

How do I know if my child has an autism spectrum disorder?

Although ASD presents as a range of severity of symptoms, there are three major categories of signs. The first set relates to problems with socialization. Individuals with ASDs have difficulty interacting with other people and often are uninterested in or have difficulty with common childhood social interactions (for example, cuddling or playing interactive games).

The second set of symptoms relates to problems with communication. For example, some individuals with ASDs use only a few words and have trouble learning more words. Others have incredible vocabularies but have a very literal interpretation of language and great difficulty maintaining conversation.

The third set of symptoms includes odd or repetitive behaviors. Children may insist on certain routines or patterns in everyday life or want to play with toys in atypical ways (for example, spinning the wheels of a toy car rather than “driving” it). Individuals with ASDs often have a great desire for predictability and consistency in their daily routines or the organization of their possessions. Some individuals with ASD may flap their hands or rock back and forth.

The American Psychiatric Association has proposed changes which will impact how autism is diagnosed. [Click here](#) to read a summary of these changes.