**BLOCK 1**

**Heading:** Concepts and Symptoms

**Brief:** What is autism and how to tell if a child has autism?

**Show more:**

**What is autism? <br></br>**

Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person’s social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a “spectrum condition” that affects people differently and to varying degrees. <br></br>

**Symptoms (in early childhood) <br></br>**

1.Speaks later than typical or not at all (nonverbal) <br></br>

2.Repetition in language or movement, such as repeating the same word or sounds, hand flapping, or any repeated movement <br></br>

3.Atypical nonverbal communication, including avoiding eye contact, giving few facial expressions, or having a monotone <br></br>

4.Prefers solitary or parallel play rather than engaging in associative or cooperative play with other children <br></br>

5.Extremely distressed by changes, including new foods or changes in schedule <br></br>

6.Preference for predictable, structured play over spontaneous or make-believe play <br></br>

7.Strong, persistent interest on specific topic, part of a toy, or item <br></br>

**Reference for block 1: [1]**

**BLOCK 2**

**Heading:** Diagnosis

**Brief:** How to get a diagnosis for children showing autism symptoms?

**Show more:**

If you think your child may be showing signs of autism, it is recommended that you make an appointment with your child’s General Practitioner (GP), or child and family health nurse. <br></br>

Your GP or child and family health nurse will ask you questions about your child’s development. They may also examine and observe your child. This will help them rule out other possible health or developmental issues. <br></br>

If they think your child has some of the [characteristics](https://thespectrum.org.au/autism-diagnosis/checklist-early-childhood/) of autism, they may refer your child for further assessment. [2] <br></br>

**Reference for the paragraphs above: [2]**

There are some platforms where you can get more information about autism diagnosis: <br></br>

[Getting an autism diagnosis for children from The Spectrum](https://thespectrum.org.au/autism-diagnosis/children/)

[Book an assessment at Autism SA](https://autismsa.org.au/autism-diagnosis/autism-diagnosis-process/how-do-i-get-a-diagnosis/)

[Getting a diagnosis from Autism Awareness](https://www.autismawareness.com.au/diagnosis/children/getting-a-diagnosis)

[Developmental assessment service from The WCH Child Development Unit](https://www.wch.sa.gov.au/patients-visitors/children/care-and-support/child-development-unit)

**BLOCK 3:**

**Heading:** Educational Supports

**Brief:** How to help an autistic child as a parent or a teacher?

**Show more:**

**Link 1: As a Parent**

As a parent, you’ve probably spent a lot of time thinking about your child’s future. Even more so if they have an [autism spectrum disorder](https://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/autism-spectrum-disorders), or [ASD](https://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/ss/slideshow-autism-overview) diagnosis. <br></br>

Apart from the medical care and therapies that you may line up to help your son or daughter, there are simple, everyday things that make a difference. <br></br>

**Focus on the positive.** Just like anyone else, children with autism spectrum disorder often respond well to positive reinforcement. That means when you praise them for the behaviors they’re doing well, it will make them (and you) feel good. <br></br>

Be specific, so that they know exactly what you liked about their behavior. Find ways to reward them, either with extra playtime or a small prize like a sticker. <br></br>

Also, as you would with anyone -- on the spectrum or not -- prize your child for who they are. As a parent, loving your child for who they are is key. <br></br>

**Stay consistent and on schedule.**People on the spectrum like routines. Make sure they get consistent guidance and interaction, so they can practice what they learn from [therapy](https://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/mental-health-psychotherapy). <br></br>

This can make learning new skills and behaviors easier, and help them apply their knowledge in different situations. Talk to their teachers and therapists and try to align on a consistent set of techniques and methods of interaction so you can bring what they’re learning home. <br></br>

**Put play on the schedule.**Finding activities that seem like pure fun, and not more education or [therapy](https://www.webmd.com/depression/ss/slideshow-therapy-myths-and-facts), may help your child open up and connect with you. <br></br>

**Give it time.**You’ll likely try a lot of different techniques, treatments, and approaches as you figure out what’s best for your child. Stay positive and try not to get discouraged if they don’t respond well to a particular method. <br></br>

**Take your child along for everyday activities.**If your child’s behavior is unpredictable, you may feel like it’s easier not to expose them to certain situations. But when you take them on everyday errands like [grocery shopping](https://www.webmd.com/parenting/raising-fit-kids/food/family-grocery-shopping-tips) or a post office run, it may help them get them used to the world around them. <br></br>

