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Autism affects 1 in 110 children

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the majority are boys. Symptoms may show up before the age of two.

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The extent can vary greatly, but the approach to treatment should be the same.

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“The highest potential, we think, is gonna be made by the kids that get the

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treatment early on.”

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Determining the type of social disorder is crucial

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from the severe classic Autism to the milder

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Asperger’s syndrome. “Under the Autism Spectrum Disorder

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one of the sub-categories is Asperger’s syndrome. That’s the one that I think

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is most often missed early on.” A distinguishing feature between the two

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is speech. “Aspergers Syndrome, there is no speech delay.

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So those are the kids that really don't. They might look a little odd with their

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behaviors or their social skills

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but they're really move along nicely in school sometimes.” Classic Autism is

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linked to late speech and less developed social skills.

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“I would look for a lack of eye contact. That's one of the classic hallmarks that’s associated

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with Autism, and that can be seen fairly early on.

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Lee Memorial Health System offers free monthly screenings for Autism.

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It covers a standardized developmental checklist to help parents get a head

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start on therapy

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“Like that with Asperger’s, sometimes they’re not diagnosed until middle school.

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But the children with speech delay in classic Autism are

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easier to identify as early as 18 months.” The bottom line: if you have any concern

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about your child's development

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acting early can make a difference. For Lee Memorial Health System

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I’m Amy Osher.