

# Difficulties in Learning: Identify the early signs and types of SLD



Learning disabilities are mental health disorders/neurological conditions that affect a person's ability to grasp new information and learn skills necessary for daily living. These disorders occur due to genetic or neurobiological factors that can alter brain function in a way that affects one or multiple cognitive abilities that are necessary for learning.

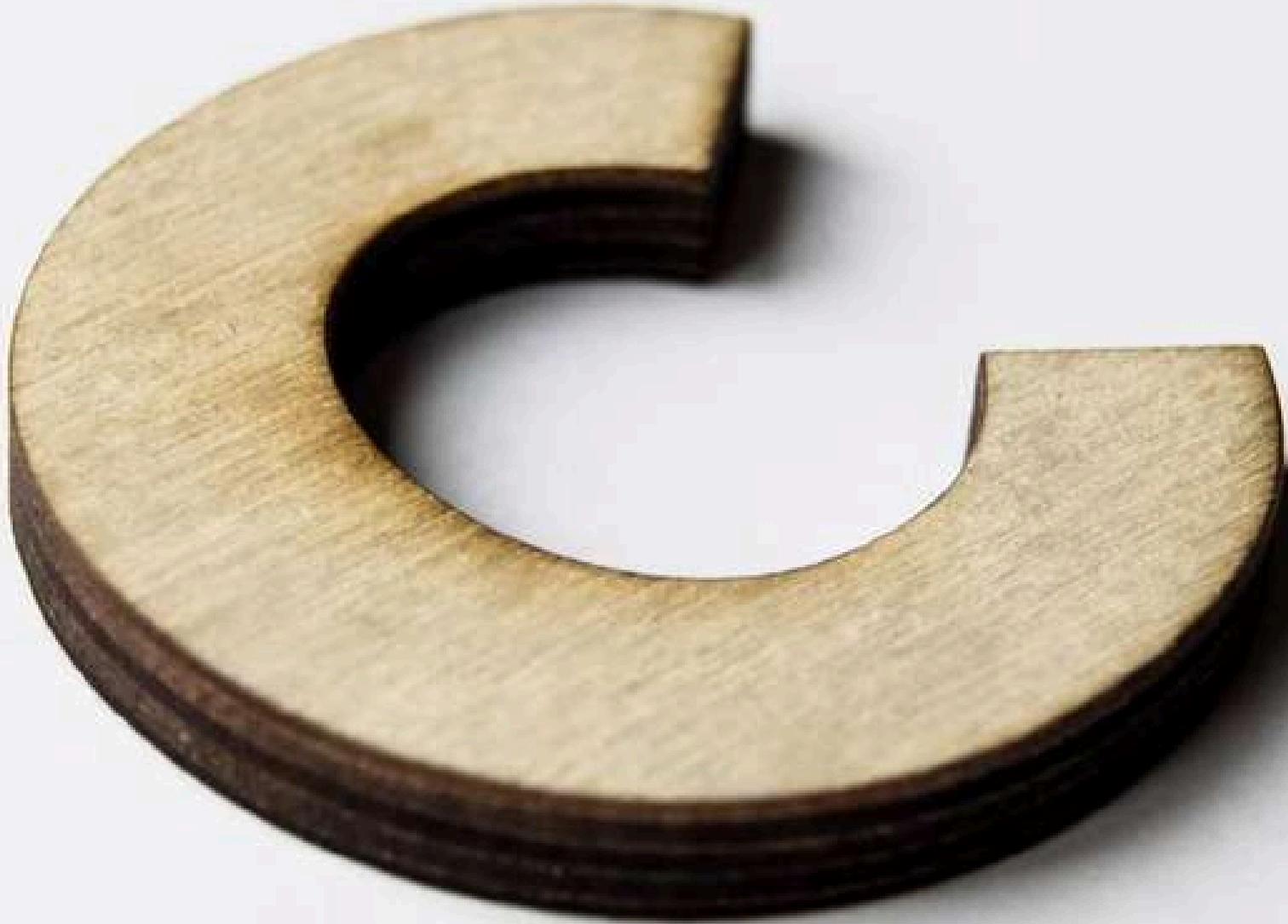
These cognitive issues might make it difficult to master fundamental abilities like reading, writing, and math. They can also obstruct higher-order skills including organization, time management, abstract thinking, long and short-term memory, and concentration. Learning difficulties can have an influence on an individual's life outside the classroom, affecting connections with family, friends, and coworkers.

