

*Could your young child be
showing signs of*

Autism?

Autism is a developmental disability that impairs social communication and language development. It is not a mental illness and it is not caused by poor parenting. Its symptoms can often be greatly minimised by early diagnosis and treatment.

Some of the following may be indicators of an Autism Spectrum Disorder. No single indicator necessarily signals autism - usually a child would present with several indicators from some of the following categories.

If you are concerned about your child's development, discuss with your GP a referral to a paediatrician for an autism assessment.



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Communication

- Not responding to his/her name by 12 months
- Not pointing or waving by 12 months
- Loss of words previously used
- Speech absent at 18 months
- No spontaneous phrases by 24 months
- Selective hearing, responding to certain sounds but ignoring the human voice

Social Skills

- Looks away when you speak to him/her
- Does not return parents smile
- Lack of interest in other children
- Often seems to be in his/her own world
- Is unable to follow simple instructions such as “Give me your shoes”

Behaviour

- Has inexplicable tantrums
- Has unusual interests or attachments
- Has unusual motor movement, e.g. flapping or rocking
- Is overactive and uncooperative
- Has difficulty coping with change

Sensory

- Afraid of some everyday sounds
- Uses peripheral vision to look at objects
- Eats a very limited range of foods
- Preoccupation with certain textures
- Walks on tip toes

Play

- Prefers to play alone
- Very limited social play such as “Peek-a-Boo”
- Play is limited to certain toys
- Plays with objects in unusual ways such as repetitive spinning or lining up

What your child should *typically* be doing at 18-24 months of age

- Shows interest in his/her siblings or peers
- Brings you items to look at
- Follows your gaze to locate an object when you point
- Engages in “pretend play” such as feeding a doll or making a toy dog bark
- Uses many spontaneous single words and some two word phrases



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If you are concerned about your child's development, discuss with your GP a referral to a paediatrician for an autism assessment.

An early diagnosis followed by early intervention provides the best opportunity for success.

**Autism Information Line:
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This brochure was adapted from Karyn Seroussis Poster Project www.autismndi.com, and produced by Ruth Evatt, a parent of a child with autism, in conjunction with the Autism Association of NSW.