

Autism SA's

# GUIDE TO SERVICES & SUPPORT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Post-diagnostic information for individuals and families



Version 1: Sept 2014

# ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is a guide for individuals, parents and carers, to provide information on available supports and services for Autism Spectrum Disorder in South Australia. This is a resource for you to refer to after your initial consultation with Autism SA staff.

The agencies and services listed in this document are a starting point for families and individuals accessing services. They are not necessarily recommended by Autism SA.

Details were correct as at August 2014. For most current details it is recommended that the specific service provider is contacted directly.

This guide has been produced as a reference only and is not intended to replace the advice of a health professional.

If you would like further information about services please phone Autism SA Info Line on 1300 288 476

For further information about Autism Spectrum Disorder and seeking an assessment, please ask for a copy of the Autism SA publication: "Could it be Autism Spectrum Disorder? – A guide to seeking an assessment for ASD in South Australia".

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# KEY ORGANISATIONS FOR ASD SERVICES AND SUPPORT

## IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### *Autism SA*

Autism SA is a diverse organisation with extensive experience and knowledge of the Autism Spectrum in relation to education, respite, community, early intervention and clinical sectors. Autism SA has taken a lead role in providing services to individuals with a National Disability Insurance Scheme Plan.

[www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

Email: [admin@autismsa.org.au](mailto:admin@autismsa.org.au)

Phone: (08) 8379 6976

Info Line: 1300 AUTISM

(1300 288 476)

### *Disability SA and Disability Services*

Disability SA is the state government organisation that has the mandate to support all people with a disability. They lead strategic planning, policy development and community support services for the disability sector in South Australia. The Disability Services arm of Disability SA provides a state-wide range of specialist disability services to children and adults with disability, their families and carers.

[www.sa.gov.au/topics/community-support/disability](http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/community-support/disability)

Phone: 1300 786 117

(for information or referrals)

## NATIONAL

### *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)*

Previously DisabilityCare Australia, the NDIS provides support to people with disability through individual funding. Contact them directly to see if you are eligible.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 800 110

## OTHER AUTISM ASSOCIATIONS

### *Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)*

[www.autismspectrum.org.au](http://www.autismspectrum.org.au)

Email: [contact@autismspectrum.org.au](mailto:contact@autismspectrum.org.au)

Phone: 1800 ASPECT  
(1800 277 328)

### *Autism Asperger ACT*

[www.autismaspergeract.com.au](http://www.autismaspergeract.com.au)

Email: [info@autismaspergeract.com.au](mailto:info@autismaspergeract.com.au)

Phone: (02) 6176 0514

### *Autism Northern Territory*

[www.autismnt.com.au](http://www.autismnt.com.au)

Email: [autismnt@autismnt.org.au](mailto:autismnt@autismnt.org.au)

Phone: (08) 89484424

### *Autism Queensland*

[www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)

Email: [admin@autismqld.com.au](mailto:admin@autismqld.com.au)

Phone: (07) 3273 0000

### *Autism Tasmania*

[www.autismtas.org.au](http://www.autismtas.org.au)

Email: [admin@autismtas.org.au](mailto:admin@autismtas.org.au)

Phone: Hobart (03) 6278 9985  
Launceston (03) 6344 1212

### *Amaze (Autism Victoria)*

[www.amaze.org.au](http://www.amaze.org.au)

Email: [info@amaze.org.au](mailto:info@amaze.org.au)

Phone: 1300 308 699

### *Autism Association of Western Australia*

[www.autism.org.au](http://www.autism.org.au)

Email: [autismwa@autism.org.au](mailto:autismwa@autism.org.au)

Phone: (08) 9489 8900



# UNDERSTANDING ASD

## WHAT IS ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a term used to describe a lifelong condition that affects the development of an individual across their lifespan.

Social communication, social interaction and restricted, repetitive behaviours are the main areas of development affected.

The term ‘spectrum’ is used to indicate that no two people with ASD are the same. The differences depend on combinations of social ability, communication level, cognitive ability, age, personality and many other factors.

