



Across the Spectrum— and Beyond



4650 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90027
323-361-6102
CHLA.org/AUTISM



Autism Spectrum Disorder
and Developmental Services at
Children's Hospital Los Angeles

323.361.6102
CHLA.org



About Autism

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that can affect a child's ability to communicate and interact socially with other children or adults. It is part of a group of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). ASDs can usually be diagnosed by age 3, although new research is making it possible to diagnose children even earlier. Parents are often the first to notice unusual behaviors in their child or to notice that their child is failing to reach key developmental milestones.

A child with an ASD might:

- Have trouble relating to other people
- Avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings
- Be very interested in people, but not know how to talk to, play with or relate to them
- Have trouble expressing their needs using typical words or motions
- Repeat actions over and over again
- Have trouble adapting when a routine changes
- Lose skills they once had (for example, stop saying words they were previously using)
- Not play "pretend" games (for example, pretending to feed a doll)
- Not point at objects to show interest
- Not look at objects when another person points at them

Children's Hospital Los Angeles knows each child is unique. Diagnosing autism spectrum disorders is a complex process that requires special expertise.



CENTER OF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Children's Hospital Los Angeles is a member of the Autism Treatment Network (ATN), and is the only Center of Clinical Excellence designated by the ATN in California. Participation in this national network allows the hospital to provide the most advanced care while expanding innovative research programs to provide a brighter future to children with autism.

Children's Hospital provides all of the expertise needed to care for a child with autism.



PARTNERS IN CARE

Children's Hospital Los Angeles knows each child is unique. Diagnosing autism spectrum disorders is a complex process that requires special expertise. At the hospital's two autism clinics, the Boone Fetter Clinic and the Mental Health Program at the University of Southern California University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, experts conduct multispecialty assessments while a nurse management team coordinates specially tailored services throughout the hospital, making parents partners in the delivery of care.

Services are available for children who have or are suspected to have:

- Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs)
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders
- Trauma resulting from child abuse
- Disorders resulting from prematurity
- Behavioral disorders
- Learning problems
- Developmental disabilities

STREAMLINED TREATMENT

Through the Autism Warm Phone Line, a nurse care manager helps families begin the diagnosis process and move through the steps that follow. Over a series of visits, the team conducts a range of assessments to understand each child's unique symptoms. The team then meets again for a detailed discussion to determine a diagnosis. Each family is given a comprehensive report, including information about the specific diagnosis and a follow-up care plan. **Call the Autism Warm Phone Line at 323-361-6102.**

COORDINATED CARE

Children's Hospital provides all of the expertise needed to care for a child with autism. Board-Certified developmental-behavioral pediatricians provide medical follow-up and coordinate care with specialists throughout the hospital, including:

- Dentistry
- Gastroenterology
- General Pediatrics
- Medical Genetics
- Neurology
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Sleep Pulmonology
- Speech Therapy



Visiting the hospital's team of specialists is the first step to empower families.

"The biggest difference was that we felt like we had the right people all in one room ... I really felt a lot of confidence, like this is the right place, these are experts, they're going to be able to help us."

— Parent

At Children's Hospital, Board-Certified developmental-behavioral pediatricians work to create a complete and holistic understanding of a child's strengths and challenges.



SERVICES

A Plan of Action

Visiting the hospital's team of specialists is the first step to empower families. An interdisciplinary diagnostic team consisting of expert developmental-behavioral pediatricians, child psychologists, speech and language pathologists and occupational therapists assess each child and develop a coordinated plan of care. Assessments include:

- Review of the child's medical, psychosocial and developmental history
- Physical examination
- Psychological assessment
- Speech and language therapy assessment
- Social and behavioral observations by the team

Board-Certified developmental-behavioral pediatricians provide medical follow-up and coordinate care with specialists throughout the hospital.



