

CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED WITH AUTISM

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, nor is it to be used as a diagnostic checklist for Autism. These characteristic behaviours, while associated with Autism, do not necessarily mean that all people exhibiting these behaviours (at some stage of their development) have Autism.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR AUTISM ENDORSES THE ROLE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL AND/OR MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM IN DIAGNOSING AUTISM.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

- Delayed speech development or absence of speech
- Atypical speech – non-speech sounds, unusual articulation, unusual tone of voice
- Confusion between “I” and “you” pronouns
- Echolalic – repeats speech fragments
- Has difficulty understanding speech
- Has difficulty with the give and take of conversation

NON-VERBAL

- Little or no gesturing
- Limited facial expression
- No indication of understanding body-language, facial expression, tone of voice
- Does not point to objects or people to indicate wants

BODY

- Repetitive movements (e.g., hand-flapping, finger-flicking)
- Repetitive whole-body movements (e.g., spinning, rocking)
- Spins objects and/or lines objects up
- Delayed or atypical motor skills development
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Toilet training and sleeping issues

SENSORY

- Sensitivity to sound, light, touch, smells, tastes
- Responds atypically to stimuli
- May appear deaf

SOCIAL

- Behavior inappropriate to the social situation
- Appears unaware of others and their feelings
- Unaware of own behavior
- No sense of danger / fear
- Appears to lack empathy
- Appears to prefer solitude
- Lacks spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment

- Little or no eye contact

IMAGINATION

- Lack of pretend play
- Plays the same way without variation
- Focus on concrete and factual objects – has difficulty with abstract concepts
- Lacks symbolic understanding
- Focus on the parts of objects

GENERAL

- Obsessive interests
 - Resistant to change, insistence on sameness and non-functional routines and rituals
 - Desire for control
 - Tantrums
 - Food Fussiness
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