

## **Facts and Statistics about Autism**

Autism is a complex developmental disability that affects an individual in the areas of social interaction and communication. Autism is a spectrum disorder that affects each individual differently and to varying degrees of severity. As many as 3.5 million Americans - children and adults - are thought to have autism today.

- About 1 percent of the world population has autism spectrum disorder. (CDC, 2014)
- Prevalence in the United States is estimated at 1 in 68 births. (CDC, 2014)
- More than 3.5 million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder. (Buescher et al., 2014)
- Prevalence of autism in U.S. children increased by 119.4 percent from 2000 (1 in 150) to 2010 (1 in 68). (CDC, 2014) Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability. (CDC, 2008)
- Prevalence has increased by 6-15 percent each year from 2002 to 2010. (Based on biennial numbers from the CDC)
- Autism services cost U.S. citizens \$236-262 billion annually. (Buescher et al., 2014)
- A majority of costs in the U.S. are in adult services – \$175-196 billion, compared to \$61-66 billion for children. (Buescher et al., 2014)
- In 10 years, the annual cost will be \$200-400 billion. (Autism Society estimate)
- Cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention. (Autism Society estimate based on Government Accounting Office Report on Autism, 2007)
- 1 percent of the adult population of the United Kingdom has autism spectrum disorder. (Brugha T.S. et al., 2011)
- The U.S. cost of autism over the lifespan is about \$2.4 million for a person with an intellectual disability, or \$1.4 million for a person without intellectual disability. (Buescher et al., 2014)
- 35 percent of young adults (ages 19-23) with autism have not had a job or received postgraduate education after leaving high school. (Shattuck et al., 2012)
- It costs more than \$8,600 extra per year to educate a student with autism. (Lavelle et al., 2014) (The average cost of educating a student is about \$12,000 – NCES, 2014)
- In June 2014, only 19.3 percent of people with disabilities in the U.S. were participating in the labor force – working or seeking work. Of those, 12.9 percent were unemployed, meaning only 16.8 percent of the population with disabilities was employed. (By contrast, 69.3 percent of people without disabilities were in the labor force, and 65 percent of the population without disabilities was employed.) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014)

### **Early Signs of Autism Include:**

- Lack of or delay in speech
- Unconventional use of language
- Little or no eye contact
- Difficulty with social interactions

- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Persistent preoccupation with objects or their parts
- Insistence on certain routines or rituals

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