



# Medical Diagnosis and Levels of Autism



PROJECT ACCESS

## WHAT IS AUTISM

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain that may result in individuals behaving, communicating, interacting with others, and learning differently than others.

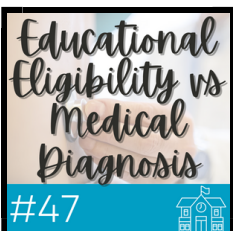
## WHY DO WE NEED LEVELS?

The three severity levels for Autism Spectrum Disorder are mainly for educational purposes to loosely describe the needs and required support of the student.

## NO MORE ASPERGER'S

As of the DSM-V, Asperger's is technically not a medical term anymore. Individuals who display deficits in social communication but whose symptoms do not meet the criteria for ASD should be evaluated for social (pragmatic) communication disorder.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

ASD Level 1 Requiring Support	ASD Level 2 Requiring Substantial Support	ASD Level 3 Requiring Very Substantial Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>difficulty initiating social interactions</li> <li>organization and planning problems can hamper independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social interactions limited to narrow special interests</li> <li>frequent restricted/repetitive behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills</li> <li>great distress/difficulty changing actions or focus</li> </ul>

## WHO CAN DIAGNOSE

There is no medical test to diagnose ASD, instead doctors look at the child's behavior and development to diagnose ASD. By the age of 2, an ASD diagnosis can be considered reliable. It is recommended that ASD be diagnosed using a tiered approach, by a multidisciplinary team including a child psychologist, developmental pediatricians, neurologists, and therapists.

**Making an Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis**

[CDC Checklist](#)



GET CONNECTED!