**SUGGESTED**<br></br>

**Get support.**Whether online or face-to-face, support from other families, professionals, and friends can be a big help. Create a village of friends and family who understand your child's diagnosis. Friendships may be difficult, and your child will need support in maintaining those friendships. Support groups can be a good way to share advice and information and to meet other parents dealing with similar challenges. Individual, marital, or family [counseling](https://www.webmd.com/balance/video/farrell-therapy-counseling) can be helpful, too. Think about what might make your life a little easier, and ask for help. <br></br>

**Look into respite care.**This is when another caregiver looks after your child -- inside your home, outside of it, or both -- for a period of time to give you a short break. You’ll need it, especially if your child has intense needs due to ASD. This can give you a chance to do things that restore your own health and that you enjoy, so that you come back home ready to help. <br></br>

You can identify or form your respite support team using these methods: <br></br>

* Ask your friends, family, and other parents you know for support connections you might not have thought about. <br></br>
* Check with your child’s doctors, therapists, and teachers for ideas or referrals. For instance, a teacher’s aide you really like might enjoy babysitting in their free time. <br></br>
* You can also post notices for childcare help in newspapers and online, local religious communities, and at colleges and universities near you. Be sure to check all references carefully. <br></br>
* Join a support group for parents of autistic children. Find out what works for others. You can find self-help communities by calling a local autism support center or looking online. <br></br>

**Take care of yourself.**  As a caregiver, you need to keep your body and your mind in tip-top shape so you can face the challenges that crop up from day to day. This means slowing down and looking for ways to take care of yourself so you’ll have plenty of you (physically, mentally, and emotionally) to go around. <br></br>

**Cut your stress.**  Parents of kids with ASD often face more stress than those who deal with other disabilities. If left unchecked, caregivers can face breakdowns in relationships and even psychological disorders. Stress can affect your health, too.  Stay organized to help yourself avoid getting overwhelmed. This means finding time in your day just for yourself. Some important and even fun ways to do that include: <br></br>

* **Pinpoint the real causes of your stress**. If you feel overwhelmed, break down the major issues you’re facing into easier bites. You’ll feel better, and you’ll have a plan. <br></br>
* [**Meditation**](https://www.webmd.com/balance/meditation) may help, too. Pay attention to your thoughts and the way you talk to yourself. It’ll help you weed out useless worries. <br></br>
* **Exercise**. You don’t need to go to the gym. Walk, work in the garden, swim, even dance in the kitchen. These are easy, effective ways to get some [exercise](https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/ss/slideshow-7-most-effective-exercises). <br></br>
  + If you want some adult company, take an exercise class. It’s a great way to recharge your batteries and meet new people. <br></br>
* **Get some ZZZs**. When you need to recharge your body and mind, you can’t beat the power of a good night’s [sleep](https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/default.htm). If you need extra help winding down, meditate or do relaxation exercises. That can help your body get ready for rest. <br></br>
* **Get creative with your food.** You likely spend lots of energy making sure your child eats nutritious meals. What about you? Spice up your personal menu by trying different fruits, veggies, and cuisines. Scope out new [recipes](https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/default.htm) to keep things interesting.  And eat on a set schedule each day. It’ll help you keep your energy up and your system on track. <br></br>

**Get balance in your life**.  This is the key not only to facing life's challenges, but also keeping a high quality of life. Your whole family will benefit. Book time in your weekly calendar for fun and socializing. Try these tips to add balance to your busy days: <br></br>

* **Find your friends**. Yes, you’re the parent of a special-needs child. But you’re a person, too. Remembering that you have your own identity makes you a better parent. Take time to reconnect and laugh with your friends. You’ll be glad you did. <br></br>
* **Take up old hobbies**. Track down your knitting needles, dust off the piano, or get out the golf clubs. Try new activities that catch your eye. <br></br>
* **Take five every day**. A few extra minutes first thing in the morning can center you and set the tone for the whole day. Gather your thoughts, take a long, warm shower, or jot some notes in a journal. <br></br>
* **Make it quick.**  Can your partner or other family members take over [parenting](https://www.webmd.com/parenting/default.htm) duties for a bit? A quick walk around the block or short drive to the store -- by yourself -- will give you some much-needed time to yourself. <br></br>

