
Professional Certificate in Autism Nutrition

Communication and Social Skills in Autism Nutrition

Communication and Social Skills in Autism Nutrition Glossary

A

Autism:

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication. It is a developmental disorder that affects how a person perceives and interacts with the world around them.

B

Behavioral Therapy:

Behavioral therapy involves using techniques to help individuals with autism learn new behaviors, improve social interactions, and reduce challenging behaviors. This type of therapy focuses on positive reinforcement and shaping behaviors through repetition and consistent rewards.

Body Language:

Body language refers to the nonverbal signals that people use to communicate with others. Individuals with autism may have difficulty interpreting body language cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture, which can impact their social interactions.

C

Communication:

Communication involves the exchange of information between individuals through verbal and nonverbal means. People with autism may have challenges with communication, such as difficulty understanding social cues, using language effectively, or engaging in conversations.

D

Dietary Restrictions:

Dietary restrictions refer to limitations on certain foods or ingredients that individuals with autism may need to follow. These restrictions can vary based on individual needs and sensitivities, such as gluten-free or dairy-free diets to manage digestive issues or behavioral symptoms.

E

Expressive Language:

Expressive language refers to the ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas through spoken words, gestures, or writing. Some individuals with autism may have difficulty with expressive language, such as forming sentences, using appropriate vocabulary, or expressing emotions.

F

Food Sensitivities:

Food sensitivities are adverse reactions that individuals may experience when consuming certain foods or ingredients. People with autism may have sensitivities to gluten, dairy, artificial additives, or other substances that can impact their behavior, mood, or physical health.

G

Gluten-Free Diet:

A gluten-free diet eliminates foods containing gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. Some individuals with autism may follow a gluten-free diet to manage digestive issues, food sensitivities, or behavioral symptoms, although research on the effectiveness of this diet for autism is mixed.

H

High-Functioning Autism:

High-functioning autism is a term used to describe individuals with autism who have average or above-average intelligence and language skills but still experience challenges with social interactions, communication, and repetitive behaviors. This term is often used interchangeably with Asperger's syndrome.

I

Interdisciplinary Team:

An interdisciplinary team consists of professionals from different disciplines, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition, and psychology, who work together to provide comprehensive care and support for individuals with autism. This team approach helps address the diverse needs of individuals with autism across various domains.

J

Joint Attention:

Joint attention refers to the ability to share attention with others on an object, event, or topic of interest. Individuals with autism may have difficulty with joint attention, which can impact their ability to engage in social interactions, follow conversations, or participate in group activities.

K

Ketogenic Diet:

A ketogenic diet is a high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet that has been used to manage epilepsy and other neurological conditions. Some individuals with autism may follow a ketogenic diet to manage seizures, improve cognitive function, or address behavioral symptoms, although more research is needed on its effectiveness for autism.

L

Language Delay:

Language delay refers to a slower rate of language development in children compared to their peers. Some individuals with autism may experience language delays, such as difficulty with speech sounds, vocabulary acquisition, sentence structure, or conversational skills, which can impact their communication abilities.

M

Mealtime Routines:

Mealtime routines are structured activities and practices followed during meals to promote healthy eating habits, social interactions, and sensory experiences. Establishing consistent mealtime routines can help individuals with autism feel more comfortable, reduce mealtime stress, and improve their overall nutrition.

N

Nutritional Deficiencies:

Nutritional deficiencies occur when the body does not receive enough essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, or protein, to support optimal health and functioning. Individuals with autism may be at risk for nutritional deficiencies due to selective eating habits, food sensitivities, or digestive issues that affect nutrient absorption.

O

Occupational Therapy:

Occupational therapy focuses on helping individuals develop the skills and abilities needed for daily activities, such as self-care, play, and social interactions. Occupational therapists work with individuals with autism to improve their fine motor skills, sensory processing, and adaptive behaviors to enhance their independence and quality of life.

P

Peer Relationships:

Peer relationships refer to the social connections and interactions that individuals have with their peers, such as friends, classmates, or siblings. Individuals with autism may have difficulty forming and maintaining peer relationships due to challenges with social skills, communication, and understanding social cues.

Q

Quality of Life:

Quality of life encompasses an individual's overall well-being, happiness, and satisfaction with life. Enhancing the quality of life for individuals with autism involves addressing their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs through personalized interventions, support services, and community resources.

R

Receptive Language:

Receptive language refers to the ability to understand and interpret spoken words, gestures, and other

forms of communication. Some individuals with autism may have difficulties with receptive language, such as following instructions, understanding complex sentences, or processing verbal information, which can impact their communication skills.

S

Sensory Processing:

Sensory processing refers to how the brain receives, organizes, and responds to sensory information from the environment, such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. Individuals with autism may have sensory processing challenges, such as hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity, which can affect their responses to sensory stimuli and daily activities.

Social Skills:

Social skills involve the ability to interact with others, establish relationships, and navigate social situations effectively. Individuals with autism may have difficulties with social skills, such as making eye contact, initiating conversations, reading nonverbal cues, or understanding social norms, which can impact their social interactions and relationships.

Speech Therapy:

Speech therapy focuses on helping individuals improve their communication skills, such as speech sounds, language development, fluency, and voice quality. Speech therapists work with individuals with autism to address their speech and language challenges, promote effective communication, and enhance their social interactions.

T

Texture Preferences:

Texture preferences refer to individuals' preferences for certain textures of foods, such as crunchy, smooth, soft, or chewy. People with autism may have texture preferences or aversions that impact their food choices, mealtime behaviors, and overall nutrition, which can be addressed through sensory-based strategies and food modifications.

U

Unpredictable Eating Patterns:

Unpredictable eating patterns refer to irregular or inconsistent eating behaviors that individuals may exhibit, such as skipping meals, grazing throughout the day, or consuming large quantities of food at once. Establishing predictable eating patterns and routines can help individuals with autism maintain balanced nutrition, regulate their appetite, and improve their overall well-being.

V

Visual Supports:

Visual supports are tools and strategies, such as pictures, symbols, schedules, or visual aids, used to enhance communication, organization, and understanding for individuals with autism. Visual supports can help individuals process information, follow routines, and navigate daily tasks more effectively, especially for

those who have challenges with verbal communication or receptive language.

W

Weight Management:

Weight management involves maintaining a healthy weight through balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and lifestyle modifications. Individuals with autism may face challenges with weight management due to factors such as food preferences, sensory sensitivities, medication side effects, or limited physical activity, requiring personalized interventions and support from healthcare professionals.

X

Extra Nutritional Support:

Extra nutritional support refers to additional interventions, supplements, or specialized diets that individuals with autism may need to address specific nutritional needs, health conditions, or dietary restrictions. Providing extra nutritional support can help individuals with autism achieve optimal nutrition, manage symptoms, and improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Y

(Yet to be defined)

Z

(Zero references found)