



**Early signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

These signs and symptoms are helpful in alerting professionals and parents about the possibility of ASD. They are not meant to be diagnostic or comprehensive.

|   | <b>Pre-school children (up to 5 years)</b>  | <b>School age children (5- 11 years)</b>  |
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| <b>Language and communication</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor or no response to name</li> <li>• Delayed language development</li> <li>• Frequent repetition of set words and phrases</li> <li>• Reduced use of language for communicating with others</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited and/or odd use of language for communicating with others e.g. talking at others mainly about topics of own interest</li> <li>• Frequent use of “learnt” phrases</li> <li>• Monotonous speech</li> <li>• Reduced response to others and poor conversations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Social interaction</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced or absent social interest in others</li> <li>• Playing alone</li> <li>• Reduced or absent social interactions or play with others</li> <li>• Reduced or absent use of eye contact for communication</li> <li>• Reduced or absent use of pointing to show objects or share interests</li> <li>• Limited or absent pretend play</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced or absent social interest in others including children of own age</li> <li>• Poor awareness of expected social behaviour and of personal space</li> <li>• Preferring to play or spend time alone; reduced sharing of interest or fun with others</li> <li>• Reduced or absent use of eye contact for communication</li> <li>• Reduced or absent use of pointing to show objects or share interests</li> <li>• Limited or absent flexible imaginative play or creativity</li> </ul> |
| <b>Repetitive and restricted behaviours</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-focused or unusual interests</li> <li>• Repetitive “stereotypical” movements such as</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-focused or unusual interests</li> <li>• Repetitive “stereotypical” movements such as</li> </ul>   |





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|  | <p>hand flapping, body rocking while standing, spinning, finger flicking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repetitive acts, e.g. opening and closing doors or flicking light switches on/off</li><li>• Over or under reaction to sensory stimuli, for example textures, sounds, smells</li><li>• Insistence on following same routines</li></ul> | <p>hand flapping, body rocking while standing, spinning, finger flicking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong insistence on following same routines or own agenda</li><li>• Dislike for change, which leads to anxiety and distress</li><li>• Over or under reaction to sensory stimuli, for example textures, sounds, smells</li></ul> |
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