

## Autism Definition

Autism is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the name given to describe the wide range of behaviours amongst the Autistic population. Children with autism are less able to interact with the world as other children do. Typically they have deficits in three key areas:

- Verbal and non-verbal Communication
- Social awareness and interactions
- Imaginative play (variable interests and behaviours).

There are separate labels given to children with autism for different points on the Autism spectrum. At the least affected end, you may find labels such as "Asperger's Syndrome", "High Functioning Autism" and "Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified" (PDD-NOS). At the other end of the spectrum you may find labels such as "Autism", "Classic Autism" and "Kanner Autism".

We believe that a diagnosis of AUTISM should be a starting point, prompting health professionals to investigate further and initiate assessment and treatment of the possible underlying causes.

Investigation and treatment of Biological, Nutritional and Metabolic factors have led to improvement of symptoms or complete resolution of symptoms in a multitude of Children with Autism worldwide. Autism is treatable and recovery possible (at least in some children).

*Autism research Institute, Defeat Autism Now (DAN) California*

The following is the list of criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). Parents are urged to seek professional advise and not to self-diagnose the disorder in their children. It requires considerable experience and training to become competent at making a diagnosis. Please call the clinic for advice.

**A total of six (or more) items from the three domains, with at least two affecting social interactions and one each affecting communication and stereotypical behaviours.**

### **Social interaction domain**

- marked impairment in the use of multiple non-verbal behaviours such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction

- failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
- lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g., by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest)
- lack of social or emotional reciprocity

**Communication domain as manifested by at least one of the following:**

- delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gesture or mime)
- in individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others.
- stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language
- lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level

**Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following:**

- encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus
- apparently inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals
- stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g., hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements)
- persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

**Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3 years:**

- social interaction,
- language as used in social communication, or
- symbolic or imaginative play (role playing or pretending)

The disturbance is not better accounted for by [Retts Disorder](#) or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder