



Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism is a complex disorder of brain function that involves three basic symptoms: impaired social interaction, difficulty with verbal and nonverbal communication, and severely limited activities and interests. These symptoms generally appear by age three and may last throughout one's life. In recent years, individuals with more varied degrees of impairment and functioning have been diagnosed with autism-related disorders. Although definite similarities exist among people classified as autistic, the differences from one person to another can be profound.

Current research on autism is pointing to irregularities in various body systems—not just the brain. For ten years, HANDLE has been applying a comprehensive systems approach to identify and treat the many different strands of the autistic experience. Areas in which most HANDLE clients report significant improvement within two to six months include:

- **Communication**
- **Social Interaction**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Muscle Tone**
- **Self-Stimulatory Behaviors**
- **Eating Issues**
- **Sleep**

“I love HANDLE. It is the one thing in all the stuff we have tried that has made my life bearable. It has allowed me to open myself up to sensations that really help me to sense the world in a normal way. I no longer have to shut down my systems to cope. I can hear, feel and understand the world around me.”

— Written by a previously non-verbal 18 year old about seven months after she began her HANDLE program.

HANDLE programs are implemented in homes and other care situations for approximately 20 to 30 minutes a day. Using gentle activities designed to prevent stress to the nervous system and body, HANDLE weaves the threads among the various systems and empowers individuals to develop efficient functions.

Want to Learn More?

- Visit us on the web at www.handle.org
- Read *The Fabric of Autism: Weaving the Threads into a Cogent Theory* for in depth information and *The Churkendoose Anthology* for first-hand stories of how individuals and families have used HANDLE to triumph over autism and other neurological dysfunction.
- Call us at (206) 204-6000 to find out about client services, training programs, and how you can attend one of our free Community Information presentations.