

## Working with families.

Autism Spectrum Disorders, or Pervasive Developmental Disorders, are typically first observed in children during toddler years. These diagnoses can affect a family in a variety of ways. Because of this, our goal is not only to work with the child's strengths and weaknesses, but also to support and work with the family. Parents and caregivers are a necessary part of the evaluation and treatment process, as they know their children better than anyone. It is our hope to collaborate with families, while providing parents with support and information to help with home life and school adjustment. Therapy sessions are typically held weekly or biweekly, with the agreement that families will work on skills outside of the sessions.



The Autism Spectrum Disorders program at Moore Counseling Center, P.C., is directed by Jennifer L. Morris, Ph.D.

Dr. Morris earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Oklahoma State University. She received her doctoral degree from the Clinical Child Psychology program at the University of Alabama and completed her pre-doctoral internship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Morris has been working with children and adolescents on the autism spectrum for more than 10 years.

Dr. Twyla L. Mancil obtained her undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern University, where she majored in psychology and graduated with highest honors. Dr. Mancil earned her Masters of Education in School Psychology from the University of Florida in May of 2008. She received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Florida in August 2012. Dr. Mancil has clinical and research experience with developmental and behavioral disorders among child and adolescent populations.



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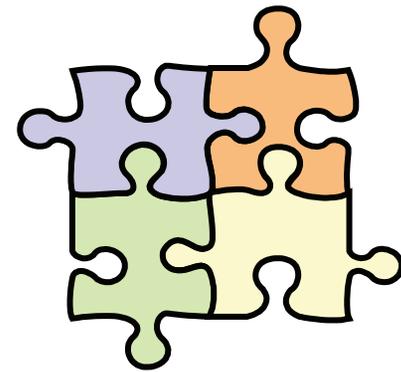
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## Autism Spectrum Disorders



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# Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism Spectrum Disorders are neurodevelopmental disorders involving deficits in two major areas, which can significantly affect a child's daily life. The new DSM-5 criteria place all Autism Spectrum conditions (Autism, Asperger's, PDD-NOS) within this one category of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

## **Social communication & interaction** –

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders display “persistent deficits” across several areas, including deficits in social-emotional reciprocity; nonverbal communicative behaviors; and deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding social relationships.

**Restricted, repetitive behaviors** – Children with ASD's display restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. These behaviors can include repetitive motor mannerisms, an overwhelming need for structure and routine, restricted/fixated interests, and hyper-/hyporeactivity to sensory input.

ASD's can include impairment in intellectual functioning and language development



Source: DSM-5,

American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

## **Diagnostic Evaluations**

The first step in working with a family of a child with ASD is accurate diagnosis. The diagnostic evaluation can provide great information that can be used to help with treatment and school recommendations. A typical evaluation includes a diagnostic play session (using the gold-standard Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule), parent interview, intellectual testing, and adaptive behavior assessment. A detailed report, including recommendations, is written and discussed with each family.



## **Intervention/Treatment Services**

Because of the unique nature of ASDs, treatment goals are individualized to meet the needs of each child and family. Individual and family therapy services involve developmental and behavioral interventions. The MCC psychologists were trained in using both structured teaching and behavioral therapy methods, and we use a combination of these techniques in our work with children with ASD and their families.

Services also include school consultation services and social skills groups. The social skills groups focus on improving basic social skills to more complex social understanding and relationships. Social skills groups are run throughout the year, for children and adolescents of different age groups.

## **Recommended Books & Websites**

*A Parent's Guide to Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism* – by Drs. Sally Ozonoff, Geraldine Dawson, and James McPartland

*A Practical Guide to Autism: What Every Parent, Family Member, and Teacher Needs to Know* - by Dr. Fred Volkmar

*Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals* – by Dr. Tony Attwood

*No More Meltdowns* – by Dr. Jed Baker

*Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships* – by Dr. Temple Grandin & Sean Barron

Autism Oklahoma – [www.autismoklahoma.org](http://www.autismoklahoma.org)

Oklahoma Autism Network – [www.okautism.org](http://www.okautism.org)

Autism Speaks – [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

Autism Society of America – [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

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