The behaviours listed in the table below are examples of characteristics of ASD. No single characteristic defines ASD, nor are all of these characteristics evident. An individual with ASD will display a complex pattern of behaviours and interactions that impacts on their everyday functioning across a range of areas.

EXAMPLES OF CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD	
Please note, not all people will have these characteristics.	
Social communication and social interaction	Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Differences in eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures</li><li>• Differences in speech and language development</li><li>• Differences in speech content and quality</li><li>• Repeats words and phrases back without understanding (echolalia)</li><li>• Difficulties using and understanding nonverbal communication and body language</li><li>• Repetitive use of words or phrases and unusual speech patterns</li><li>• Difficulty initiating or sustaining conversation</li><li>• Does not easily understand or talk about feelings</li><li>• Literal understanding of what people say</li><li>• Differences in the development of play activities, particularly imaginative play</li><li>• May prefer to be alone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May fixate on talking about one topic</li><li>• Resistance to change and transitions, persistent with following same rules and routines</li><li>• Fascination with parts of objects or with repetitive movement e.g. spinning fan</li><li>• Fascination with the pattern something makes e.g. moving water, certain sounds or numbers</li><li>• Repetitive body movements e.g. hand flapping, rocking</li><li>• Narrow, restricted interests e.g. maps, trains or memorising sports statistics</li><li>• Uneven development of gross and fine motor skills</li><li>• Differences in posture e.g. toe walking</li><li>• Experiences sensory processing difficulties e.g. reacts unusually to sights, smells, sounds, tastes or textures.</li></ul>

## PERSONAL STRENGTHS THAT MAY ACCOMPANY ASD

Just as individuals with ASD experience a variety of difficulties, they may also have some distinctive strengths. These strengths can also be seen in individuals not on the autism spectrum and are not part of the diagnostic criteria for ASD.

Some of the strengths that individuals with ASD have may include\*:

- Ability to understand and adhere to concrete concepts, rules and sequences
- Strong long term memory skills
- Math skills
- Science skills
- Computer skills
- Musical ability
- Artistic ability
- Ability to think in a visual way
- Ability to decode written language at an early age (This ability is called Hyperlexia. Some children with autism can decode written language earlier than they can comprehend written language.)
- Honesty – sometimes to a fault
- Ability to be extremely focused – if they are working on a preferred activity
- Excellent sense of direction

\* Adapted from Sally Ozonoff, Geraldine Dawson and James McPartland's, A Parent's Guide to Asperger's Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism, 2002.



# UNDERSTANDING ASD

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

People with ASD often find understanding and relating to other people challenging and anxiety provoking.

Understanding the difficulties of an individual with ASD is important, especially if you are going to be interacting with them regularly.

The following summary table of characteristics of ASD and provides suggestions for strategies for interacting with the person with ASD. The table has been adapted from the Australian Advisory Board on ASD's guide to Supporting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES		
	Characteristic of ASD:	Strategies for ASD:
Behaviour and Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty interacting appropriately with others because they may not understand the rules of social behaviour.</li><li>• Engage in challenging behaviour.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency, predictability and structure.</li><li>• Always explain what you are going to do and if possible, present information visually as well as verbally to aid understanding.</li><li>• For example, making a visual schedule of the day's activities or giving a map of where you are going can be reassuring.</li><li>• Provide support and reassurance and understand that anxiety can cause extreme reactions to what seems like a minor event.</li></ul>
Cognitive Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have varying degrees of cognitive capacity. Some may have an intellectual disability (or intellectual impairment) while some may have average or above average cognitive ability.</li><li>• It is characteristic of ASD that there will be an uneven IQ profile regardless of the level of intellectual functioning.</li><li>• Have difficulty learning new tasks or understanding instructions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand the learning style and capabilities of the individual that you are working with. For example, some people with ASD may learn better when material is presented visually, whereas others may process auditory information more successfully.</li><li>• Always provide continuous positive reinforcement</li><li>• Provide clear, simple instructions to reduce stress, confusion and frustration.</li></ul>



## CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

	Characteristic of ASD:	Strategies for ASD:
Sensory Stimuli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-responsiveness: People with ASD can find some forms of sensory input uncomfortable or distressing. For example some people with ASD may react negatively to loud noises, bright lights, someone touching them unexpectedly, or strong smells.</li> <li>• Under-responsiveness: Sometimes people with ASD do not respond to input as much as others seem to. For example, they may not notice someone speaking to them, or may not seem to notice painful events or extreme temperatures.</li> <li>• Sensory-seeking. Some people with ASD appear to crave particular sensations, such as touching or mouthing objects, body-rocking, humming to themselves, or watching patterns of light. The person may use these sensations to “block out” other sensations that they find distressing. They may also engage in sensory seeking behaviours to help calm themselves when they are feeling anxious. They may also seek some sensations because they enjoy them.</li> <li>• Sensory-avoiding. Examples include: not wearing shoes, dislikes having people too close, water on face, brushing teeth or complains about smells.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify the environment wherever possible and be watchful for sensory issues. For example, try to avoid too much extraneous sensory input such as background noise, visual clutter or crowding.</li> <li>• It may be helpful to offer a quiet space or quiet time where individuals can go and relax and escape from the general environment if they need to.</li> <li>• Enable access to appropriate sensory stimulus.</li> <li>• Consider seeking support from an Occupational Therapist.</li> </ul>



# UNDERSTANDING ASD

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASD AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES		
	Characteristic of ASD:	Strategies for ASD:
Communication	Use and understanding of nonverbal behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poorly integrated verbal and nonverbal communication</li><li>• Differences in eye contact and body-language</li><li>• Unusual vocal quality (i.e. difference in voice pitch, intonation, volume rhythm or stress).</li><li>• May not understand other people have different interests to theirs</li><li>• May not understand how to use language and other communication methods as a way to interact socially</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use clear and simple language.</li><li>• Leave pauses and waiting time in between sentences and phrases to allow individuals with language difficulties to process the information.</li><li>• Communicate one idea at a time by breaking up ideas into sentences with pauses in between.</li><li>• List tasks in sequential order and support with visual information to allow for tasks to be processed more easily.</li><li>• State your message clearly and avoid language that may imply meaning.</li><li>• Avoid ambiguous language such as metaphors, similes and idioms as these can be taken literally.</li><li>• Avoid giving instructions by asking a question (e.g. "please set the table" instead of "can you set the table?").</li><li>• Speak in a normal tone of voice using normal intonation and volume, slightly slower speed and plenty of pauses.</li><li>• Give specific choices and limit open ended questions.</li><li>• Use visual aids to support communication such as a pictorial or written checklist of the steps required to complete a task like dressing or toileting, schedules, "first - then" cards.</li></ul>
	Delay in speech development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expressive, receptive language delays and/or disorder</li><li>• Understanding receptive language often more delayed than expression</li><li>• Disordered sentence structure</li><li>• Difficulty understanding and using complex sentences</li><li>• May repeat last part of sentence or question</li><li>• Tends to have a literal understanding of what is said</li><li>• Difficulty with understanding and use of language concepts (i.e. time, direction, emotion)</li><li>• May become overwhelmed with too much verbal direction.</li></ul>	
	Stereotyped or idiosyncratic language use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May echo what others say without understanding</li><li>• Use of rote or learnt phrases – echolalia</li><li>• Unusual voice pitch, intonation, volume rhythm or stress.</li><li>• Misuse of pronouns</li><li>• May have extensive vocabulary, but not appropriate to social context</li></ul>	

## AUTISM SA SERVICES

The diagram below provides an overview of services and support provided by Autism SA.



# FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS AND ALLOWANCES

## FEDERAL (NATIONAL) FUNDING

### NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)

From 1 July 2013, Australia's current disability support system for people living with disability is being progressively replaced with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

NDIS began in South Australia on 1 July 2013, and will be fully operational from 2018-2019. The scheme will be administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), formerly called DisabilityCare Australia.

Children up to the age of 14 will be able to request access to the scheme in the first three years. There then will be a two-year transition period to the full scheme. All eligible people with disability will be covered from 2018-2019.

The NDIS timeline for South Australia is:

- 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 - children from birth to five years
- 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 - children from birth to 13 years
- 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 - children from birth to 14 years
- 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018 - transition to full scheme
- 2018-2019 - full scheme

To be eligible for NDIS after July 2016, people must:

- be under 65 years of age when they acquire their disability
- meet residency requirements
- have a disability or a psychiatric disability that is attributable to a permanent impairment that results in substantially reduced functional capacity.

NDIS will provide reasonable and necessary supports for eligible people, and there will be a special focus on intensive early intervention.

Each person's circumstances will be assessed, and funding amounts from NDIA will vary depending on:

- their current situation
- their needs that are not being met
- how much support they get from family.

People with disability will have their own individualised funding and personal budgets. NDIS will allow more flexibility to choose how and when supports are provided, and enable people to choose their service provider.

NDIS considers a person's care and support needs over their lifetime. Many people will continue to receive familiar support such as therapy, respite, equipment, supported accommodation and personal assistance. People with disability, and their families and carers, will also be given the opportunity to discuss challenges they face in their daily lives, which may lead to new types of support.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 800 110

## MEDICARE

There are a number of Medicare rebates available for therapy. These rebates do not cover the entire fee and usually you will be required to pay the full amount then make a claim to Medicare for the rebate.

Medicare items can be used in conjunction with National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding.

For more information on Medicare initiatives please:

- call Medicare on 132 011
- email on [medicare@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:medicare@humanservices.gov.au), or
- go to the Medicare website at [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/medicare](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/medicare)

MEDICARE PROGRAMS				
Name of the Program	Who can use the Program	How many times can I use the Program?	Who do I need to speak to?	Which private services can I use?
Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan (formerly Enhanced Primary Care Plan)	Any age	5 therapy sessions in total every year	GP (local doctor)	Speech pathologist; Occupational Therapist (OT); Psychologist; Physiotherapist; Dietician; Aboriginal Health Worker; Audiologist Chiropractor; Diabetes Educator; Exercise Physiologist; Osteopath; Podiatrist.
Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan	Any age	10 individual therapy sessions and 10 group therapy sessions in total every year	GP (local doctor)	Occupational Therapist (OT); Psychologist; Social Worker.

# FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS AND ALLOWANCES

## CENTRELINK

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### CARER ALLOWANCE

You may be eligible for financial assistance from Centrelink. This includes the Carer Allowance (Child or Adult), which your doctor will help you access. There is also an annual lump sum payment for people who receive the Carer Allowance called the Child Disability Assistance Payment. These payments are not means tested.

### CARER PAYMENT

If you cannot support yourself through paid employment due to the demands of your caring role, you may be eligible for the Carer Payment (Child or Adult). This payment is income and assets tested, and takes into account family income.

For more information, visit [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or phone 132 717.

### HEALTH CARE CARD

If you are receiving the Carer Allowance, your child will have a Health Care Card. If you are on other benefits you may also hold a Health Care Card in your name. The Health Care Card allows you access to cheaper medicines and other concessions such as discounted public transport for some cardholders, bulk billing by selected doctors, and higher refunds through the Medicare safety net.

## OTHER

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### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO HELP GET A JOB

The Australian Government Department of Human Services provides support if you have a disability, illness or injury to find and keep a job. There is financial support available to help you work, study or do other approved activities. They also provide free information and job search services to help you while you are looking for work.

For further information go to: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/disabled-ill-or-injured-and-looking-for-work](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/disabled-ill-or-injured-and-looking-for-work)

### DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

The Disability Support Pension provides financial support for eligible people aged 16 years and over who have a physical, intellectual or psychiatric condition that prevents them from working.

