

Deaf Education at a glance...



KANSAS SCHOOL
FOR THE DEAF
OUTREACH

RESOURCES

- **Autism Society**—www.autism-society.org

- **“Making Learning Accessible for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students with Autism”** - http://www3.gallaudet.edu/Images/Clerc/articles/Odyssey_SPR_2012_Szymanski.pdf

- **“When It’s More Than Hearing Loss”**—<https://leader.pubs.asha.org/article.aspx?articleid=2234619>

April is Autism Awareness Month!

“Autism is an important part of who I am, and I wouldn’t want to change it because I LIKE the way I think.”

-Temple Grandin

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DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING

Autism Spectrum Disorder (also known as Autism or ASD) is a disorder that is characterized by deficits in social communication development and restricted/repetitive behaviors and interests. Individuals with Autism can also have language delays/disorders, intellectual disability, and global developmental delay.

Deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) children are at risk for both over diagnosis and under diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. There are many possible reasons for this. One is that there are not many professionals who have extensive experience with both D/HH children and children with Autism. Another is that there are currently no Autism screeners or diagnostic tests that have been validated for use with D/HH children. D/HH children with a diagnosis of Autism are typically identified later than average. This leads to a delay in Autism intervention services which has been linked to poorer outcomes compared to children who receive intervention services early (Yoshinaga-Itano & Mood, 2017). On the other hand, misdiagnosis can lead to lowered academic expectations and limited academic opportunities.

It is important to consider the child’s communication and language access history when determining if a child may have Autism. Children with Autism and D/HH children who have not had full access to language can both present with language delays that impact their social communication and behaviors. Either group may present with poor eye contact, poor joint attention, and repetitive play. One primary difference is that students who demonstrate these symptoms due to limited language access rather than Autism will engage with a communication partner who uses language at a level they are comfortable with.

Some red flags of Autism to be aware of include (DeRamus, 2015) :

- Limited gesture use
- Not sharing interests
- Fixated interests of unusual intensity
- Limited interactions even with familiar people
- Not responding to bids for attention
- Flat affect (limited facial expression)
- Repetitive use of objects
- Insistence on sameness
- Sensory seeking/avoiding
- Difficulty with changes in routine
- Limited functional/imaginative play
- Repetitive motor movements (hand flapping, spinning, rocking)

KSD Outreach Mission: To provide the highest quality of services, resources, and support to children ages birth-21 who are deaf/hard of hearing by collaborating with their families, their communities, and the professionals that serve them.