



# AUTISM

Autism is a condition which affects the way in which a person communicates with and relates to other people. It can also be called a neurodevelopmental condition or Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Difficulties understanding and recognising communication such as verbal language, facial expressions, tone of voice and body language.
- Possible speech and language delay.
- Difficulties recognising and understanding other people's feelings and understanding and managing their own.
- Difficulties with understanding other people's intentions and behaviour.
- Preferring to stick to their own routines.
- Many people with autism experience some kind of under or over sensitivity to the seven senses: auditory, visual, touch, taste, smell, vestibular (balance) and proprioception (movement).

**All of the above can lead to a heightened level of anxiety for individuals on the Autistic Spectrum. The condition can affect every aspect of a person's life.**

## LINKS

### National Autistic Society

[http://www.autism.org.uk/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMlvIjRwbGM2wIVghwbCh0AMQx3EAAYASAAEgLZhPD\\_BwE](http://www.autism.org.uk/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMlvIjRwbGM2wIVghwbCh0AMQx3EAAYASAAEgLZhPD_BwE)

### Autism Hampshire

<https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/>

### Social Stories

<http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/myworldhub/socialstories.aspx>

## RESOURCES

### Picture Exchange

#### Communication System (PECS)

<https://www.nationalautismresources.com/the-picture-exchange-communication-system-pecs/>

### Makaton

<https://www.makaton.org/>

### Sensory Diet

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/therapies/sensory-diet-treatment-what-you-need-to-know>

## TOP TIPS

- Ensure you get their attention before you speak.
- Be clear and specific about what you want them to do. For example "Lego" "in box" rather than "tidy up".
- Cut out unnecessary social language such as "do you think you could ..."
- Be careful of using sarcasm, humour or irony.

### **TOP TIPS (Continued)**

- Make sure what you say matches your tone of voice, facial expression and body language. At times of anxiety or distress reduce the "volume" of your communication e.g. use fewer words, less eye contact etc.
- Be careful of giving open ended choice e.g. "What do you want for tea?". You may find it better to give a choice of options "Would you like spaghetti or fish fingers?".
- Praise and reward when things go well.
- Use the timetable to agree when to do homework, when to go on the computer or when to go to bed etc.
- If there are changes to plans let your child know in advance.
- Use normal daily routines to provide structure to the day. Have a good morning routine, meal routine, bedtime routine.
- Be aware of how much sensory information there is going on and think about reducing it e.g. sounds, smells, lights etc.
- Clearly indicate the beginning or end of something, possibly using timers to count down time to something finishing, so the child is prepared.
- Physical exercise can be really useful in managing anxiety e.g. a small trampoline.
- It may be useful to create a document, such as a hospital passport, as a quick and easy way to explain your child's difficulties.

### **FURTHER HELP**

- Speak to your child's school.
- Speak to your doctor.
- Look at your local authorities Local Offer website.