The signs and symptoms of learning impairments are most typically recognized during the school years since issues with reading, writing, and/or math are obvious problems during that period. Some people, however, do not undergo an evaluation until they are in post-secondary school or are working adults. Others with learning impairments may never have an evaluation and go through life without understanding why they struggle in school, at work, or in interactions with family and friends.

Learning disabilities are not to be confused with learning difficulties caused by visual, hearing, or motor impairments; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages.

People with learning impairments, on average, have normal or above-average intellect. There appears to be a disconnect between an individual's potential and their actual accomplishments. This is why learning difficulties are known as "hidden disabilities": the individual appears to be fully "normal" and intellectual, but may be unable to display the skill level anticipated of someone of comparable age.

A learning disability is a lifetime issue that cannot be healed or rectified. People with learning impairments, on the other hand, can succeed in school, work, relationships, and the community with the right assistance and intervention.



# Signs and Symptoms of Learning Disabilities

Learning disorders manifest differently in each child and vary in severity as well. Some children might struggle with reading or spelling, but another child could be proficient at reading but might not be able to make head and tail of mathematics. Some others may have difficulty comprehending speech. While all of these may seem like symptoms of different kinds of issues, they all fall under the umbrella term of learning disorders.

Learning difficulties aren't always simple to spot. Because of the large range of symptoms and profiles, there is no one symptom or profile that can be used to prove the existence of a problem. At various ages, though, certain warning signals are more prevalent than others. You'll be able to detect a learning issue early and take action to aid your child if you know what they are.

Some frequent red flags for learning difficulties are listed in the checklists below. Remember that even children who do not have learning problems may face some of these challenges at different times. When your child's ability to learn specific abilities is consistently unequal, it's time to be concerned.



# Symptoms of SLDs in Preschool Years

- **Delays in language acquisition:** Your preschooler should be able to speak in phrases or short sentences by the age of 2 ½.
- **Speech difficulties.** By the age of three, your kid should be able to communicate well enough for adults to comprehend the majority of what they say.
- **Colors, shapes, letters, and numbers are difficult to remember.**
- **Rhyming** words is a challenge.
- **Coordination is a problem.** Your youngster should be able to button clothes, handle scissors, and jump by the age of five. A circle, square, or triangle should be able to be copied.
- **Attention spans are short:** Your youngster should be able to sit down and listen to a short narrative between the ages of 3 and 5. Your youngster should be able to pay attention as they get older.



## Symptoms of SLD in ages between 5-9

01

It's difficult to make the connection between letters and sounds.

02

Incapable of combining sounds to form words.

03

When reading, fundamental words become mixed together.

04

Learning new talents takes time.

05

Frequently misspells words and creates grammatical blunders.

06

Basic arithmetic ideas are difficult to grasp.

07

Having trouble keeping track of time and memorizing sequences.

## Symptoms of SLD through teenage years

01

Reading comprehension or math abilities are difficult to master.

02

Open-ended test questions and word problems pose a challenge.

03

Reading and writing are disliked by the child, and they avoid reading aloud.

04

Handwriting is sloppy.

05

Ineffective organizational skills (bedroom, homework, and desk are messy and disorganized).

06

Following classroom conversations and expressing opinions aloud are both difficult.

07

In a single document, the child spells the same term differently.

## How do you identify these symptoms?

It's critical to pay attention to toddlers' and preschoolers' natural developmental milestones. An early diagnosis of developmental abnormalities might be a symptom of a learning disability, and issues that are caught early are simpler to fix.

Although a developmental lag may not be recognized as a symptom of a learning problem, until your kid is older, you may act early if you see it when your child is small. You know your child better than anyone else, so getting an examination doesn't hurt if you suspect a problem. You can also request a developmental milestones chart from your physician.

# Types of Specific Learning Disabilities

## Issues with reading, writing, and mathematics

### Dyslexia - Problems with reading

In reading, there are two categories of learning difficulties. When it comes to basic reading challenges, it's tough to comprehend the link between sounds, letters, and words. When people have trouble understanding what words, phrases, and paragraphs mean, they have reading comprehension issues.

