

## Helpful Resources In Pittsburgh

*PDDNOS is often linked with Autistic Disorder due to the similarity in symptoms. Therefore, many helpful resources for a child with PDDNOS can be obtained through services that specialize in Autism.*

### The Autism Center of Pittsburgh:

<http://www.autismcenterofpittsburgh.com/>

Provides therapies, parent support, and information

### The Autism Society of Pittsburgh:

<http://www.autismsocietyppgh.org/>

Refers families to programs and services, provide legal information

### Advisory Board on Autism and Related Disorders (ABOARD):

<http://www.aboard.org/>

Supplies free information and family support

## Online and National Resources

### Autism Society of America:

<http://www.autism-society.org/>

Community of parents and professionals who know about living with Autism

### Autism Speaks & Cure Autism Now Foundation:

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Opportunities for information and involvement

### Autism-PDD Resources Network:

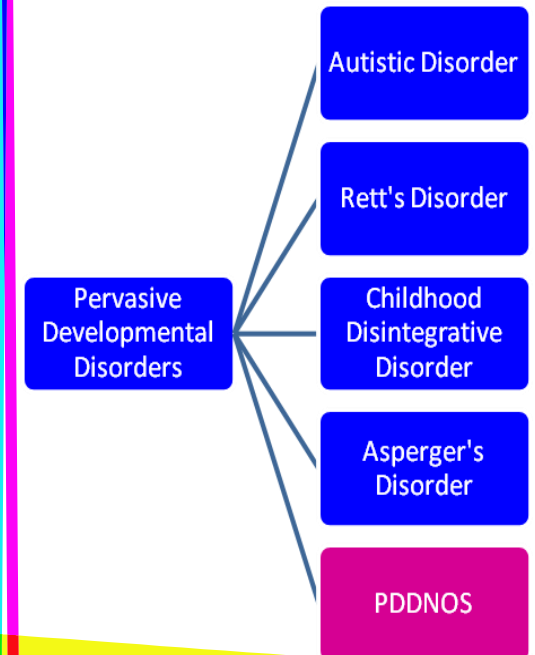
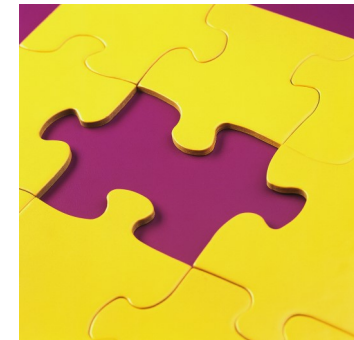
<http://www.autism-pdd.net/>

Information and support network with resources and postings for local events/conferences



Assessing and treating PDDNOS is a lot like trying to put together a puzzle whose pieces do not quite fit—no child is the same, which makes understanding this disorder quite challenging.

## Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS)



# What is PDDNOS?

- One of the Pervasive Developmental Disorders that is usually evident by age 3
- A child may receive the diagnosis “PDDNOS” when they show signs or symptoms of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder (usually Autistic Disorder), but they do not exactly meet the criteria
- PDDNOS is a spectrum disorder, so each child has a unique combination of symptoms ranging from mild to severe
- Although there is no known specific cause, studies suggest that PDDNOS is caused by a neurological abnormality
- PDDNOS, like Autistic Disorder, is more prevalent in boys than girls

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## Common Signs of PDDNOS:

Children with PDDNOS typically exhibit a combination of the following signs/symptoms:

- **Deficiencies in Social Behavior:** avoiding eye contact, apathy concerning emotions with a lack of facial responsiveness, the lack of typical attachment behaviors (atypical separation and stranger anxiety), lack of interest in playing with other children
- **Nonverbal Communication Impairment:** pulling caregiver to object of desire, lack of imitation (of caregivers or other children), absence of gesturing

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- **Impairment in Understanding Speech:** some children are able to follow straightforward commands paired with gestures, humor and sarcasm are not always understood, it is a possibility that some children who have PDDNOS and also have mental retardation will not develop a complete understanding of speech
- **Difficulties Concerning Speech Development:** infants might not babble or they might stop babbling, echolalia (repetition of words or phrases), flat delivery of speech, problems with pronunciation, irregular grammar, lack of imagination, abstraction, or emotion
- **Unusual Behavioral Patterns:** opposition to changes in routines, ritualistic/compulsive behaviors (including repetitive acts), peculiar attachments to objects and preoccupation with atypical objects or features of an object, under- or over- responsiveness to sensory stimuli
- **Movement Disturbances:** delay in typical motor milestones, atypical characteristics such as hand flapping or twisting, walking on tiptoes, body rocking, head banging
- **Shortfalls in Intelligence and Cognitive Abilities:** in general, children with PDDNOS test well in areas concerning visual skills or immediate memory, but less so on tasks involving abstract or symbolic thought and chronological logic. Children oftentimes have difficulties with imitation, understanding words and gestures, using information already learned, inventive learning, applying rules. Due to differences in speech development, some children are not able to be adequately tested in terms of intelligence.
- **Other Features of PDDNOS:** flat, inappropriate, or extreme emotional response, labile affect (sob or scream at one time, laughing and “silly” behaviors at another time), seemingly unreasonable fears without regard to “real” dangers

# Treatment Options for PDDNOS

## Traditional Treatment Methods:

- Positive Behavioral Support (usually works best in a structured, consistent environment)
- Appropriate Educational Environment (in some cases, special education environment involving inclusion)
- Medical Intervention (medication in conjunction with other treatments)
- Psychological Care (counseling and ongoing evaluations)

**Less Traditional Treatment Methods:** Facilitated Communication Therapy, Auditory Integration Therapy (AIT), Sensory Integration Therapy, Lovaas Method, Vitamin Therapy, Anti-Yeast Therapy

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## What You Can Do as a Parent

- The earlier the intervention, the better!
- Explore Special Education options for your child—eligibility is different in every state
- Seek out counseling for the family in order to help adjust to raising a child with a disorder
- Find a local parent support group—other parents share common experiences and can provide wonderful emotional and practical support!