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Beacon Wellbeing

# Autism Spectrum Disorder



## What is autism?

Autism is a condition that affects language, communication, and behavior. It is called a spectrum disorder because it is different for all people who have it.

## What are the signs?

Each child with autism is different, but all have difficulties with language, social interactions, or behavior. Here are signs to look for:

- Does not respond to their name
- Shows poor or no eye contact with others
- Little or no interest in interacting with adults or other children
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, running in circles, or getting stuck on a word
- Uses few or no complete words by age 2
- Makes odd movements, such as arm flailing or walking on tiptoes
- Has bad temper tantrums or episodes of fearfulness
- Has little interest in playing with toys or games
- Stays focused on a single item, sound, or movement
- Sensitive to temperature, sound, or light
- Needs to have things placed in a certain order
- Cannot handle any change in routine

## What should I do if I think my child may have autism?

Many parents wonder if their child is developing normally. If you are worried that your child is off track, talk to your child's doctor about having her evaluated and treated.

The earlier you get help, the better. With an early start, a child with autism can make great strides.



## What is ABA?

Applied behavioral analysis (ABA) is the only evidence-based and most effective behavioral intervention for children with autism.

ABA is a customized step-by-step approach delivered by professionals. It incorporates screening and assessment, therapy, medication management, and other specialized treatments to:

- Bridge the gap between each child's chronological and developmental age as early and as fast as possible
- Promote development of self-help, language, learning/educational, communication, social, and vocational skills
- Maximize the child's adjustment to mainstream settings and improve the child's chances to live a full life
- Improve issues with sleep, hygiene, and self-care
- Reduce behaviors like physical and verbal aggression; self-injury; and other disruptive, self-stimulating, or excessive behaviors

Individual outcomes vary, but to get meaningful results, 12 to 40 hours per week of ABA services are often needed, many times in the home.

If medically necessary, PG&E's health plans will cover speech therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy for those with autism or autism spectrum disorder. Please contact your health plan provider (Anthem or Kaiser) for more information.



**One in 68 American children falls on the autism spectrum.** When autism-related disorders are suspected, early diagnosis and intervention can have a positive impact on your child and your family.

## PG&E benefit coverage

PG&E covers ABA for PG&E employees, dependents, and retirees who are enrolled in the company's medical plans. There are no age-specific, day, or dollar limits, and no deductible for the ABA benefit. The plan will pay 100 percent of the cost for all authorized and pre-certified ABA therapy benefits.

ABA services are available to those with autism or pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). ABA will also be covered for those with diagnoses of PDD-not otherwise specified, Asperger syndrome, Rett syndrome, and childhood disintegrative disorder, along with a diagnosis of being "at risk" for autism or PDD.

ABA coverage requires pre-authorization or pre-certification with Beacon Health Options (Beacon) before services are delivered, and then on a recurring basis as required by Beacon. In some cases, ABA services may be available via telehealth.

If you have a covered dependent who is already getting ABA services, ask your current ABA provider to contact Beacon at 1-888-445-4436 to coordinate a discussion with Beacon's Provider Relations Department.

## How your benefit can help

- Provide information on autism, including visual and auditory stimulation, play, music, and art therapy
- Schedule telephonic coaching sessions to assess your needs and develop a plan
- Connect you to counseling, family support, support groups, advocacy centers, and legal/financial referrals
- Provide referrals for specialized private or public schools
- Find specialized summer camps or child care facilities
- Provide information on state and federal programs

## Contact us

[pge.mybeaconwellbeing.com](https://pge.mybeaconwellbeing.com) | [mypgbenefits.com/EAP](https://mypgbenefits.com/EAP)

888-445-4436 | 800-735-2962 (TTY)

### Privacy is a priority

Your personal information is kept private as required by state and federal laws. No one will know you have accessed the program services unless you grant permission or express a concern that presents a legal obligation to release information (for example, if it is believed you are a danger to yourself or to others).



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