

Autism – do you know the signs?

Pre School Children – 2 years to 4¹/₂ years

Social Interaction and Verbal Communication

Repeating certain words or phrases over and over again ("echolalia")

**"echolalia
echolaliaecholalia
echolaliaecholalia
echolaliaecholalia
echolalia"**

Delay in learning to babble, using first words or combining 2-3 words by age 3

Regression in or loss of skills

Does not follow simple commands relating to objects not in view (such as fetch your toothbrush)

Does not yet use 2-3 word utterances



Does not respond by looking when name is called



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Indifferent to, or no interest in, age peers

Approaches others in a one sided way or on own terms

Does not respond to greetings and farewells

Emotional responses to others can seem rude or inappropriate

Does not 'share' interests or enjoyment with others

Does not spontaneously join in or interact with others of same age



Does not enjoy social situations that most children like (e.g. birthday parties)

Unaware of other's feelings

Imagination, ideas and creativity

Lack of imaginative pretend play (pretending that dolls and toys are real and enacting out scenarios with them or role play)



Imaginative pretend play or role play is repetitive

Imaginative pretend play is over-focused or obsessive or copied (not invented)



Poor imitation of sounds or people's actions

Imaginative pretend play is solitary or plays near but not with other children

Plays imaginative pretend play with others but not equally shared - may passively copy another's imaginative game, or insist that others follows his/her own themes and rules

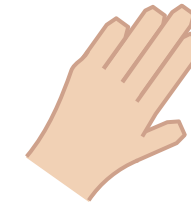
Gestures and non verbal communication

Does not use simple gestures (waving goodbye)

Uses someone else's hand as a tool (e.g. putting someone else's hand on a box to open it)



Lack of pointing to show objects and share interest



Lack of spontaneous gesture that expresses emotion (e.g. putting arm around someone)

Does not 'show' objects by holding them up or giving them to someone

Does not follow a pointing gesture to where someone is looking



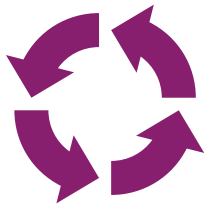
Reduced or unusual eye contact



Lack of social smile

Narrow range of interests, routines and repetitive behaviours

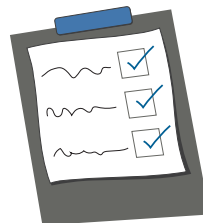
Displays repetitive behaviours or rituals that negatively affect daily activities



Arranges objects in patterns or lines and dislikes these to be disturbed

Self-chosen activities are limited and unchanging

Dislike of change, which can lead to anxiety or aggression



Insists on following own agenda

Over-focused, unusual or highly specific interests and hobbies

Prefers familiar routines, likes things to be 'just right'

Problems with turn taking

Sensory responses

Unusual sensory responses to sound sight, touch, taste, smell, movement and/or pain

