

# Introduction to Autism

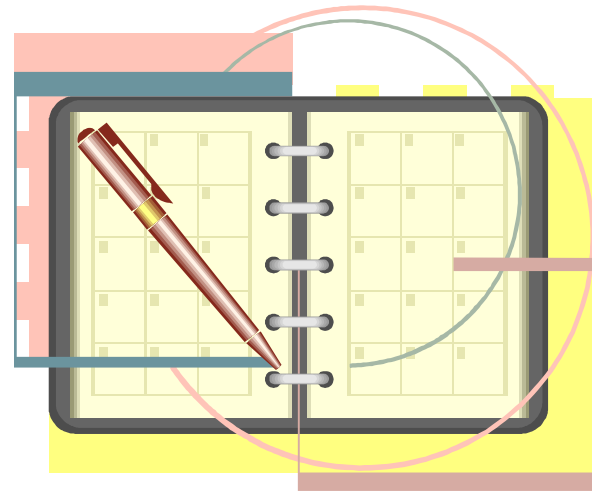
“A withdrawal from the fabric  
of social life, into the self”

-Frith

Sandra Hess Robbins, M.Ed.

# Agenda

- Quiz
- Introduction to autism
- Video
- Activity
- Discussion
- Early intervention & Research
- Reflective journaling
- Evaluations



# Pervasive Developmental Disorders/ Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Autism
- Asperger Syndrome
- Rett Syndrome
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified)

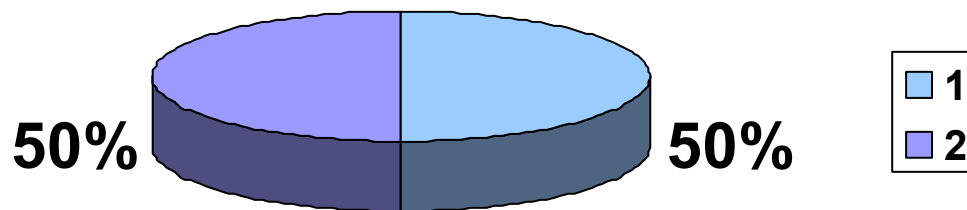


# Fact or Fiction????

- What do you know about children with autism?
- Take out a scrap piece of paper and write down your answers to the following questions... keep track of the number of questions you get correct
- Using the “clickers” respond to the questions by pressing the number of the correct answer
- Pass the “clickers” after each question so everyone gets a turn
- Don't sweat it... your answers will be confidential

# 1. Children with autism can perform amazing mental feats such as memorizing the telephone book or multiplying large numbers in their heads