Reading difficulties can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including:

- Recognition of letters and words.
- Understanding the meaning of words and concepts
- Reading speed and fluency are important factors to consider.
- Vocabulary skills in general.

## **Dyscalculia - Problems with mathematical calculations**

The severity of arithmetic learning impairments varies tremendously depending on the child's other strengths and shortcomings. A language learning handicap, a visual issue, or a problem with sequencing, memory, or organization will all influence a child's ability to perform math in different ways.

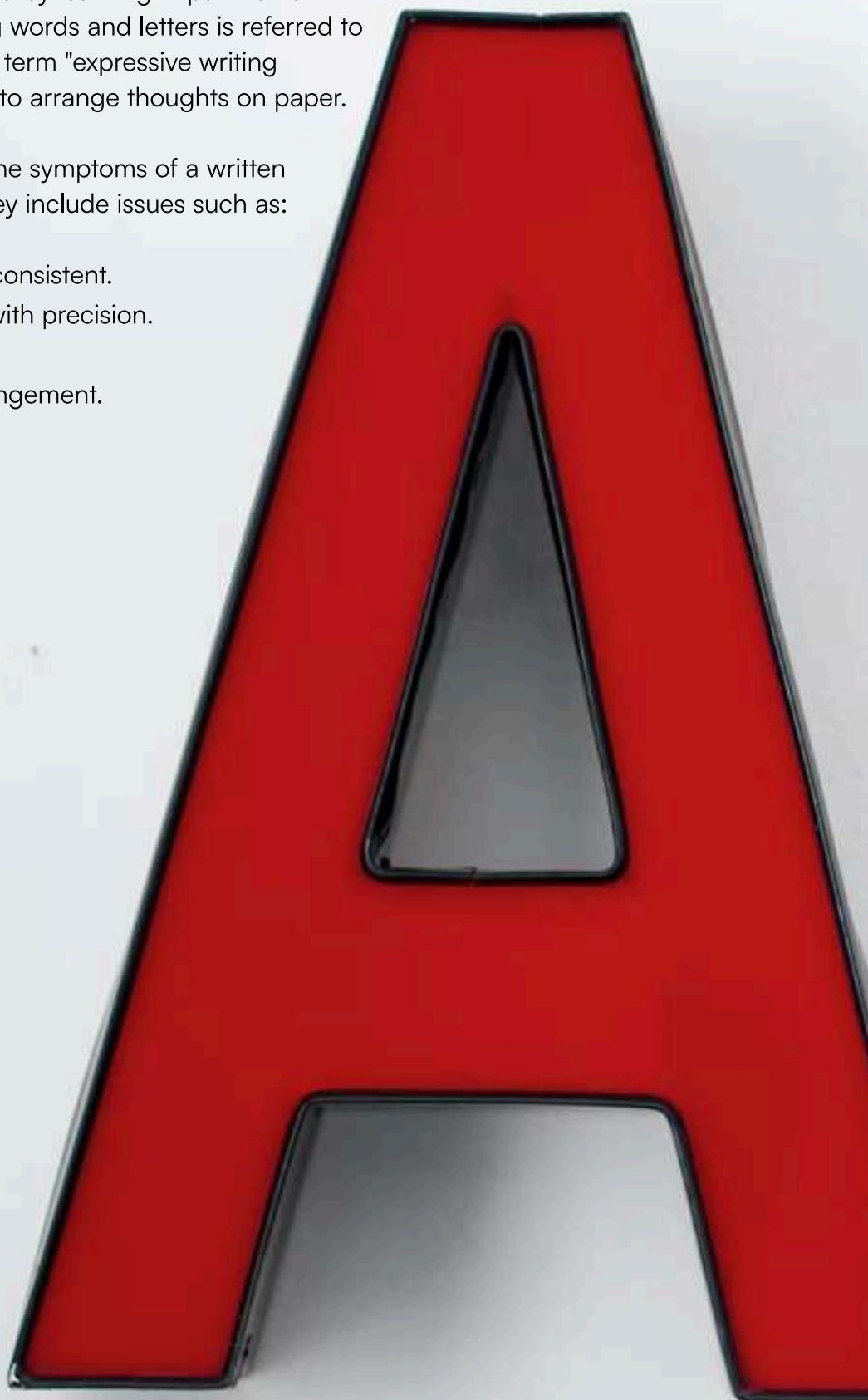
A kid with a math-based learning problem may struggle with number memory and organization, as well as number "facts" (such as  $4+4=8$  or  $56=30$ ). Children with arithmetic learning disabilities may struggle with counting concepts (such as numbering by twos or calculating by fives) or telling time.

## Dysgraphia - Issues with writing

The physical act of writing or the cerebral activity of interpreting information can both be affected by learning impairments in writing. Physical trouble making words and letters is referred to as a basic writing problem. The term "expressive writing handicap" refers to the inability to arrange thoughts on paper.

The act of writing is central to the symptoms of a written language learning problem. They include issues such as:

- The writing is not neat and consistent.
- Copying letters and words with precision.
- Consistency in spelling.
- Writing coherence and arrangement.



# Other types of Learning Disorders

Learning disabilities affect more than just reading, writing, and math. Other forms of learning impairments include challenges with motor skills (movement and coordination), comprehension of spoken language, sound discrimination, and visual information interpretation.



## Dyspraxia - Issues with Motor Skills

Whether it's fine motor abilities (cutting, writing) or gross motor skills (walking, running), motor difficulties refer to issues with movement and coordination (running, jumping). Motor impairment is also referred to as an "output" activity, implying that it has something to do with the brain's information output. The brain must be able to communicate with the relevant limbs in order to accomplish an activity such as running, jumping, writing, or cutting.

Problems with physical abilities that involve hand-eye coordination, such as holding a pencil or buttoning a blouse, are signs that your kid may have a motor coordination deficit.

## Dysphasia - issues learning languages

The capacity to understand or generate spoken language is affected by these learning impairments. Language is also an output activity since it takes the brain to organize thoughts and summon the appropriate words to vocally explain or express something.

Problems with verbal language abilities, such as the capacity to repeat a tale, speech fluency, and the ability to grasp the meaning of words, directions, and the like, are all signs of a language-based learning disability.

## Auditory and Visual Processing Problems

The primary way of conveying information to the brain is through the eyes and hearing, a process known as "input." Learning can be hampered if one or both of the eyes or ears aren't functioning properly.

**Auditory processing problem** - The capacity to hear well is referred to as "auditory processing skills" or "receptive language" by professionals. The capacity to hear things correctly has a big influence on reading, writing, and spelling. It's tough to sound out words and comprehend basic reading and writing ideas if you can't discern minor distinctions in sound.

**Visual Processing Problems:** Missing tiny distinctions in shapes, inverting letters or numerals, skipping words, skipping lines, misperceiving depth or distance, or experiencing difficulty with eye-hand coordination are all symptoms of visual processing impairment. "Visual processing" is a term used by professionals to describe the activity of the eyes. Motor abilities, reading comprehension, and numeracy can all be affected by visual perception.

It's not always simple to know what to do and where to look for support when it comes to learning impairments. Of course, enlisting the help of experts who can locate and diagnose the issue is critical. You should also engage with your child's school to create modifications and obtain specialized academic assistance. But don't forget about your own part. Take the lead in researching your alternatives, learning about new therapies and services, and managing your kid's education since you know your child better than anyone else.

At Cadabams, we combine the best mental health professionals with advanced infrastructure to offer accelerated recovery journeys. Our expert mental health professionals ensure that individuals get the recovery journey they deserve!





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# Treating Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Options



Getting a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be stressful for both the child and the parents. However, it is important to note that seeking help and treatment immediately after a diagnosis is pivotal to ensuring the best recovery outcomes for your child. As parents, we understand how difficult it can be for you to cope with the diagnosis and the implications, but time is of the essence.

Once you decide to seek help and treatment, the next question arises, what are the types of treatment options available and what is the best option among them. To be honest, there is no one-size fits all approach to treating ASD. Since the disorder can occur in varying severities and manifest as different symptoms, treatment options differ in efficacy from child to child. The key is to find a treatment approach that works for your child, and for you and to stick with it as long as your mental health professional suggests it.

Please do read on to understand the various treatment approaches available to treat Autism Spectrum Disorder, and remember that you and your child are never alone in this journey of recovery:

# Treating Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder has no definitive cure right now; hence treatment options focus on the reduction of symptoms that may interfere with a child's daily living, and impede their quality of life. Because ASD affects different children in different ways, treatment plans too must be tailor-made for each child. Treating ASD usually involves a multidisciplinary team that addresses the disorder comprehensively.

