

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

What are the signs of Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

People with autism have difficulties in three main areas:

- Social communication (including verbal and non-verbal communication, such as body language)
- Social interaction (difficulty recognising or understanding other people's emotions and feelings, and expressing their own)
- Social imagination (difficulty understanding and predicting other people's behaviour)

In addition, many people with autism have sensory sensitivities. They experience sensory experiences very strongly so that, for example, bright lights, loud noises, certain smells or tastes, the feel of certain fabrics may all be distressing to them.

Asperger's Syndrome is a form of autism where the language aspect is less of a disability. People with Asperger's Syndrome often have good language skills, though their communication with other people will still be impaired because they lack social understanding.

Autism (or **ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder**) is a lifelong condition.

For more information about the signs of autism, click on the link below.

- [About Autism](#) Information from the National Autistic Society about the features of autism.

What might we notice in a child with autism?

This is a difficult area to describe as many of the signs of autism are also common in non-autistic children.

Many of the signs listed below may also not be seen in an autistic child.

Things we might notice include:

- They may not speak.
- They may not understand what other people say.
- They may copy what other people say.
- They may only talk about their favourite subject.
- They may be very interested in one thing and know a lot about it.
- They may not want to take part in games or activities with other people.
- They may find group situations, such as assembly, dinner time or playtime, very difficult.
- They may prefer to be on their own, at home or at school.
- They may like to play the same game or do the same thing every day.

- They may get upset, angry or withdrawn if routines change or something different happens (such as their teacher being away or coming to school by a different route).
- Their reactions to things may be unusual.
- They may not understand implicit social rules, such as not standing too close to someone.
- They may not have much sense of danger.
- They may be very fussy about what they eat and how it is presented.

None of these signs alone indicates autism, but if many of them are present in a child we may start to wonder about ASD.

The major sign we see in school is usually that the child frequently becomes distressed or angry in situations where most children react less strongly or cope better.