For further information go to: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pensionSouth Australian](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pensionSouth Australian)

## STATE FUNDING

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PACKAGES PROGRAM

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An Individual Support Package is Disability Services funding that has been allocated to a person for assistance with meeting their disability support needs. The funds may be used to buy a range of supports chosen by the person to help achieve their goals. This may include individually delivered supports and/or group based supports such as a day service.

South Australia's individualised funding will help people prepare for the NDIS. The funding is currently being offered to people receiving more than six hours of disability support each week.

Please contact NDIS, Disability SA or Autism SA's Info Line for further information.



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

The agencies and services listed in this document are a starting point for families and individuals accessing services in South Australia. They are not necessarily recommended by Autism SA.

For most up-to-date details it is recommended that the specific service provider is contacted directly.

If you would like information about services in addition to the ones listed below, please contact the service providers directly or phone the Autism SA Info Line on 1300 288 476.

## TAILORED SUPPORT PACKAGES

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This service provides support that is tailored to people's individual requirements and helps them to live as independently as possible. Every package is unique and person-centred - focussing on the needs, wishes and aspirations of each person to help build their confidence and develop independence in all aspects of their life. Support can be long-term or short-term depending on each person's needs and may be offered to people in their family home, the community, a university, college or other educational setting, or supported living accommodation.

Tailored support packages may include support with goal-setting, support with general issues relating to ASD, support to maintain relationships with family and friends, strategies to keep safe or opportunities to go out and about in the community. Funding for these services can come from a variety of sources which may include Disability SA or the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Please contact Autism SA's Info Line for further information.



## INTERVENTION AND THERAPY

Individuals with ASD often present with a range of difficulties or needs across a number of areas. It can be a challenge to prioritise needs and decide which types of therapy to access. There are many different therapies available for individuals with ASD. Some of the most common are speech therapy, occupational therapy and psychology.

Therapy can take place in many contexts; clinic, schools, community setting, at home. Whilst engaging in therapy the individual and family may be given 'homework' to complete outside of the therapy sessions, or some ideas to try during every-day activities.

### CHOOSING A THERAPY

It is important to choose a therapy that is relevant for the individual. This can be difficult when an individual and family are starting on their therapy journey. A good place to start is to seek the advice of the professional that diagnosed the individual.

It is important for the individual and family to understand the types of therapy available and the skills that different therapists work on.

When selecting an intervention and therapist it is helpful to consider the following points:

- Does the therapy target the areas that are a priority for the individual and family?
- Does the therapist suit the needs and personality of the individual and family?
- How much time is the family expected to dedicate to the therapy each week (some therapies will have minimum hourly requirements)?
- What is the evidence for the therapy (see the Evidence Based Approach section below)?

An excellent resource to refer to when starting on the therapy journey has been developed by Amaze (Autism Victoria) through funding provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

This will assist families of young children with ASD to understand the therapy process, determine the needs of the individual, and maximise the benefits of therapy:

[www.therapy.amaze.org.au](http://www.therapy.amaze.org.au)

There are regulatory bodies that govern the practice of therapists. Autism SA requires therapists to be registered with their regulatory body where appropriate. These organisations are as follows:

#### **Occupational Therapy Australia (SA Branch)**

Australia wide directory of Occupational Therapists.

[www.otaus.com.au](http://www.otaus.com.au)

Phone: 8332 6600

#### **Speech Pathology Australia (SA Branch)**

Australia wide directory of Speech Therapists

[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

Phone: 8332 6600

#### **Australian Psychological Society**

Australia wide directory of Psychologists, information and fact sheets.

[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)

Phone: 1800 333 497



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

There are many and varied treatments and interventions available for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Making the decision about the most effective treatment or intervention for each individual can be a difficult task. When making these decisions, it is important to:

- consider whether the treatment or intervention under consideration has scientific evidence of effectiveness with individuals on the autism spectrum, and
- ensure that the individual's characteristics and individual support needs are taken into consideration.

