

Signs of Autistic Disorder

Social interactions

Children with autistic disorder might:

- Seem to be in their own world
- not use eye contact very much – for example, during interaction or for drawing attention to something
- Not use gestures – for example, they might not lift their arms to be picked up
- Not share enjoyment or interests – for example, they might not point to an object or event to share it
- Not show emotion or empathy
- Not respond to their names
- Show no interest in other children or peers
- Not engage in pretend play – for example, they won't feed a baby doll.

Communication

Children with autistic disorder might:

- Have little or no babble
- Have little or no spoken language
- Have 'echolalia', which means they echo or mimic words or phrases without meaning or in an unusual tone of voice
- Have difficulty understanding and following simple instructions – for example, 'Give me the block' might be difficult for them.

Repetitive or persistent behaviours

Children with autistic disorder might:

- Have intense interest in certain objects – they'll get 'stuck' on one particular toy or object
- Focus narrowly on an object – for example, on a detail like opening and closing the door on a toy bus rather than pretending to drive it
- Insist on following routines and be easily upset by change
- Have repetitive body movements or unusual body movements – for example, back-arching, hand-flapping or walking on toes.

Sensory issues

Children with autistic disorder might:

- Be extremely sensitive to sensory experiences – for example, they might be easily upset by certain sounds, or eat only foods with a certain texture
- Seek sensory stimulation – for example, they might like deep pressure touch or vibrating objects like the washing machine.

Many children with autistic disorder also have sensory issues, although this isn't necessary for a diagnosis. They might:

- be especially sensitive to sound, which is why they raise their hands to their ears to block out noise
- like the feel of objects, and smell and sniff at everything around them
- want to eat only foods with a certain texture – for example, they'll be happy to eat soft, smooth food, but will refuse anything lumpy
- use their peripheral vision a lot, or tilt their heads to look at objects from a particular angle.

Autism Symptoms Checklist

General

- Repetitive behaviors
- Avoidance of eye contact with people
- Obsessive interest in certain things
- Repetitive rocking, twirling etc.

As a Baby:

- Unresponsive to people
- Tendency to focus on one item for a long period of time
- Low sensitivity to pain
- High sensitivity to sound, touch, etc
- Resistance to being touched (especially being hugged)

As a Infant:

- Slow to start speaking
- Refers to themselves by name vice “me” or “I”

By One year old:

- Not responding to their name
- Lack of babbling
- Lack of happy expression
- Problems establishing eye contact
- Staring for a long time at items which aren't moving

As a Child:

- Difficulty making friends
- Difficulty starting or carrying on conversation
- Lack of imaginative play
- Unusual and/or repetitive use of languages
- Difficulties with social interactions
- Difficulties with communication (verbal and non verbal)
- Desire to adhere to certain routines
- Failure to respond to their name
- Difficulties determining what others think or feel
- Difficulties interpreting social cues (eg: tone of voice, facial expressions)
- Lack of empathy
- Self-abusive actions (eg: biting, head banging)
- Difficulties playing with other children
- Speaking in singing voice
- Often speaks about the same topics over and over again.