

## What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

"Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges.

There is often nothing about how an individual with ASD looks that sets he/she apart from others, but individuals with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn differently from most other individuals. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of individuals with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some individuals with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less." [CDC 2014]

## Characteristics of Autism

While it is easy to generalize about characteristics, no two individuals with autism are alike.

- ⇒ You cannot tell by appearance alone that someone has autism.
- ⇒ Autism is diagnosed by behavioral characteristics. Children with autism typically have difficulties in three main areas:
  1. Social interaction
  2. Communication
  3. Repetitive or restrictive behavior patterns
- ⇒ Symptoms present before age 3.

**DO NOT WAIT!** If you suspect that your child may have autism contact your pediatrician immediately or call Maryland's Infants & Toddlers program at 1-800-535-0182, for a **FREE evaluation.**

## Did You Know?

In Howard County, more than 8% of the special education population has an autism spectrum disorder (state average is 4%).

**National prevalence is estimated at 1 in 68 births;\***  
in Maryland it is about 1 in 60.\*\*

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

\*\* [www.pathfindersforautism.org](http://www.pathfindersforautism.org)

The Howard County Autism Society serves individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, and the community by providing information, support, and advocacy; by promoting awareness of autism that values the dignity and uniqueness of each individual; and by working to improve the quality of and access to services and to educational opportunities.

*Awarded "2007 Chapter of the Year"  
by the Autism Society of America*

## HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

***WE ARE MOVING!***

**New address as of May 15, 2017:  
9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 308  
Columbia, MD 21046**

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**

*The Howard County Autism Society is a  
not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.  
Donations are tax-deductible.*



HOWARD COUNTY  
AUTISM SOCIETY

Providing Support

Promoting Awareness

Advocating for Change





HOWARD COUNTY  
AUTISM SOCIETY

## Welcome from the Board of the Howard County Autism Society

At its heart, the Howard County Autism Society is an organization created, inspired and powered by loving parents helping their own children as well as others with autism find their place in this world. Our Board consists of many parents, brought together in their individual journeys living with a loved one with autism.

There is a place of value for every person with autism.

Much of the work undertaken by our organization is directed toward raising awareness and educating the general public about the complexities of autism. We believe that once people better understand autism, they are better able to welcome and support people living with autism in the greater community.

For more information on autism spectrum disorders and where to get help, please call us at 410-290-3466.

## Serving Families and Community

**Monthly Support Group Meetings:** General Support Group, Aspergers Support Group, Transition Group. Many meetings feature a guest speaker.

**Social Outings** help prevent family isolation. Activities include but are not limited to: swimming parties, family fitness nights, rock climbing and parent nights out.

**Autism Trainings** are offered to community service providers including Howard County General Hospital, Howard County Police Department, Howard County Fire and Rescue, Howard County Recreation and Parks, and Howard County Libraries.

**Educational Workshops** are offered on a variety of issues related to autism, therapies, special education, research, and assistive technology.

**AMC Sensory Friendly Movies** offer children with an autism spectrum disorder and others a chance to enjoy a movie where the volume is lowered, the lights are up, and everyone is free to move around.

**Sensory Friendly Santa & Easter Bunny** allow children to enjoy these holiday favorites in a quiet, well lit mall, with no waiting in line, and when few shoppers are around.

**911 Alert** is a collaboration with the Howard County Police department that offers parents the opportunity to flag their home in the 911 Call System so first responders will know that a child with autism lives there and the first responder can act appropriately.

### ***Become a Member Today!***

Join the Howard County Autism Society and become a member today. Annual membership is \$25. Call 410-290-3466 or visit [www.howard-autism.org](http://www.howard-autism.org).

## Do You Have Questions About Special Education Services?

We are here to answer your questions about IEPs, school services, modifications, accommodations, and regulations under state and federal law. We can also offer guidance on how to request additional help from your school.

The Howard County Autism Society provides advice and support on special education issues and services in Howard County through consultations, workshops, and seminars. If necessary, free phone consultations with the Maryland Disability Law Center can be arranged.

Visit [www.howard-autism.org](http://www.howard-autism.org) for a complete list of upcoming workshops.

### **We are here to help**

Call **410-290-3466** or email questions to [info@howard-autism.org](mailto:info@howard-autism.org)

### **Visit our Special Education News Center: [specaled.howard-autism.org](http://specaled.howard-autism.org)**

- Accommodations & Modifications
- Behavior & Discipline Issues
- Common Core Standards
- High Stakes Testing
- Transitions
- Spanish & Korean Language Resources Available