



# CARD Fact Sheet

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## Pervasive Developmental Disorder- Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

PDD-NOS is an abbreviation for Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified. It is one of five disorders classified as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (others include Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, Rett's Disorder and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder).

The diagnosis PDD-NOS is usually given to an individual who does not meet the diagnostic criteria for any of the four other Pervasive Developmental Disorders, yet clearly shows unusual development in the areas of communication, social interaction and interests/attention.

PDD-NOS is a neurological disorder, and symptoms can range from mild to severe. Often, individuals with a PDD-NOS diagnosis have more intact social skills than individuals diagnosed with other Pervasive Developmental Disorders. Sometimes this diagnosis is given to very young children with limited communication skills who also show characteristics of autism. As the child's communication skills increase, other symptoms of autism may become more apparent.

### Characteristics

No two individuals diagnosed with PDD-NOS are exactly alike. However, many individuals with PDD-NOS have some characteristics in common, such as:

- ◆ Deficits in social behavior
- ◆ Uneven skill development (strengths in some areas and significant delays in others.)
- ◆ Poorly developed speech and language comprehension and skills
- ◆ Difficulty with changes in environment
- ◆ Deficits in nonverbal communication
- ◆ Uncommon responses to taste, sight, sound, smell and touch
- ◆ Repetitive or ritualistic behaviors (i.e., opening and closing doors repeatedly or switching a light on and off)
- ◆ Unusual likes and dislikes

### Causes

The causes of PDD-NOS are still unknown. There is a strong belief in the medical community that the disability's origin is genetic and/or biological and affects brain function, but specific biological mechanisms remain unclear. There is a possibility that more than one variable could be responsible for the different symptoms that are present in those individuals with PDD-NOS.

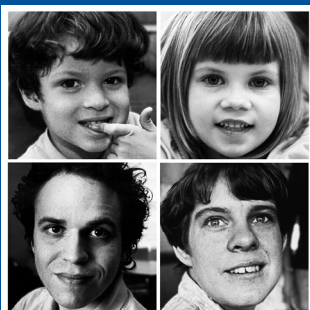
There are no factors in a child's upbringing that are responsible for PDD-NOS. Parents do not cause PDD-NOS.

### Facts

Current estimates are that 3-4 per 1000 individuals may have PDD-NOS. PDD-NOS often occurs with some degree of cognitive impairment. Individuals with PDD-NOS are found in all races, ethnicities, and social statuses.

Chakrabarti, S. & Fombone, E. (2001) Pervasive Developmental Disorders in Preschool Children. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 285, 24, 3093.

### RELATED DISABILITIES



## Treatment

Treatment and educational needs for individuals with PDD-NOS include but are not limited to:

1. An early and accurate diagnosis, which improves a child's chances of reaching his or her full potential.
2. Specialized and intensive interventions, which may include educational, behavioral, occupational and speech therapy.

Success is optimized when a collaborative effort occurs among all parties involved in the individual's life and a comprehensive treatment approach is utilized.

## For More Information Contact:

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities Sites:

### Florida State University

625-B North Adams St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
(800) 769-7926 or (850) 644-4367  
Fax: (850)644)3644  
<http://autism.fsu.edu>

### University of South Florida

CARD-USF MHC2113A  
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.  
Tampa, FL 33612-3899  
(800) 333-4530 or (813) 974-2532  
Fax: (813) 974-6115  
<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu>

### University of Florida at Gainesville

P. O. Box 100234  
Gainesville, FL 32610-0234  
(800) 754-5891 or (352) 846-2761  
Fax: (352) 846-0941  
<http://www.card.ufl.edu>

### University of Florida at Jacksonville

6271 St. Augustine Rd, Suite 1  
Jacksonville, FL 32217  
Phone: (904) 633-0760  
Fax: (904) 633-0751  
<http://centerforautism.org>

### University of Central Florida

12001 Science Drive, Suite 145  
Orlando, FL 32826  
(888) 558-1908 or (407) 737-2566  
Fax (407) 737-2571  
<http://www.ucf-card.org>

### University of Miami

Dept. of Psychology  
5665 Ponce de Leon Boulevard  
PO Box 248768  
Coral Gables, FL 33124-0725  
800/9-AUTISM or 305/284-6563  
Fax 305/284-6555  
<http://www.umcard.org>

### Florida Atlantic University

Dept. of ESE  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
(888) 632-6395 or (561) 297-2023  
Fax (561) 297-2063  
<http://www.coe.fau.edu/card/>

### The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) seeks to provide support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism, dual sensory impairments, and related disabilities. Located at six university sites throughout Florida, CARD develops programs offering support and training for individuals, families, professionals, and peers throughout Florida. This fact sheet is made possible through the cooperative efforts of Florida's CARD Centers.