



Autism

What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. This can lead to a variety of educational, behavioural, social and other related difficulties.

What difficulties might children with autism encounter?

- children with autism understand language and social situations differently so they may behave in ways which others find unpredictable
- they are likely to be extremely anxious in unfamiliar situations
- they may have fixed interests or exhibit repetitive behaviour
- they not have creative play skills
- they may have difficulty with flexible and creative thinking
- they may experience problems transferring skills from one setting to another
- they may have difficulties making transitions

Children may have some of these difficulties or they may exhibit all of these difficulties. Each individual child's experience is very different.

How can you help at home?

- be consistent - creating consistency in your child's environment is the best way to reinforce learning and deal with challenging behaviours
- stick to a schedule and maintain routine - try to keep disruptions to this routine to a minimum. If there is an unavoidable change to the routine, prepare your child for it in advance.
- reward good behaviour as positive reinforcement can be very effective for children with autism
- be aware of your child's sensory sensitivities. If you understand what affects your child, you'll be better at solving problems and creating successful experiences.
- work out the motivation behind the tantrums. When children with ASD act out, this is often because nonverbal cues are being ignored, so throwing a tantrum is their way of communicating frustration and getting attention.

Useful website

www.autism.org.uk