# Autism: An Overview

## Autism Is.../Autism Is Not...

**Autism is...**

- A developmental disability
- A neurophysiological disorder
- A lifelong disability
- Behaviorally defined
- A communication, sensory, and interactional disability
- Treated through good educational programs
- Variable in its severity across individuals

**Autism is not...**

- A mental or emotional illness
- Curable
- Diagnosable by any type of medical procedure
- Simply a behavior disorder
- The same set of behaviors in all individuals

## Autism Facts

2. Boys are three-to-four times more likely to be affected by autism than girls (Facts about autism, 2001).
3. Approximately 50% of people with autism score below 50 on IQ tests, 20% score between 50 and 70, and 30% score higher than 70. A small percentage of people with autism are savants (Autism fact sheet, 2003).
4. Approximately 40% of people with autism are functionally nonverbal (About autism, 2004). This means that even if the person has speech, the speech is not used in a meaningful way.

## Features of Good Educational Programs

The main goals of education for people with autism are EMPLOYABILITY and INDEPENDENCE. These goals can best be met through significant integration into settings with normal peers.

Good educational programs include instruction in the four life domains:

1. Domestic
2. Vocational/Academic
3. Social/Leisure

*Introduction to Autism*
4. Community Integration

Good educational programs embed within the four life domains the following skills:

- Social interaction
- Domestic
- Nontraditional academics (functional life)
- Problem solving/critical thinking
- Communication
- Social/leisure activity
- Generalization
- Self-monitoring/self-management
- Work behaviors
- coping

References