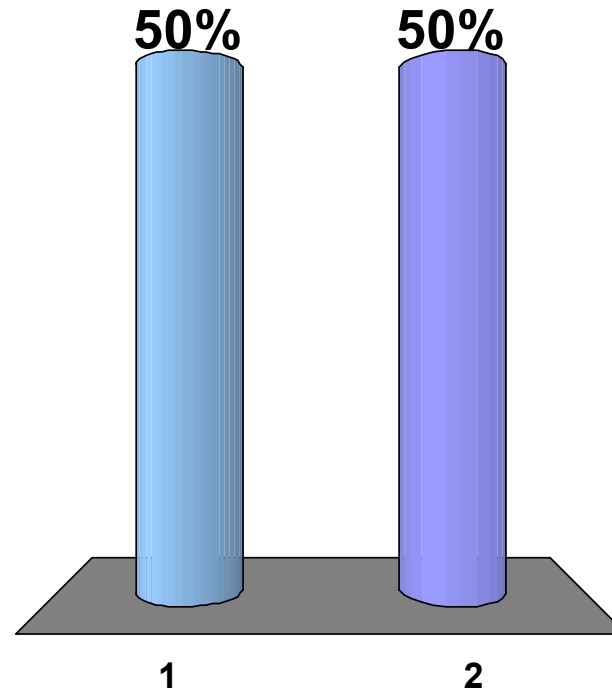
1. Fact
2. Fiction



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32								

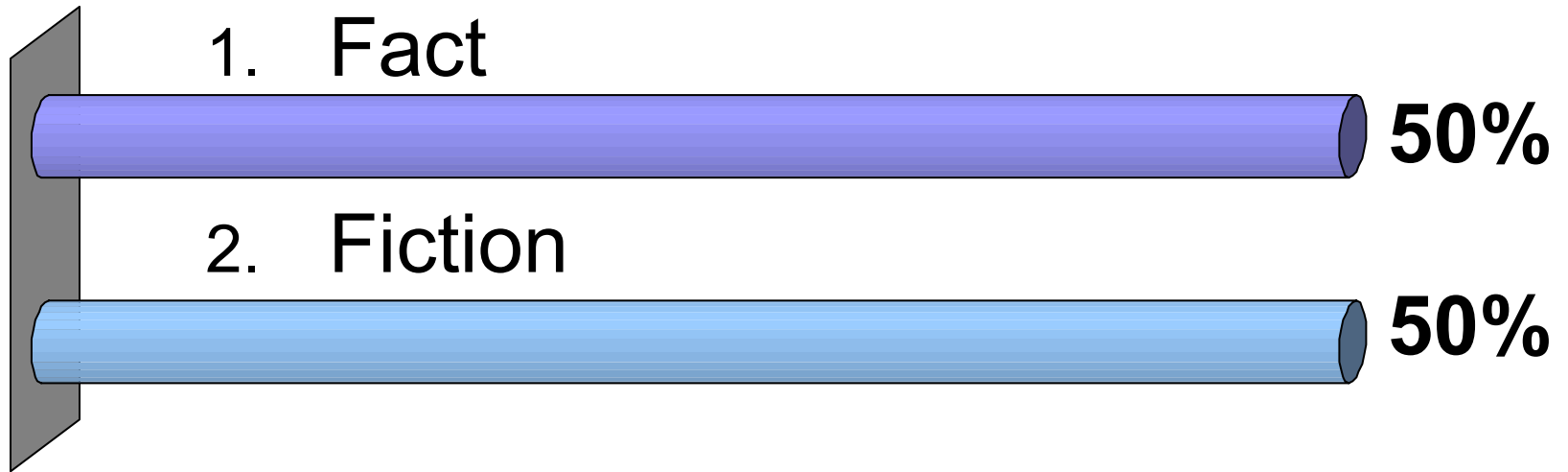
## 2. Boys are 75% more likely to have autism than girls

1. Fact
2. Fiction



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32									

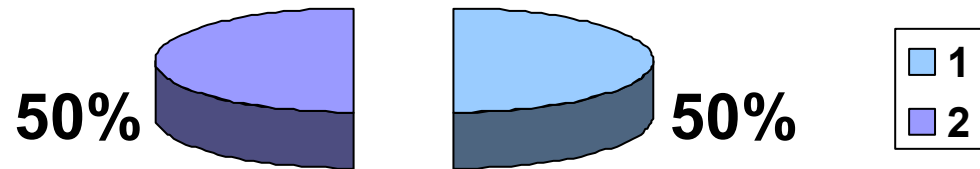
### 3. Most children with autism never learn to talk



