



# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A Parent's Guide



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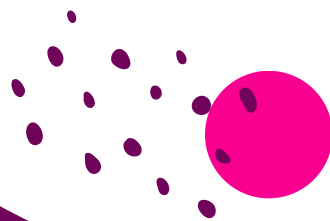
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# What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

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Autism Spectrum Disorder, commonly referred to as ASD, is a complex neurodevelopmental condition that affects how individuals perceive the world, interact with others, and communicate.





# Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder:

ASD can manifest in various ways, but some common characteristics include:

## Social Challenges:

Difficulty with social interactions, making eye contact, understanding emotions, and forming friendships.

## Communication Difficulties:

Challenges with verbal and nonverbal communication, such as speech delays, limited language use, or repetitive language.

## Repetitive Behaviours:

Engaging in repetitive movements, interests, or routines.

### **Sensory Sensitivities:**

Heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli (e.g., lights, sounds, textures).

### **Difficulty with Change:**

Resistance to changes in routine or environment.

### **Intense Interests:**

Developing intense, focused interests in specific topics or activities.



# Who Diagnosis Autism Spectrum Disorder:

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ASD is typically diagnosed by qualified healthcare professionals, such as Paediatricians or a developmental team made up of a Psychologist, Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist. At Inspire Allied Health and Education Group our diagnostic team assesses and diagnoses ASD.



# Diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder:

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Diagnosis of ASD involves a comprehensive evaluation, including interviews with parents and observations of the child's behaviour as well as specialised tests and assessments are used to confirm the diagnosis and the level of support required.



# Checklist for Parents: Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder

If you suspect that your child may have ASD, consider the following characteristics as potential signs:

- ✓ Difficulty with eye contact
- ✓ Limited or delayed speech
- ✓ Repetitive hand movements or behaviours
- ✓ Difficulties with social interactions
- ✓ Avoidance of touch or sensitivity to textures
- ✓ Fixation on specific topics or objects
- ✓ Resistance to change in routines
- ✓ Difficulty understanding and expressing emotions
- ✓ Challenges with making and maintaining friendships
- ✓ Unusual reactions to sensory stimuli





# Steps to Take if You Suspect ASD:

## Seek Professional Evaluation:

Consult with your child's paediatrician or multidisciplinary team for an evaluation.

## Gather Information:

Keep a record of your child's behaviours, milestones, and any concerns.



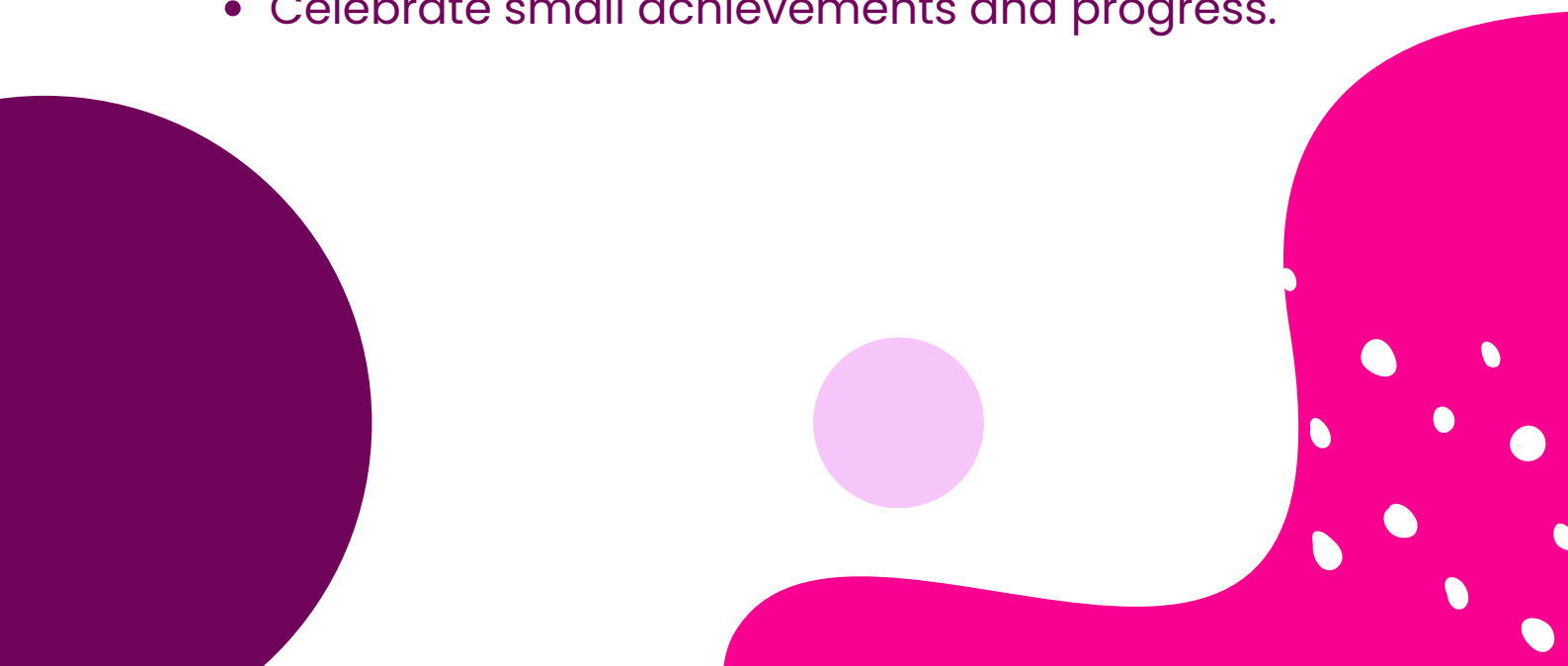
# Next Steps to Support a Child with ASD:

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- 1. Develop a Supportive Environment:** Create a structured and predictable routine at home.
  - 2. Learn About ASD:** Educate yourself about ASD to better understand your child's needs.
  - 3. Advocate for Your Child:** Work with schools and specialists to develop an individualised education plan (IEP).
  - 4. Join Support Groups:** Connect with other parents of children with ASD for advice and emotional support.
  - 5. Seek Specialist Services:** At Inspire Allied Health & Education Group we offer Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Music Therapy, Art Therapy and Education.



# Strategies for Supporting Children with ASD:

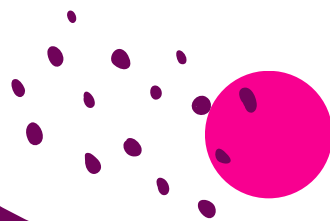
- Create a visual schedule.
- Use social stories to explain social situations.
- Provide clear and concise instructions.
- Use visual supports like picture cards.
- Offer sensory breaks as needed.
- Encourage communication through alternative means (e.g., AAC devices).
- Reward positive behaviour with a token system.
- Teach self-regulation and coping skills.
- Foster special interests as a source of motivation.
- Practice social skills through role-playing.
- Establish a quiet and safe space for relaxation.

- Offer choices to promote autonomy.
  - Use timers to help with transitions.
  - Develop a consistent bedtime routine.
  - Provide sensory-friendly clothing options.
  - Encourage peer interactions through playdates.
  - Teach emotional regulation through emotion cards.
  - Engage in activities that match their interests.
  - Monitor screen time and ensure it's age-appropriate.
  - Celebrate small achievements and progress.
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Remember, each child with ASD is unique, and what is suitable for one may not be for another. Consult with professionals and tailor supports to your child's specific needs and strengths. Please reach out to Inspire Allied Health and Education Group to find out how we can support your child and family.





# Contact

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