The Autism Society of America defines autism as a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first 3 years of life. The result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. (What is autism?, n.d.).

Family income, lifestyle, and education do not affect the chance of autism. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and nonverbal communication, social interactions and leisure, or play activities. The disorder makes it hard to communicate and relate to the outside world. They may exhibit repeated body movements (e.g., hand flapping, rocking), unusual responses to people or attachments to objects, and resist any changes in routines. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behavior may be present (Jameson Titlon, n.d.).

Over a half million people in the U.S. today have some form of autism. Its prevalence rate now places it as the third most common developmental disability—more common than Down syndrome. Yet the majority of the public, including many professionals in the medical, educational, and vocational fields, are still unaware of how autism affects people and how to work effectively with individuals with autism (Jameson Titlon, n.d.).

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**References**


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Introduction to Autism