

# Indicators of autism in young children

## Are you worried about your child?

Autism is a lifelong disability that affects one in 100 children. The main areas of difficulty are in social and communication skills, and restricted or repetitive behaviours. Although there is no one indicator, there are several signs that could suggest autism.

### Social interaction and communication

- looks away when you speak to him/her
- does not return your smile
- lack of interest in other children
- often seems to be in his/her own world
- lack of ability to imitate simple motor movements eg. clapping hands
- prefers to play alone
- very limited social play (eg "Peek-a-Boo" )
- not responding to his/her name by 12 months
- not pointing or waving by 12 months
- loss of words previously used
- unusual language pattern (e.g. repetitive speech)

### Behaviour

- has unusual interests or attachments
- has unusual motor movements such as hand flapping, spinning or walking on tiptoes
- has difficulty coping with change
- unusual distress reaction to some everyday sounds
- uses peripheral vision to look at objects
- preoccupation with certain textures or avoids certain textures
- plays with objects in unusual ways such as repetitive spinning or lining up

By 18 - 24 months of age, there are certain 'milestones' that your child should be meeting. They include:

- showing interest in his/ her siblings or peers
- bringing you items to show you
- following your gaze to locate an object when you point
- engaging in 'pretend play' (e.g. feeding a doll or making a toy dog bark)
- using many spontaneous single words and some two-word phrases

Visit [www.aspect.org.au](http://www.aspect.org.au) or call 1800 ASPECT (1800 277 328) for more information about autism and our diagnosis and early intervention services.

