could answer the following questions, on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) about what you learned in this lesson about autism spectrum disorders. Your answers will help us to improve the class or develop other classes of interest.

After attending this class:

1. I can define autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

2. I can identify potential signs and symptoms of ASD.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. I can identify methods of screening and diagnosing for ASD.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I can list potential therapies and treatments for ASD.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. I will be able to find resources for ASD.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. I can identify the use of IEP and 504 school plans for ASD.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. After attending *Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) - Information for caregivers*, my overall knowledge of ASD has increased?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. In the space provided below, please tell us what we can improve about this class.

9. In the space provided below, please list any topics about ASD you would like more information on or be interested in attending a class to learn about.

10. In the space provided below, please list any other comments you have about the class *Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) - Information for caregivers*.

Thank you for your participation in our survey.

References:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (n.d.). *Autism Resource Center*. https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Autism_Resource_Center/Home.aspx

American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d.). *Patient Care: Autism Spectrum Disorder*. <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/autism/>

Autism Speaks (n.d) <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Centers for Disease Control (n.d.) *Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)*. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>

Florida Department of Health (n.d.) *Individualized Education Program (IEP) Resource for Parents*. https://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/fccdhh/education/parents.html?utm_source=frywj_floridahealth.gov&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=fdoth_az_index

Pinellas County School Board (n.d.). *Exceptional Student Education*.
<https://www.pcsb.org/ece>