This process is referred to as evidence-based practice. According to the National Autism Centre (2009), evidence-based practice has four critical components:

**Research Findings** - The strength of evidence ratings for all treatments being considered must be known. Consideration must be given to the benefits of established treatments.

**Professional Judgment** - The judgment of professionals with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder must be taken into consideration. Professionals also have a responsibility to determine the effectiveness of treatment for an individual on an ongoing basis.

**Values and Preferences** - The values and preferences of parents, care providers and the individual with ASD should be considered.

**Capacity** - Treatment providers should be well positioned to correctly implement the intervention. This includes having proper training, adequate resources, mechanisms for feedback and inbuilt sustainability.

There are a number of resources available to help people make decisions about appropriate evidence-based treatments or interventions for an individual with ASD. These resources explore treatments with an established evidence base, treatments with an emerging or promising evidence base and treatments that are not established or even ineffective or harmful.

There are also guidelines that provide professionals with decision making support and information about how to implement treatments or interventions in a range of settings and with a range of age groups.

In using evidence-based practice, professionals, parents and individuals working together as a team can ensure the best possible outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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The following resources are designed to support evidence-based practice:

- Prior M, Roberts J.M.A, Rodger S and Williams K. (July 2011). A Review of the Research to Identify the Most Effective Models of Practice in Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australia.
- National Autism Center (2011). A Parent's Guide to Evidence-Based Practice and Autism. National Autism Centre, Massachusetts. [http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/pdf/nac\\_parent\\_manual.pdf](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/pdf/nac_parent_manual.pdf)
- Positive Partnerships [www.positivepartnerships.com.au](http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au)
- Raising Children Network: Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## PRESCHOOL

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### PLAYGROUP

Playgroups are an opportunity for children to develop play and interaction skills. Usually parents are required to remain with the child and supervise their play.

#### Playgroup Association

The Playgroup Association has a register of South Australian playgroups and can direct you to your nearest group. The Playgroup Association also coordinates PlayConnect Playgroups for families who have a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

[www.playgroupaustralia.com.au](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au)

Phone: 8346 2722 or

Free Call: 1800 171 882

### CHILDCARE & KINDERGARTEN

There are a number of services that assist children with additional needs in the child care and kindergarten setting. They include:

#### The Daphne Street Child Care and Specialist Early Learning Centre

This Centre is an Autism Specific Early Learning & Care Centre. Enrolment enquiries should be directed to Manager, Anglicare SA. Email: [daphneadmin@anglicare-sa.org.au](mailto:daphneadmin@anglicare-sa.org.au)  
Phone: 8269 8688.

#### Briars Early Learning Centre, Department for Education and Child Development

The Briars Early Learning Centre offers a preschool experience for children with disabilities and significant developmental delay.  
[www.thebriarsselc.sa.edu.au](http://www.thebriarsselc.sa.edu.au)  
Phone: 8365 9808

### Early Learning Program, Department for Education and Child Development

The Early Learning Program is a developmental home-based program that assists parents of children aged 2-4 years to support their child's development.  
Phone: 8207 2497

#### Autism SA - Intake and Early Childhood Consultants

Autism SA Intake & Early Childhood Consultants may assist children at home and at preschool/ kindergarten. The Consultants can provide programming ideas and recommendations to preschool/ kindergarten staff to assist with the inclusion of children with ASD.

A staff member from your child's preschool/kindergarten will need to complete an online request for service form to request consultancy support from the Intake and Early Childhood Consultants. The request for service form is available from the Autism SA website:

[www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

## **Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs)**

Funded by the Australian Government, Inclusion Support Agencies work at a local level with child care and early learning services to provide practical advice and support to assist services to build their capacity and to access training. The ISA may also recommend that services access resources to better facilitate a child's inclusion in a service. This support may also be provided to children attending outside-school-hours-care and vacation care.