**You can find more resources about how to help your autistic children as a parent here**: [Family workshops from AutismSA](https://autismsa.org.au/training-consulting/workshops/family-workshops/), [Therapeutic Social Work from AutismSA](https://autismsa.org.au/supports-services/social-work-help-supporting-your-goals/), <br></br>

**Link 2: As a Teacher:**

The number of students with autism is on the rise. So a deep understanding of the strategies and social skills needed to handle a class of autistic children is extremely important. <br></br>

Listed are some tried and true strategies that will ensure every autistic child receives the best education possible. <br></br>

**These strategies apply to both the classroom and home environments.** <br></br>

1. Structure or routine is the name of the game when it comes to autism. Maintain the same daily routine, only making exceptions for special occasions. During such moments, place a distinct picture that depicts the day’s events in the child's personal planner. <br></br>
2. Design an environment free of stimulating factors: <br></br>

Avoid playing loud background music as it makes it difficult for the autistic child to concentrate. <br></br>

Eliminate stress because autistic children quickly pick up on negative emotions. So for example, if you’re experiencing too much stress, leave the classroom until you feel better. <br></br>

Maintain a low and clear voice when engaging the class. Students with autism get easily agitated and confused if a speaking voice is too loud. <br></br>

Some autistic people find fluorescent lights distracting because they can see the flicker of the 60-cycle electricity. **To mitigate this effect:** <br></br>

Place the child's desk near the window or try to avoid using fluorescent lights altogether. <br></br>

If the lights are unavoidable, use the newest bulbs you have as they flicker less. <br></br>

You can also place a lamp with an old-fashioned incandescent light bulb next to the child's desk. <br></br>

Let students stand instead of sitting around a table for a class demonstration or during morning and evening meetings. Many students with autism tend to rock back and forth so standing allows them to repeat those movements while still listening to the teacher. <br></br>

1. Keep verbal instructions short and to the point, because an autistic student may find it difficult to recall the entire sequence. Instead, write the instructions down on a piece of paper.

This seemingly small act matters; take this person with autism for instance: <br></br>

*“I am unable to remember sequences. If I ask for directions at a gas station, I can only remember three steps. Directions with more than three steps have to be written down.”* <br></br>

1. Go for repetitive motions when working on projects. For example, most autistic classrooms have an area for workbox tasks, such as putting away erasers and pencils. This kind of predictability helps autistic kids stay organized. <br></br>
2. Use signs, pictures, and demonstrations for visual learners. For example: <br></br>

a. When teaching up and down movements, attach cards with the words "up" and "down" to a toy airplane. The "up" card is attached when the plane takes off while the "down" card is attached when it lands. <br></br>

b. Use a wooden apple cut up into four pieces and a wooden pear cut in half to help students with autism understand the concept of quarters and halves. <br></br>

*“I think in pictures. I do not think in language. All my thoughts are like videotapes running in my imagination. Pictures are my first language.”* <br></br>

1. Many autistic children hyperfocus on one subject like trains or maps so use that specific interest to motivate school work. With a child who likes trains, for instance, calculate how long it takes for a train to go between New York and Washington. And there you have it, you’ve just solved a math problem. <br></br>
2. The fewer the choices, the easier decision-making is for an autistic kid. For instance, if you ask a student to pick a color, limit them to three choices. <br></br>
3. Create a few structured one-on-one interactions between students to promote their social skills. Take note that autistic children can’t accurately interpret body language and touch, so minimal physical contact is best. <br></br>
4. Parents and caregivers are the true experts on their autistic children. Therefore, to fully support the child in and out of school, teachers should coordinate and share knowledge with them. For example, you can exchange notes on interventions that have worked at home and in school then integrate accordingly. <br></br>
5. Lastly, we can’t forget you, dear teacher. Even when you’re doing everything right, teaching students with autism can still be tough, so building resilience is important. <br></br>

**You can find more resources here about how to help autistic children as a teacher**: [Resource kits for teachers from Autism Awareness Australia](https://www.autismawareness.com.au/resources/educational)

**BLOCK 4**

**Heading:** Service Providers

**Bried**: Service providers providing all kinds of service to help autistic children

**Read more:**

/\* click on read more and it will be the same page of service system \*/

**Video Link**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYPeOm5A8XQ>

References

[1] <https://www.autism-society.org/what-is/>

[2]<https://thespectrum.org.au/autism-diagnosis/children/>

[3] [Parenting a child on the autism spectrum](https://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/parenting-child-with-autism)

[4]