

A leading center for

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**AUTISM RESEARCH**  
and **TREATMENT**

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A young child with short brown hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, is focused on stacking colorful blocks. The child's expression is one of concentration. In the background, a blurred figure of an adult is visible, suggesting a classroom or therapy setting. The overall scene is brightly lit and warm.

The logo for Marcus Autism Center, featuring a stylized blue wave or swoosh above the word "Marcus" in a serif font.

**Marcus**  
AUTISM CENTER

**NIH Autism Center  
of Excellence**



**One in 68 U.S. children has autism, and thousands more are diagnosed every year. Marcus Autism Center has treated more than 40,000 children since it opened. We will see more than 5,700 children this year from across Georgia and beyond.**

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It costs more than \$3.2 million to care for an adult with autism during his life.\* By diagnosing and treating autism and related disorders earlier, we may lessen the lifetime cost of care.

### **Pediatric Neurodevelopmental Center**

We offer comprehensive outpatient services, providing consultation and treatment for children with autism and related disorders through diagnostic, medical, and psychiatric evaluations, in addition to medication management and coordination of care.

Our multidisciplinary team includes child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental pediatricians, pediatric nurse practitioners and social workers.

## **Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program**

*Children achieve 85 percent or more of the feeding goals set by parents and the treatment team by the end of the program.*

We provide interdisciplinary assessment and treatment of children with feeding disorders between the ages of 8 months and 21 years. We are one of only a few centers in the country to provide data-supported, intensive day treatment for children with feeding disorders.

**Day Treatment Program**—Offers a medical program for children who require intensive daily therapy without 24-hour medical supervision, including intensive feeding sessions, sensorimotor training, and medical and nutritional monitoring

**Feeding Clinic**—Provides interdisciplinary assessments to make general recommendations for further tests and interventions

**Outpatient Program**—Serves children with feeding problems who can be treated with less intensive therapy

## **Severe Behavior Programs**

*We saw an 82 percent average reduction in children's problem behaviors in the Severe Behavior Day Treatment Program.*

Our staff works with families to develop goals. With these goals in mind, we use a multidisciplinary team environment to create, test and implement individualized treatment programs.

We offer a variety of services:

**Day treatment**—Six-hour, 12-week treatment program

**Outpatient**—Less intensive behavioral services, including assessment, treatment and consultation

**Brief behavioral interventions**—Interventions delivered in a family's home, including assessment, treatment and consultation

**Toileting**—Behavioral-based interventions to teach appropriate bathroom behavior

## **Language and Learning Clinics**

*Treatment services target children with limited verbal and social communication skills. Children have made significant improvements in functional communication and learning readiness.*

We offer intensive one-on-one and small-group intervention based on the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behavior (VB) to children with significant language, social, and adaptive skills delays and behavioral concerns. Interventions are offered in a variety of settings, including clinic, home, day care and school.

**Language and Learning Clinic Home-Based Program**—Providing support in the student's home, day care or school to take advantage of teaching opportunities that occur in the natural environment

**Community Autism Program**—Focuses on parent training and education with behavioral parenting counselors conducting weekly home visits

Also, we offer a parent-training series to introduce caregivers to topics such as behavior management, Individualized Education Plans (IEP) process and toilet training.

## Community-based services

*We are expanding our reach beyond Georgia.*

**School Consultation Program**—Offers services and consultations within schools throughout Georgia, with a focus on behavioral assessments and program evaluations:

- We work to increase students' skills and decrease problem behaviors, in addition to providing staff training and assisting with IEP goal development.

**Educational Outreach Program**—Educates entire school communities to create autism-friendly campuses and provides highly specialized staff within those educational systems guidance on how to deliver training and serve as mentors for school-based personnel and families

**Telemedicine**—Works with Georgia Partnership for Telehealth to improve care in communities throughout Georgia. Using telemedicine, our team can screen, treat, and provide distance learning for autism and related disorders, in addition to co-occurring conditions including: psychiatric disorders, sleep disorders (nonrespiratory) and communication disorders.

### Outreach clinics

In addition to our primary location in Atlanta, we offer psychiatric services in cities throughout Georgia.

## Research at Marcus Autism Center

As a National Institutes of Health Autism Center of Excellence, we are leading the country in scientific research and treatment efforts. Our team is dedicated to learning more not only about the root of ASD, but also about interventions that will help diagnose and treat the condition earlier.

### Why participate in research?

Patient participation in clinical research is critical to understanding conditions and developing life-changing treatments. Every child who participates in research will be given a thorough assessment to ensure parents are aware of their child's progress.

There are countless reasons to join studies; parents can learn more about their child's condition, help others who are living with it and aid scientists in eliminating unsuccessful treatments. According to Autism Speaks, however, only 5 percent of children with ASD in the United States participate in clinical research each year. **Without participants, researchers are limited in their exploration of potentially better treatments.**



Visit [marcus.org/research](https://marcus.org/research) to learn more about ongoing studies.



# Developmental milestones

The signs of autism often exist before the 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Here are the early social communication milestones that are important to look for as your toddler grows. If your child is not meeting these milestones, talk to your pediatrician.



Age	Social milestone	Language milestone
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smiles and laughs while looking at you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocalizes often with babbles</li> <li>Reaches for things he wants</li> </ul>
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds by looking when name is called</li> <li>Enjoys playing social games such as peek-a-boo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses gestures such as giving, showing and pointing</li> <li>Uses consonant sounds and a few simple words (e.g., "mama" and "baba" for bottle)</li> </ul>
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays pretend with dolls or stuffed animals</li> <li>Imitates words you say and actions in play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses at least 10 words</li> <li>Says many different consonant sounds</li> <li>Identifies familiar people and body parts</li> </ul>
24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows interest in playing with other children</li> <li>Puts many actions together during play (e.g., stirring, pouring juice, feeding a doll)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses at least 50 words</li> <li>Makes simple sentences such as "Mommy go outside," "What's that?"</li> <li>Identifies objects when named</li> </ul>
36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enjoys imaginative play with others</li> <li>Takes turns in conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds to questions</li> <li>Uses longer sentences</li> <li>Follows two- to three-step instructions</li> <li>Uses speech that is understood most of the time</li> </ul>

## Resources

CDC, Learn the Signs. Act Early. Campaign, 2012 [cdc.gov/milestones](http://cdc.gov/milestones)

Florida State University, FirstWords Project, 2012 [firstwords.fsu.edu/](http://firstwords.fsu.edu/)



EMORY  
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Visit [marcus.org](http://marcus.org) or call  
404-785-9350 for more information.

\* Ganz, M. "The Lifetime Distribution of the Incremental Society Costs of Autism,"  
Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. April 2007. Vol. 161, pp. 343-349.

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