Treatment can be focused on a child's academic, social, and personal life, and as the child finishes their education and move on to a job or higher studies, the treatment can evolve to accommodate their changing needs. Some people may need assistance throughout their lives to continue employment, to train for a job, and in daily activities as well.

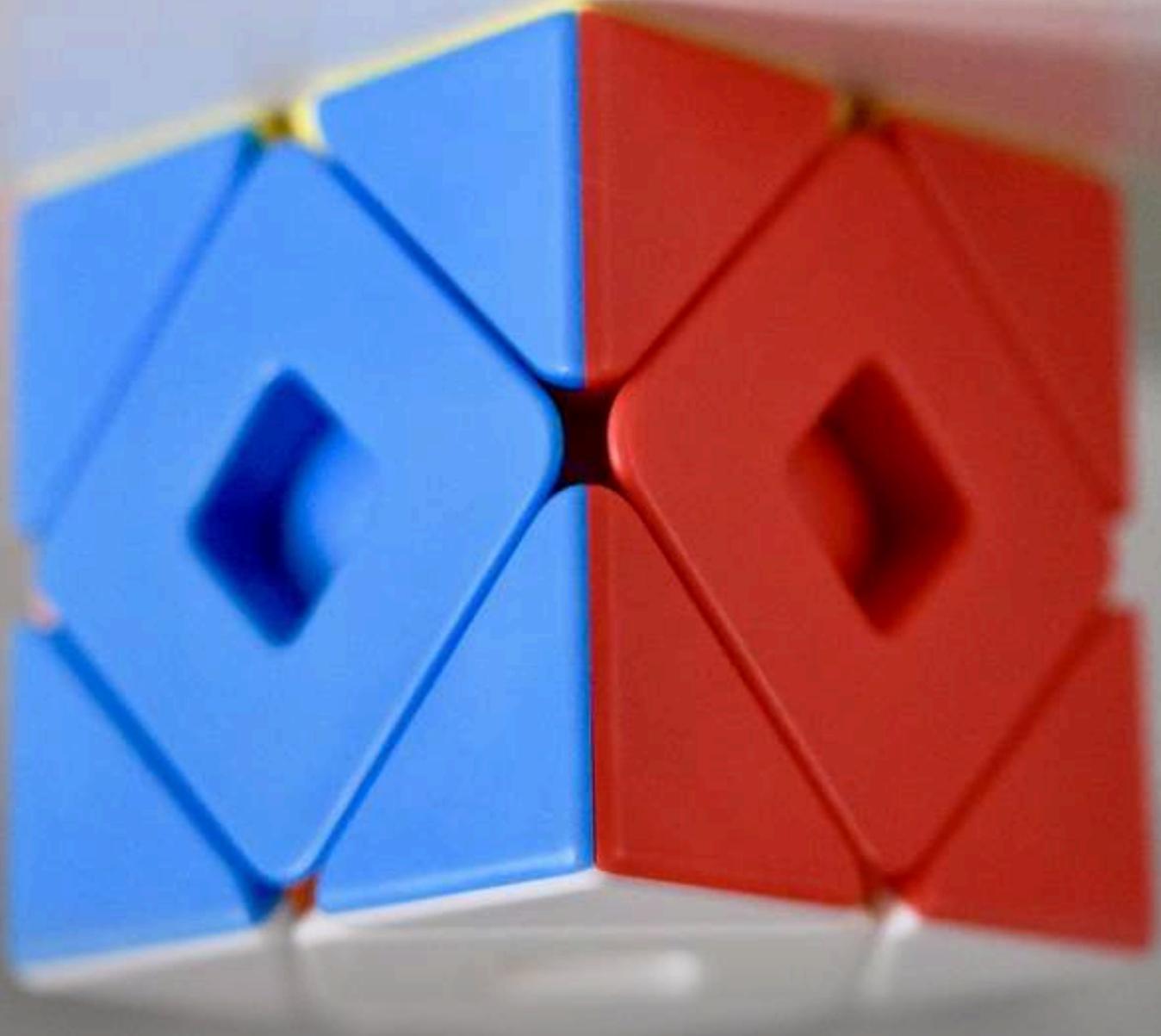
Treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorder can fall under one of the following verticals:

- Behavioral
- Developmental
- Educational
- Social-Relational
- Pharmacological
- Psychological



# Behavioral Approach to Treating Autism Spectrum Disorder

Children with ASD have multiple symptoms that affect their ability to communicate with other people, affect their behavior, and more. The behavioral approach to treating ASD focuses on the processes before an action is committed, and the aftermath of these actions. Research has shown that this is one of the more impactful treatment methods for ASD, and it has gained widespread acceptance among educators and mental health professionals. The major behavioral treatments for ASD fall under something called Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in which desired behaviors are encouraged and undesirable behaviors are discouraged.



The progress a child makes is tracked. Under the ABA teaching style, there are two variations:

**Discrete Trial Training:** In this approach, a larger task is broken down into multiple simple steps that are easier for the child. During this task, desired responses are encouraged and rewarded, while the wrong or undesirable responses are ignored.

**Pivotal Response Training:** This is conducted in a day-to-day setting with the goal of improving some important skills that will help the person cope with daily life. A pivotal skill example is the ability to initiate communication or conversations with people.



## Developmental Approach

Specific developmental capabilities, like language or physical skills, or a larger spectrum of integrated developmental abilities, are the focus of developmental methods. Behavioral and developmental techniques are often integrated.

Speech and Language Therapy is the most prevalent developmental therapy for persons with ASD. Speech and Language Therapy aids in the comprehension and use of speech and language. Some persons with ASD use words to communicate. Others may use signs, gestures, photographs, or an electronic communication device to communicate.

Occupational therapy provides skills that allow a person to live independently as much as is feasible. Dressing, eating, bathing, and interacting with others are examples of skills. Occupational therapy might also involve the following services:

- Sensory Integration Therapy is used to help people to modify their reactions to sensory input that is either too restricting or too overwhelming.
- Physical therapy can aid in developing physical abilities such as delicate finger motions or bigger trunk and body movements.

## Educational Approach

In a classroom context, educational therapies are offered. The Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication-Handicapped Children (TEACCH) method is one form of educational strategy. TEACCH is founded on the concept that consistency and visual learning are beneficial to persons with autism. It gives instructors tools to change the organization of the classroom and enhance academic and other outcomes. Daily routines, for example, can be written or sketched and shown prominently. Learning centers can have boundaries put around them. Visual instructions or physical demonstrations can be used to supplement spoken instructions.



## Medicine based Approach:

There are no drugs that can help with ASD's primary symptoms. Some drugs can help persons with ASD operate better by treating co-occurring symptoms. Medication might, for example, aid with excessive energy, inability to concentrate, or self-harming behaviors like head pounding or hand biting. In addition to physical illnesses including seizures, sleep difficulties, and stomach or other gastrointestinal problems, medication can assist in controlling co-occurring psychological diseases like anxiety or depression.

When contemplating the use of medication, it is critical to consult with a doctor who has expertise in treating patients with ASD. This is true for both prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Individuals, families, and physicians must collaborate to track development and reactions so that unwanted side effects are avoided.



# Social Approach

The goal of social-relational therapy is to improve social skills and strengthen emotional ties. Parents or peer mentors are involved in several social-relational techniques.

- The Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-Based paradigm (also known as "Floortime") encourages parents and therapists to follow the individual's interests to increase communication possibilities.
- The Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) paradigm entails activities that boost motivation, enthusiasm, and capacities to engage in shared social relationships.
- Simple explanations of what to expect in a social scenario are provided in Social Stories.
- People with ASD can practice social skills in a structured environment by participating in Social Skills Groups.



# Psychological Approach

People with ASD can benefit from psychological interventions to help them manage anxiety, depression, and other mental health difficulties. CBT (Cognitive-Behavior Therapy) is a psychological treatment that focuses on understanding the relationships between ideas, feelings, and behaviors. A therapist and the individual collaborate to set objectives and then modify how the person thinks about a circumstance in order to change how they react to it.

All of this is meant to be informational in nature. Your mental health professional or doctor will be able to advise you best on how to progress. But, keep in mind the most necessary part of any recovery journey is patience and optimism! With continued support and effort, your child will be able to lead a happy and contented life!



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