Autism Workshop
FDL Co Parish Nurses
Saturday February 2, 2008

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What comes to your mind when you hear the word “autism”?
Autism

- Affects approximately 1/150 based on the most recent CDC study
- Occurs 4 times more often in boys than girls
- Affects close to 26,000 individuals in Wisconsin
- Found in all racial, ethnic, and social groups across the world
- Recurs in 5-7% of families unless due to another, known cause. In families with two children with autism, the risk for each successive pregnancy is as high as 50%
- There is a 10-15% likelihood of having a primary relative with a related area of need, i.e., speech and language delays, not necessarily autism
What causes ASD?

- No known factors in the psychological environment of a child
- Changes in the brain (within cells and neurotransmitters) thought to occur during fetal development
  - These changes cannot be detected by our current medical diagnostic technology
  - Likely to be in the future by technological advances in imaging such as PET scans
- Result of a neurological disorder that interferes with the normal development of the brain (in the areas of reasoning, social interaction and communication skills.)
- There is generally nothing that was done or not done during the pregnancy that caused the condition.
What is the “cure”? 

- There is no known “cure” for autism.

- Early identification and intervention can improve the skills and symptoms.

- Medicines may relieve symptoms in some cases.
**Autism**

- A “spectrum” disorder in which children may display a wide variety of characteristics

- Signs may or may not be apparent in infancy, but become more obvious during early development and need to be present by 3

- Early identification and appropriate intervention are key

- Often occurs in combination with other conditions
Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Medical (DSM IV)
- Educational (IDEA, WI PI 11)
What’s in a name?

- Technically known as
  
  Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)
  

- Pervasive Developmental Disorders
  
  is sometimes referred to as the “umbrella category” that refers to a group of disorders characterized by a significant and widespread (pervasive) effect on the areas of
  
  - social interaction
  - communication
  - behavior.
Autism Spectrum Disorder “ASD”

• Autistic Disorder
• Asperger Disorder
• Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
• Rett Syndrome
• Pervasive Developmental Disorders Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)
Four Hallmarks of Autism
(Diagnostic Features -- DSM-IV)

- Impaired social development
- Impaired language and communication skills
- Resistance to change or insistence on sameness
- An onset in the first years of life before age three years
Autism Spectrum Disorders can be characterized as a “Hidden Disability”.

Each person with ASD is a Unique individual.
Autism

How well can you recognize the characteristics common to Autism?
Characteristics of Typical Development

- Social Development
- Joint Attention
- Language and Communication
- Behavior and Interests
Typical Characteristics of ASD

Think about a child you know ….

What characteristics might link them to the autism puzzle?
Social Development

- Key characteristics of interpersonal interactions
  - Reciprocity
    - Does the child respond to social initiatives by others?
  - Initiation
    - Does the child attempt to engage others?
  - Use of nonverbal behaviors
    - Does the child utilize nonverbal behaviors/gestures (e.g., eye contact, smiling, responsiveness to name, etc)?
  - Interactions
    - Is there social interaction with family members?
    - Does the child attempt to engage or show interest in peers?
Joint Attention

- Sharing one’s experience of object/event in some manner
- Ability to initiate/engage
- Gestures/actions
  - Pointing
    - To ask for something
    - Pointing to indicate interest
  - Following pointing – looks where other points
  - Following gaze – looks where other looks
  - Showing – holds toys out toward other
Characteristics of Language/Communication

- Use of words by expected ages

- Likely unaware of meaning of their first words, but soon learn the power of those words as others respond to them.

- Child has *communicative intent*

- By six months of age, most children recognize the basic sounds of their native language.

- By age 3 – 5 begins to master the rules of language.
Characteristics of Behaviors / Interests

- Interest in many objects and activities Intense preoccupation with certain object / parts of objects
- Enjoys social play such as peek-a-boo and imitates others
- Is interested in other children and adults
- Limited stereotyped and repetitive mannerisms
  - Some engagement in repetitive behaviors is typical for preschool age children
Other features of ASD

- Characterized by a spectrum of abilities and challenges, ranging from mild to severe.

- Abilities and evidence of learning may fluctuate day to day due to many influences.

- May show affection, smile, laugh and a variety of emotions.
Individuals/children with ASD find it more difficult to:

- Engage in typical forms of play
- Comprehend spoken and written language as well as “social” language
- Learn skills for self-care and everyday living (eating, toilet training)
- Socially interact and make friends
- Learn in school without individualized support
- Be successful in new environments or when routines change
Children with ASD are *children first*

each with a unique personality,

and with feelings, fears, and dreams
And their families are more like other families than different.
In practical terms, what does this mean?

- Human beings are social by nature

- Children with ASD are too

- But the features of ASD make it harder for them to understand the social world, to tolerate stimulation and to socially interact and communicate with others
Local Resources

- ADRC - Aging and Disability Resource Center at (920) 929-3466 or toll free at (888) 435-7335.

- Children’s Long Term Support Program, Family Support and the Community Options Program
  Geri Rettler, Geri.Rettler@fdlco.wi.gov

- Birth – Three, Diane Fett, 920-929-689, Diane.Fett@fdlco.wi.gov

- FDL County & Beyond - Autism Support Group - contacts are Contacts: Sherry Behnke - (h) 923-5396; (w) 920-721-4311, Julia Cartwright (h) 923-3480, and/or Jan Rupe, NFDL School Psychologist (w) 929-3757;

- Spillman Library (North Fond du Lac) - http://www.northfonddulaclibrary.org/
  and page to the printable list http://www.northfonddulaclibrary.org/AutismBooks.pdf
Wisconsin Resources

- Regional Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Centers
  NE Regional CYSHCN
  Children's Hospital of WI-Fox Valley
  Neenah, WI 54956
  920-969-5325
  www.northeastregionalcenter.org

- Autism Society of Wisconsin
  Two Rivers, WI 54241
  920-553-0278
  888-4-AUTISM (1-888-428-8476)
  www.asw4autism.org

- Waisman Resource Center
  Kristin Gowan, Information and Referral Specialist
  Madison, WI 53705
  800-532-3321
  gowan@waisman.wisc.edu

- Wisconsin FACETS
  Kara Van Vooren, Fox Valley Center Coordinator
  920-419-1236
  (877) 374-4677 ext. 126
  tkvanvooren@prodigy.net

- Wisconsin First Step
  Help Book 2007: A Directory of Services for Children with Special Needs
  Maternal and Child Health Hotline - 1-800-722-2295
  Wisconsin First Step - 1-800-642-7837
  http://www.mch-hotlines.org
National Resources

- Center for Disease Control  www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities  www.nichcy.org

- American Academy of Pediatrics  www.aap.org
- American Academy of Family Physicians  http://www.aafp.org/

- National Center of Medical Home Initiatives (AAP)  www.medicalhomeinfo.org
- National Medical Home Autism Initiative  www.waisman.wisc.edu/nmhai/

- First Signs  www.firstsigns.org
- Autism Society of America  http://www.autism-society.org