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32								

4. If a mother has a child with autism there is a 10% chance that her second child will have an autism spectrum disorder

1. Fact
2. Fiction



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32								



5. Autism is caused by chemical imbalances or allergies that can be cured by special diets or nutritional supplements

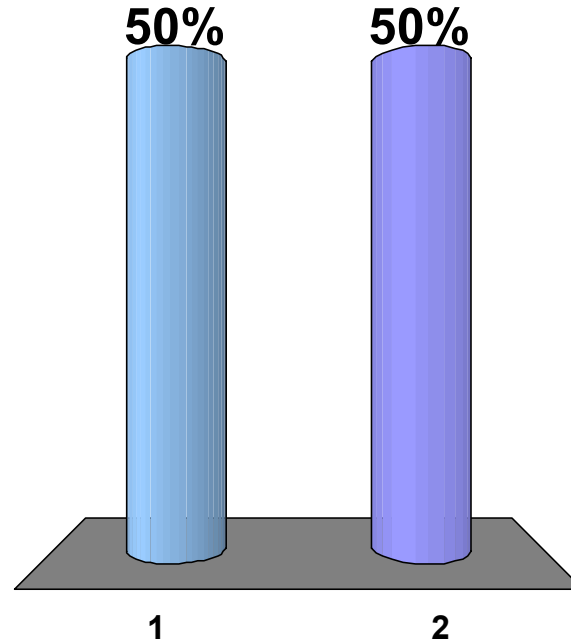
**50%** 1. Fact

**50%** 2. Fiction

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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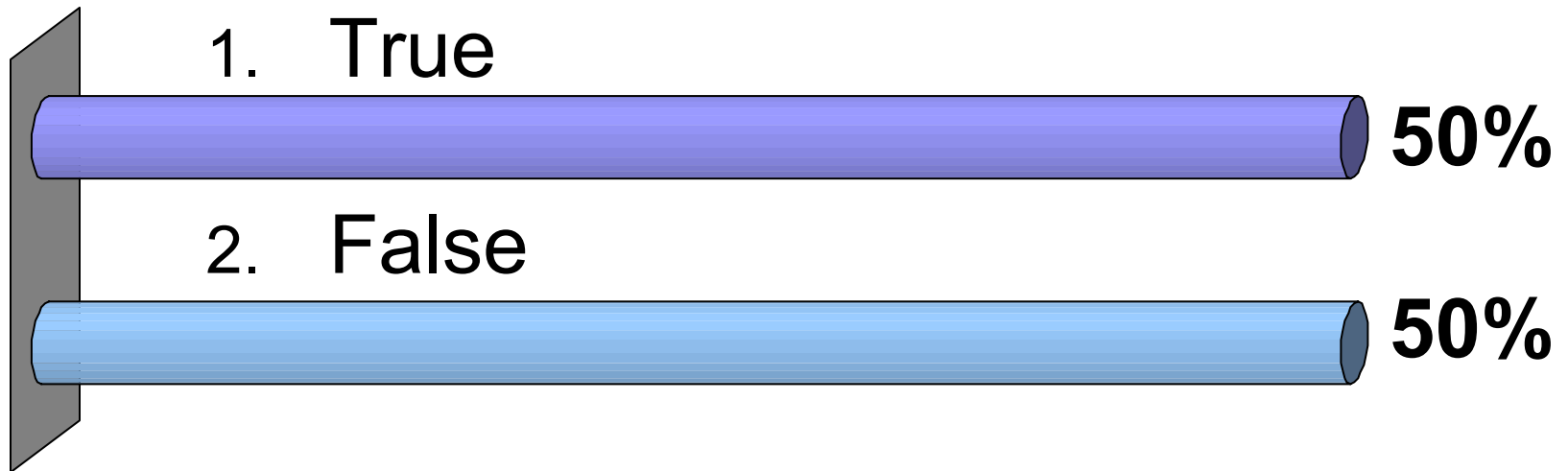
# 6. There is no single behavior that is always typical of autism

- 1. Fact
- 2. Fiction



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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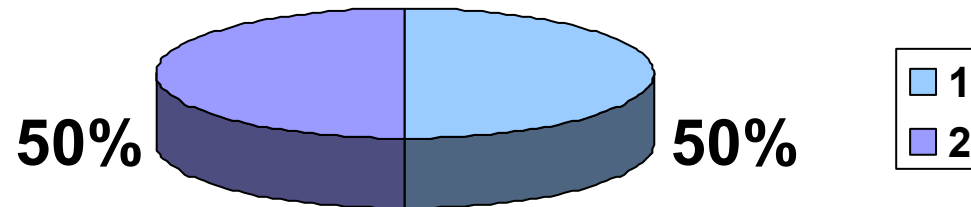
# 7. Children with autism are completely cut off from human relationships



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32								

# 8. Autism can be caused by vaccinations

1. Fact
2. Fiction



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32								

# Definition of Autism

- Extreme social withdrawal and impairment in communication; often includes stereotyped movements, resistance to change, and unusual responses to sensory experiences; usually manifests before 3 years of age

# Diagnostic Criteria

- DSM IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition) Criteria for Autism
- Social
- Communication
- Sensory

# DSM IV – Social (at least 2 items)

- Impairment in nonverbal behaviors (eye gaze, facial expression, gestures)
- Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
- Lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, achievements with others
- Lack of social or emotional reciprocity

# DSM IV – Communication (at least one item)

- Delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language
- In individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others
- Stereotyped or repetitive use of language
- Lack of varied spontaneous play appropriate to developmental level



