



# Autism Spectrum Disorder



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## Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD occurs on a continuum, which means that no two persons will have the exact same experience. It is typically able to be diagnosed at or around 3 years of age, when a child begins having difficulties communicating and understanding what people around them are thinking and feeling. This makes it very difficult for individuals with ASD to respond to gestures, facial expressions, touch and even language. Individuals with ASD are often referred to as neurodiverse due to unique strengths they have, such as classifying items, math skills, or airtight memories.

### Symptoms seen at school

- Struggles transitioning between activities
- Apparent over-sensitivity or under-sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells, textures, or pain
- Excels at subjects they are interested in
- Difficulty in expressing needs verbally, using gestures or pointing instead of words
- Unresponsive to typical teaching methods
- Unique ways of thinking and problem-solving
- Exceptional memory for details
- Communicate with honest and direct communication
- Insistence on sameness in routines



## Symptoms seen at home

- Tantrums and low frustration tolerance
- Thoroughness and accuracy when completing things at home.
- Plays with toys as objects, not engaging in pretend play
- No real fears of danger despite obvious risks of harm
- Prefers to be alone; seems withdrawn to strangers and family members; or engages in parallel play.
- Loving and liking people for who they are
- Uncomfortable with physical contact, even when given with affection such as a hug, or deep pressure seeking.
- A sense of wonderment about their world



## Strategies to use at home:

- Use a visual schedule for what the day will look like and provide warnings prior to transitions
- Provide time for processing what has been said, a good rule of thumb is to count to 10 before repeating what you said or expecting a response.
- Be aware of your child's sensory needs and plan accordingly, to lessen the occurrence of a meltdown due to over stimulation. This could be having headphones when you go to loud places, or allowing them to wear sunglasses in bright stores.
- Build connections with children their age through low pressure group activities. Such as going to the park, going to a trampoline park or have some friends over to do activity that your child enjoys.
- Provide them with positive feedback or recognition when they have accomplished a task or engage in an activity they normally choose not to engage in.
- Provide your child with choices instead of choosing things for them, and provide them the ability to change their mind about the choice they have made. For example, providing a choice of what they would like to have for breakfast or lunch, or giving two options of where they can work on homework.

- [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_Youth/Resource\\_Centers/Autism\\_Resource\\_Center/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Resource\\_Centers/Autism\\_Resource\\_Center/Home.aspx?hkey=eba90fdc-e75b-4d63-a53b-2d7c50978d21](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_Youth/Resource_Centers/Autism_Resource_Center/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Autism_Resource_Center/Home.aspx?hkey=eba90fdc-e75b-4d63-a53b-2d7c50978d21)
- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/12-things-id-teachers-understand-about-autism>

