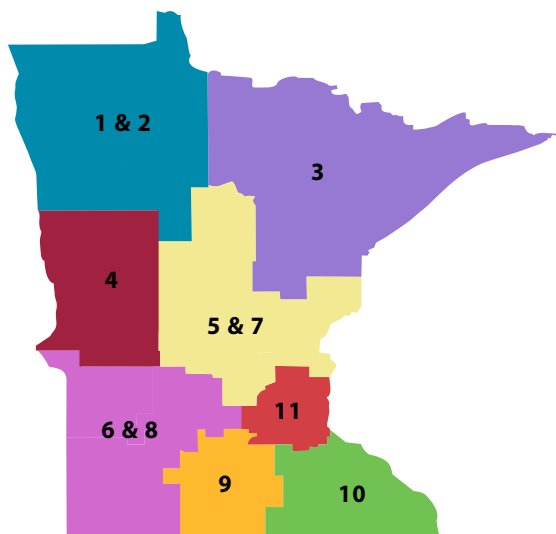


## MN Autism Community of Practice

The goal of the Minnesota Autism Community of Practice is to build the capacity of staff, districts and regions, to provide a full array of educational services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. The CoP is comprised of regions that provide technical assistance and training opportunities for schools and families.



Regions 1 & 2	218-751-6622 ex. 41
Region 3	218.748.7606
Region 4	218.739.3273
Region 5 & 7	218.894.5462
Region 6 & 8	507.537.2240
Region 9	507.389.1914
Region 10	507.775.2037
Region 11	612.638.1517

Contact your Regional Low Incidence Facilitator for more information. Your RLIF is:

## Community Resources

### MN Department of Education ASD

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SpecEdClass/DisabCateg/AutSpecDis/>  
Maci Spica, MA/BCBA  
Specialist for Autism Spectrum Disorders  
651.582.8596, [brianna.spica@state.mn.us](mailto:brianna.spica@state.mn.us)

### MN Low Incidence Projects

<http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/asd.html>  
Tami Childs, Ph.D.  
Coordinator, Minnesota Autism Project  
612.638.1519, [tami.childs@metroecu.org](mailto:tami.childs@metroecu.org)

### Autism Society of Minnesota

651.647.1083, [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

### Help Me Grow MN

[helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org)

### PACER Center

952.838.9000, <http://www.pacer.org/>

### Autism Society of America

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

### Autism Speaks

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

### Minnesota Parents Know

<http://helpmegrow.org/>

### National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC)

<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/national-professional-development-center-autism-spectrum-disorder>

### Autism Internet Modules (AIM)

<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/>

### Autism Navigator

<http://autismnavigator.com/resources-and-tools/>

# Autism Spectrum Disorders



## Minnesota Educational Resource Guide



Minnesota Department of  
Education

## What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a set of neurodevelopmental disorders that affect how an individual processes information and interprets the world. Core features of autism are persistent deficits in social interaction and communication and restricted, repetitive or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests or activities. Each individual with ASD displays a unique combination of characteristics, ranging from mild to severe, requiring individually determined educational and treatment programming.

The first signs of autism appear in early childhood and can be detected by an experienced professional as early as 18 to 24 months of age. *Early and accurate identification and intervention can change the trajectory for many children on the autism spectrum.*

*What would happen if the autism gene was eliminated from the gene pool? You would have a bunch of people standing around in a cave, chatting and socializing and not getting anything done” —Dr. Temple Grandin*

## What Causes Autism?

Researchers have not found a specific cause for ASD. Evidence indicates that there are genetic factors involved and that there are biological and/or neurological differences in the brains of individuals with autism. It is not something that is caused by bad parenting or by any other psychological influences in the person's life.

*“If you’ve met one person with Autism, you’ve met one person with Autism.”  
—Dr. Stephen Shore*

## What to do if you suspect your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Contact your local school district as soon as possible and discuss your concerns with your doctor. The earlier a child receives intervention the more gains they make.

Students who meet Minnesota’s eligibility criteria for ASD are entitled to a free and appropriate education which includes early intervention services. Special education programming is individualized and may include early intervention, specially designed instruction, speech therapy, behavioral support, occupational therapy, and other related services. While a medical or clinical diagnosis is not required to meet educational criteria or for educational intervention, a diagnosis may provide additional understanding, direction, and guidance for families. Minnesota Administrative Rules 3525.1325 Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=3525.1325>



On March 27, 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data on the prevalence of autism in the United States. This surveillance study identified 1 in 68 children (1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls) as having autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

*The content of this brochure does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the state Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the federal or state government. Funding for this brochure is made possible with a grant from MN Department of Education. The source of the funds is federal award Special Education—Program to States, CFDA 84.027A*

## Red Flags or Absolute Indicators for Older Children/Adults

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expression by six months or thereafter
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions by nine months
- No babbling by 12 months
- No back-and-forth gestures such as pointing, showing, reaching or waving by 12 months
- No words by 16 months
- No meaningful, two-word phrases (not including imitating or repeating) by 24 months
- Any loss of speech, babbling or social skills at any age