# DSM IV – Sensory (at least one item)

- Preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal in intensity or focus
- Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals
- Stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g. hand flapping)
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

# Prevalence

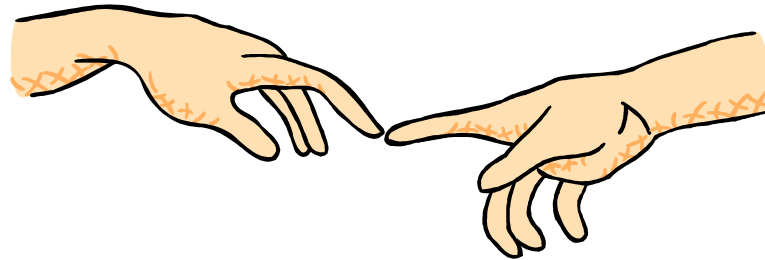
- 1 in 150 children now have autism (as compared to 1 in 10,000 a decade ago)
- Fastest growing developmental disorder
- 1 out of every 68 families
- Boys are affected 75% more than girls

# Characteristics

- Unusual interests
- Unusual speech and language
- Unusual social interactions
- Unusual abilities
- Unusual physical movements
- Lack of physical coordination
- Unusual reactions to objects, people, and situations

# Sensory processing

- Hearing
- Seeing
- Smelling
- Taste
- Touch

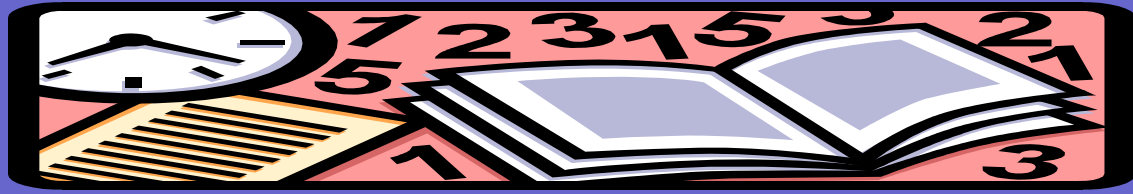


# Video – Autism Every Day

- [http://www.autismspeaks.org/sponsored\\_events/autism\\_every\\_day.php](http://www.autismspeaks.org/sponsored_events/autism_every_day.php)
- Consider the impact of autism on children and their families
- As a teacher, how could you support these families, develop communication and rapport with them, and support their children in the classroom?



# Activity



- Work in small groups, pairs, or individually
- You will have 15 minutes to answer the questions on the pink, blue, or yellow sheet in your packet
- You may use your books for this activity, as well as your reading packet and lecture notes
- Think back to the quiz...
  - If you got
    - 0-4 questions correct, answer the questions on the pink sheet
    - 5-6, blue
    - 7-8, yellow
- Be prepared to share your findings with the class

# Discussion



- What are the characteristics of autism? (pink)
- What are some educational considerations for children with autism? (blue)
- How can inclusion benefit children with autism? (yellow)

# Early intervention

- Early intervention may produce **remarkable** gains if...
  - Early
  - Intensive
  - Highly structured
  - Involve families





# Early intervention

- As soon as the child is suspected as having an autism spectrum disorder
- Minimum of 25 hours a week – all year
- Sufficient adult attention (one on one or very small group instruction)
- Family component – parent training
- Ongoing program evaluation & progress monitoring with program adjustments

