

World Autism Awareness Day: April 2

World Autism Awareness Day seeks to raise awareness of the autism spectrum disorders and improve the lives of those currently living with autism. Autism refers to a lifelong brain development disorder that affects social interactions, learning, routines and communication. It is estimated that approximately 1% of the global population is autistic.

World Autism Awareness Day was designated by the United Nations in 2007 in an effort to end stigmatization and discrimination against those with autism. World Autism Day is celebrated annually on April 2nd and fits in with the UN's Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promises to leave no one behind.

What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition that affects, among other things, the way an individual relates to his or her environment and their interaction with other people.

The word 'spectrum' describes the range of difficulties that people on the autism spectrum may experience and the degree to which they may be affected. Some people may be able to live relatively normal lives, while others may have an accompanying learning challenge and require continued specialist support.

The main areas of difficulty are in social communication, social interaction and restricted or repetitive behaviours and interests.



Early Signs & Indicators

Some of the following may be indicators of autism. Usually a child would present with several indicators from the following categories:

- Behaviour

Inexplicable tantrums; limited interests or attachments; unusual and repetitive movements like hand flapping or rocking; overactive and uncooperative behaviour and difficulty coping with change.

- Sensory

Fear of some everyday sounds; uses peripheral vision to look at objects; eats a very limited range of foods; a preoccupation with or an aversion to certain textures and walking on tiptoes.

Unusual sensory interests such as sniffing objects or staring intently at moving objects.

- Communication

Not responding to his/her name by 12 months; not pointing or waving by 12 months; loss of words previously used; no speech by 18 months or spontaneous phrases by 24 months; responding to certain sounds but ignoring the human voice; unusual language or repetitive speech.

- Social skills

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; is unable to follow simple instructions (e.g. "Please give me your shoes").

- Play

Prefers to play alone; very limited social play (e.g. "Peek-a-Boo"); play is limited to certain toys; plays with objects in unusual ways.



Autism Facts

An estimated 1 in 70 people has autism; that's almost 230,000 Australians.

Autism affects almost four times as many boys than girls.

Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average.

35 % of young adults (aged 19–23) with autism have not had a job or received postgraduate education after leaving high school.



Treatment

The broad range of Autism Spectrum impairments and the varying degrees to which people are affected means that one approach will not be suitable to every individual. An evidence-based approach that encourages activities that support the individual's strengths and interests are proven to be the most credible forms of treatment.



Let's support people who are on the Autism Spectrum, and their families!

For further information on treatments, approaches and strategies, [please click here](#). Access [Fact Sheets](#) about Autism, from [Autism Spectrum Australia](#).

References:

<https://www.wincalendar.com/au/World-Autism-Awareness-Day>

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/what-autism>

