

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Tip Sheet

## What is ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disorder in which communication and behavior are impaired. Children with ASD have difficulty communicating and interacting with others. They have restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. These difficulties impair the child's ability to function effectively at home and in the community. Children with ASD experience a variety of behaviors, varying in severity, which is why it is considered a spectrum disorder.

## Communication:

- Minimal, inconsistent eye contact
- Doesn't exhibit shared excitement
- Slow to respond to cues seeking their attention, including using their name
- Difficulty with reciprocal conversation
- Talking in great detail about preferred topics, without gauging the receiver's interest
- Inconsistent expression and hand gestures
- Difficulty understanding another person's point of view

## Behavior:

- Repeating behaviors or phrases
- Intense, long-term interest in specific topics
- Very upset by slight changes in routines
- Over-sensitive or under-sensitive to sensory stimuli

## How can I help?

1. Be consistent
2. Stick to a consistent routine
3. Reward good behavior—go out of your way to identify it
4. Create a safe space—a place the child can go to when they are dysregulated
5. Understand that tantrums are often the result of the inability to communicate effectively
6. Pay attention to the child's sensory needs and initiate breaks if you see the child becoming dysregulated
7. Demonstrate what you want the child to do, using as few words as possible
8. Give directions in short segments
9. Use intense interest as motivation to get the child to comply
10. Teach a child in multiple settings so they can generalize the skill to different environments

## Sources:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/autism-learning-disabilities/helping-your-child-with-autism-thrive.htm>

<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/Teaching-Tips-for-Children-and-Adults-with-Autism>