

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)



THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DETECTION

Infants and toddlers have much greater brain plasticity than adults, meaning children's brains have an extraordinary ability to modify their structure and function in response to changes in the body or external environment. The number of connections in the brain are greatest between birth and three years of age. During adolescence, they are reduced by half and remain static through adulthood. By being alert to symptoms of ASD, (such as challenges in social communication or repeating patterns of behavior), actions can be taken to help rewire the developing brain. The sooner an early detection is made, the sooner treatment can begin, resulting in a greater likelihood of improved language abilities, social skills, and attention span.



Pediatricians are often the first to diagnose autism. The earlier a young child can be identified with autism, the sooner the child can be taught skills needed to reach full potential.

THE MEMBER'S INDIVIDUALIZED CARE PLAN

While we know there is no cure for ASD, ensuring development of a comprehensive and individualized care plan for the member is key to success. After assessing the educational / support service needs of the member, discuss with the parent / guardian what will be included in the member's individualized care plan regarding supports, therapies, and the treatment team. The goal is to have one comprehensive plan in place to address all the member's needs and promote independence and self-care, where possible.

TREATMENT OPTIONS CAN INCLUDE:



**Applied Behavior
Analysis (ABA)**



**Speech, Physical, and
Occupational Therapies**



**Pharmacological
Management**



**Other Treatments/
Therapies**

When you are working with a Molina member whom you suspect may have ASD or was recently diagnosed, we can help you with recommendations and referrals for the member, keeping you informed along the way.



Look for the red flags of ASD, and let us know when you would like support from our Care Management team, and we will include you in the Integrated Care team.



Refer the family to an approved ASD provider for further assessment / evaluation. To augment this information, use our resource guide, "Screening for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities."