

Quality of Life

Quality of Life and Autism



What Lowers Quality of Life for Kids and Teens with Autism?

- Repeating behaviors over and over
- Trouble making and keeping friends
- Acting out
- Anxiety
- Sleep Problems
- Movement problems
- Mental health issues
- Stomach issues like constipation or heartburn
- Pain

What Can Autism Specialists Do To Help?



- Screen all kids and teens with autism for the problems listed above
- Address any physical problems, symptoms and illnesses with the appropriate medical and behavioral treatments
- Consider using questionnaires that help spot behavior and health problems
- Track patients' quality of life from visit to visit



What Should Parents Do?

- Talk to your child or teen's health care provider and therapists about their symptoms and issues.
- Ask your health care provider to track quality of life in your child.

**Disclaimer: This summary is based on research conducted by Autism Treatment Network (ATN) members. It is not a summary of the entire body of research literature available on this subject*

Children and teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often have worse family reported quality of life compared to children and teens without ASD. Poor quality of life is associated with ASD symptoms such as repetitive behaviors and anxiety.¹ Poorer quality of life in children with ASD is also associated with sleep problems.^{2; 3} Similarly, quality of life can also be affected by mental health issues, constipation, and pain.^{3; 4} When doctors treat these behavioral and physical problems, quality of life may improve for patients with ASD.⁴

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED?

- Kids and teens with ASD often have lower quality of life because of the following symptoms and issues:
- Repeating behaviors over and over
- Trouble making and keeping friends
- Acting out
- Anxiety (1)
- Sleep problems (2; 3)
- Movement problems
- Mental health issues
- Stomach issues (like constipation or heartburn)
- Pain (3; 4)

WHAT CAN AUTISM SPECIALISTS DO TO HELP?

- Screen all kids and teens with autism for the problems listed above
- Address any physical problems, symptoms and illnesses with the appropriate medical and behavioral treatments (4)
- Consider using questionnaires that help spot behavior and health problems
- Track patients' quality of life from visit to visit (5)

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO?

- Talk to your child or teen's health care provider and therapists about their symptoms and issues.
- Ask your health care provider for referrals to specialists as needed.

References

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