# Why does early intervention work??

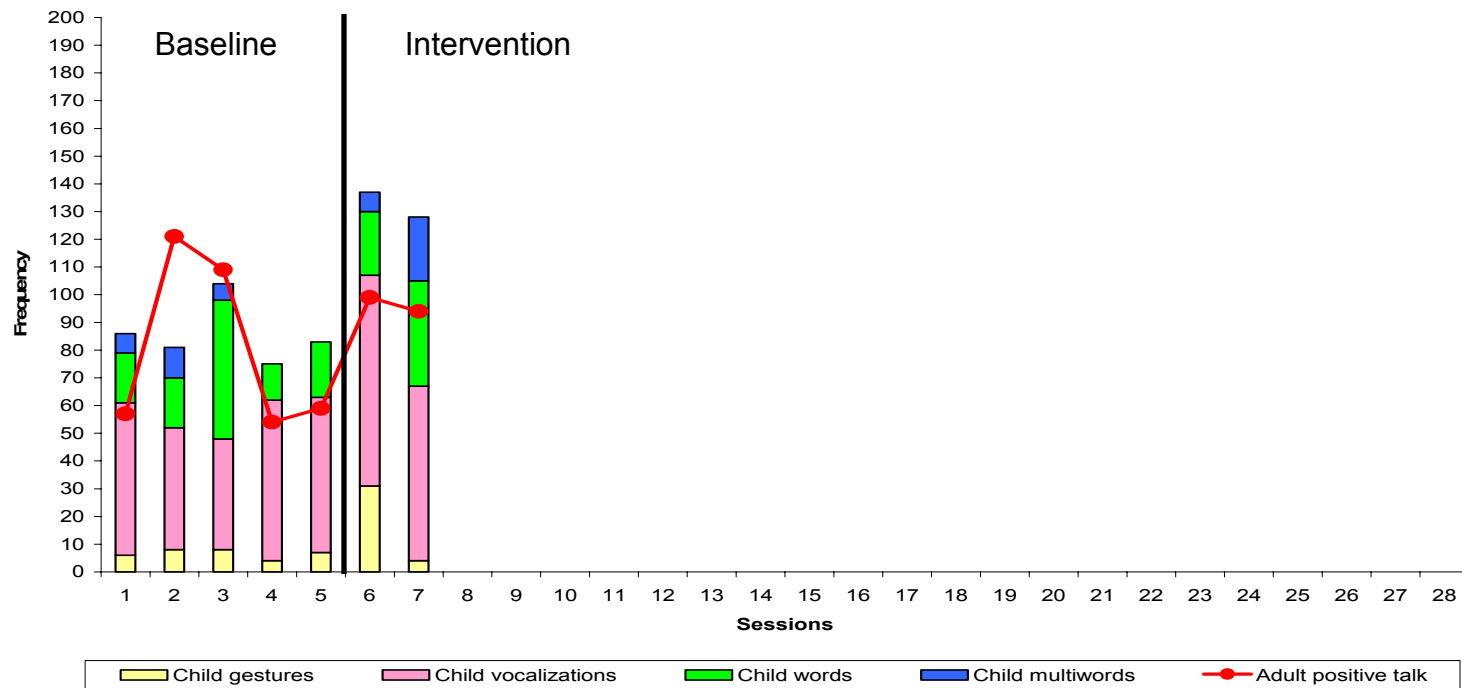
- Early childhood is a Critical / Sensitive period of development
  - An optimal time for certain capacities to emerge (e.g. language)
- Brain research
  - Several surges in frontal lobe activity occur during the first two years of life
  - A dramatic increase occurs during ages 3 and 6
  - The brain is particularly sponge-like during the first few years of life

# Family Child Learning Center

- Research and training program
- Preschool program for children with autism
- 7 teachers, 5 children with autism, 5 typically developing peers
- One on one intervention in the afternoon
- Child-centered, responsive interaction approach
- Family-centered, parent training component

# My Research

- Can early naturalistic interventions improve the communicative behaviors of young children with autism?



# You can make a difference!

- Kent State University's Early Childhood Intervention Specialist Program
- A department of special education
- Preparing personnel to make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities (birth to age 8) and their families
- Contact Dr. Kristie Pretti-Frontczak ([kprettif@kent.edu](mailto:kprettif@kent.edu)) or Dr. Sanna Harjusola-Webb ([shwebb@kent.edu](mailto:shwebb@kent.edu))

# Helpful resources

- [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)
- [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)
- [www.mayer-johnson.com](http://www.mayer-johnson.com)
- [www.symbolworld.org](http://www.symbolworld.org)
- [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com)
- [www.teachgrid.com](http://www.teachgrid.com)
- [www.ocali.org](http://www.ocali.org)
- [www.meosercc.org](http://www.meosercc.org)

# Reflective Journaling



- Using the paper provided in your packet, take 5 minutes to reflect on today's lesson
- You are not expected to answer all of the questions, only to generally reflect on your understanding and reactions to today's lesson
- I will be collecting your reflections

# Evaluation

- Please take a moment to evaluate today's lesson
- You do not need to put your name on the evaluation and your answers will be kept confidential
- I will be using your responses and suggestions to evaluate and improve my teaching in the future

