

Referrals:

- The Diagnostic Team accepts referrals from parents and professionals. A *written* referral is required – telephone referrals are not accepted. A guideline on the information that is useful in a referral is attached. Referrals are also accepted from adults who wish to refer themselves for assessment.
- Letters acknowledging that a referral has been received are sent to parents and, where necessary, the referring person. Included with the letter to parents/caregivers is a consent form that must be signed by both parents to allow Autism SA to undertake an assessment. Appropriate consent must be obtained prior to any appointments being made. If an adult has been referred by another person (e.g. partner, parent, support worker) consent must be obtained from the adult before a diagnostic assessment can be conducted.

Appointments:

- Parents/Caregivers are notified in writing when an appointment is made. Included with this letter is a questionnaire that is used to gather information regarding their child's behaviours and interactions at their educational setting. Parents/caregivers are asked to give the questionnaire to the child's teacher or a relevant adult who they feel knows their child well, to complete and forward to Autism SA. Although the questionnaire gives the Diagnostic Team important additional information regarding the child they are assessing, parents/caregivers are not required to have the questionnaire completed. Adults who have been referred are also notified in writing when an appointment for their assessment has been made.

Assessment Procedure:

- All assessments take place at the Autism SA. A standard assessment usually takes 1 – 1 ½ hours. One member of the Diagnostic Team conducts a play/activity based assessment with the child in a large room full of toys and games. With the consent of the parents/caregivers, this assessment is videoed. Another team member interviews the parents/caregivers and records the child's developmental history. At the conclusion of the assessment and interview, a time is organised to meet with the parents/caregivers to discuss the outcome of the assessment.
- The members of the team then watch the video of the assessment and review all the available information concerning the child (e.g. the developmental history, accompanying reports, school questionnaire). This information is then examined against the relevant diagnostic criteria for autism or Asperger syndrome. This procedure usually takes about 2 hours, during which time the parents/caregivers and child are not required to be in attendance.

- The members of the team then meet with the parents/caregivers to discuss the outcome of the diagnostic assessment, and, if appropriate, support and services from Autism SA.
- If a child has already been diagnosed as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder by a professional in private practice with acknowledged expertise in the diagnosis of autism and Asperger syndrome, the standard assessment process is not required. While the process for accepting the referral and organising an appointment are the same, the assessment process does not require the involvement of two team members. In order to confirm the diagnosis, one member meets with the family and gathers additional information not covered in the report(s) received from the private professional and spends time interacting with the child. They then meet with the parents/caregivers to discuss the outcome of the assessment, and, if appropriate, support and services from Autism SA.
- For both standard assessments and 'confirmation' assessments, a report is written in the two weeks following the assessment and sent to the parents/caregivers, and, if necessary, the referring person. Copies of the report can be forwarded to additional people if requested by the parents/caregivers and if a "Consent to Release/Disclose Information" form is completed.

Assessments of Adults

- Prior to the assessment taking place Adults are sent a questionnaire to complete seeking information regarding their early development and current presentation; a questionnaire for family members to complete is also available. Adults are then assessed by way of a conversation based assessment conducted with the adult and two members of the diagnostic team. Individuals being assessed are welcome to bring other people with them to the assessment (e.g. parents, spouse, friend, support worker).
- A report is written in the two weeks following the assessment and sent to the individual, and, if necessary, the referring person. Copies of the report can be forwarded to additional people if requested by the individual and if a "Consent to Release/Disclose Information" form is completed.

For further information, please contact:

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