Staying on the Right Track

At Children's Hospital, Board-Certified developmental-behavioral pediatricians work to create a complete and holistic understanding of a child's strengths and challenges. Caregivers also are helped to understand each child's behavior in relationship to his or her overall development. Care may include:

- Treatment planning
- Behavioral medication management
- Recommendations for further assessment or additional therapeutic strategies
- Coordinated care with necessary specialists throughout the hospital

Autism Spectrum Disorders and Beyond

As part of the evaluation process, assessments are conducted by team experts to identify learning disabilities, cognitive defects, giftedness, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and language disorders. Hospital psychologists also can provide direct intervention for children, adolescents, families and parents facing a variety of clinical concerns. These may include:

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Disruptive behaviors
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders
- Trauma
- School-based difficulties
- Loss/grief
- Parenting guidance

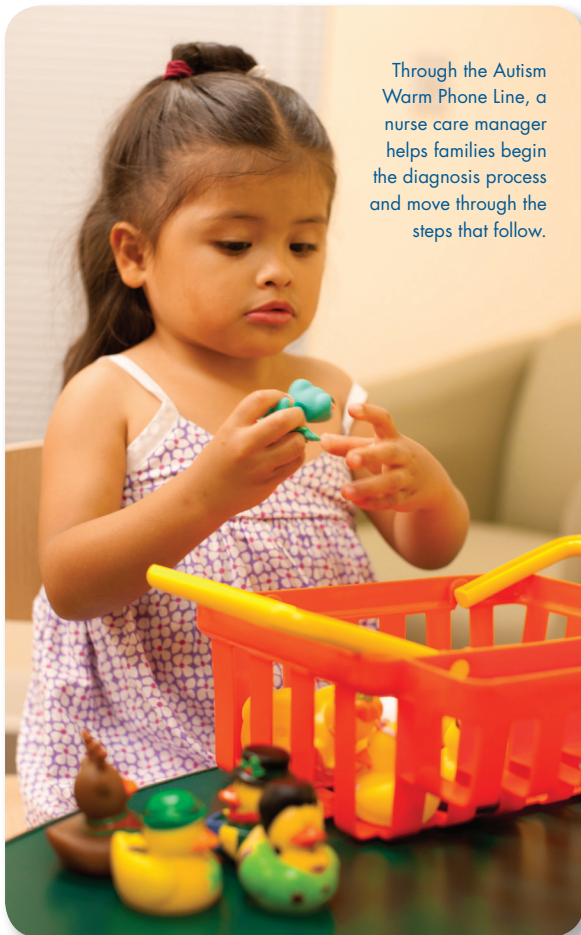
A Continuum of Care

For families with children who already have a diagnosis, Children's Hospital Los Angeles offers guidance for a child's plan of care. Clinicians are available to review previous assessments and reports to provide the best information and recommendations in response to concerns.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

A nurse care manager is available to provide information, make service referrals, listen and respond to concerns and answer general questions about a child's development. Questions about insurance options—Children's Hospital is the pediatric provider for many major health plans and is one of few providers in greater Los Angeles that accepts insurance for comprehensive interdisciplinary assessments for ASDs—can also be answered, among other questions.

To speak to a nurse care manager, call the Autism Warm Phone Line at 323-361-6102.



Through the Autism Warm Phone Line, a nurse care manager helps families begin the diagnosis process and move through the steps that follow.

RESEARCH

Research is key to improving the health and well-being of children with developmental concerns. Patients and families often participate in research as a way to learn about their diagnosis and treatment options and to help build understanding of the conditions that affect them. The Boone Fetter Clinic Patient Registry is a confidential and convenient way for families to connect with researchers and help to mobilize studies quickly. Research studies are focused on understanding these complex disorders, improving care and outcomes and creating new tools to improve the lives of children and their families.

"We are on a long journey ... this is not going to be easy, and we want absolutely the best for our daughter, for her to maximize her full potential, but we are not alone in that journey. With Children's Hospital Los Angeles ... we have a partner, we're not on our own, we have help, we know where to turn, we know what questions to ask, we know what help to get and we have hope for what the potential can look like. We have hope for her future."

– Parent