The Inclusion Support Subsidy is also available to contribute to the cost of an additional child care educator/carer for services with a child or children with ongoing high support needs, or a capacity payment in recognition of the impact on the educator/carer. Inclusion Support Subsidy is paid to child care and early learning services as a contribution towards the costs associated with including a child or children with ongoing high support needs.

The two Inclusion Support Agencies in South Australia are:

### **Inclusive Directions Incorporated – (Metropolitan Adelaide, Mount Lofty Ranges, Riverland, South East SA, Kangaroo Island)**

Offer individual assistance to children, coaching for staff, and support to families to build their skills and networks. Advocate for and support strong communities through programs, services and training.

[www.directions.org.au](http://www.directions.org.au)

Phone: (08) 8165 2900

Email: [info@directions.org.au](mailto:info@directions.org.au)

### **Novita Children's Services Incorporated – (NW Country, Flinders Ranges, Yorke Peninsula)**

Novita provides child development, rehabilitation and disability services, as well as support for their families and carers.

[www.novita.org.au](http://www.novita.org.au)

Phone: (08) 8243 8243

Email: [inclusion@novita.org.au](mailto:inclusion@novita.org.au)

## **FOUNDATION SKILLS GROUP**

Autism SA provides an early childhood trans-disciplinary group to develop interaction between children with a focus on emerging language and communication, social interaction, emotional regulation (building tolerance), age appropriate social skills, friendship and play skills including developing and enhancing fine and gross motor skills.

The Foundation Skills Group focuses on the development of social, communication, life, independence and play skills within a trans-disciplinary program. The aim is to maximise and enhance development utilising a range of therapeutic interventions and strategies. The group includes a Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Developmental Educator. The Foundation Skills Group is based in Salisbury East.

The Foundation Skills Group is available for children aged from 3.5 years until the child starts school. (Children are generally offered a placement of up to two terms.) There is no cost for participants but waiting times may exist. For further details please contact Autism SA's Early Intervention and Clinic Services on 8462 0656.

# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## SCHOOL EDUCATION

### CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Choosing the right school for your child can be challenging and will largely depend on your child's needs. There are many things to take into consideration, and collecting information about the options available to you is the first step. It is recommended that you start this process as early as possible. Information can be gathered from web resources, books, other parents, Family Support Groups, teachers, schools and service providers. It is important to remember that, while consulting others can be helpful, you are the person who knows your child the best and the decision is yours to make.

When choosing a school it is important to ask as many questions as you need and have a good line of communication between home and school. Try to find out if the school has opportunities for individualised support for your child, and if they have previous experience supporting children with ASD. It is important to be honest in relation to the needs of your child to ensure the appropriate planning and training can take place and to avoid misunderstanding in the years to come.

Autism SA has a brochure 'Working through the Schooling Maze' which may assist parents/caregivers when considering a school environment for their child. It can be accessed on the Autism SA website [www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au) or by calling Info Line on 1300 288 476.

### SCHOOLING OPTIONS

Each state and territory education system offers different types of support for students with special needs. Speaking to your child's teacher or administration staff at the school such as the principal or deputy principal is often the first step to finding out if your child may be eligible for extra support. Support offered will also depend on whether your child attends a government or non-government school. Different types of support may be available for your child and this is dependent on a number of factors including area, type or severity of the disability, age and educational system.

Schooling options for children with ASD in South Australia are described below.

#### **Mainstream School (Government, Independent, Catholic)**

Many children with ASD attend a mainstream school. Some may be fully integrated and attend regular classes full time, while others may only attend part time and will participate in support classes within the mainstream school. Every child has the right to attend their local school regardless of their level of need. Some children with ASD may be eligible for funding to assist with teaching and learning adjustments. Often this funding is used to employ an education assistant or teacher aide for the child. However, schools may use this funding to provide other supports.

#### **Special Class or Special Unit within a Mainstream School**

Many students with ASD attend a special class within a mainstream school. These classes may also include students with a variety of other disabilities. These classes are smaller and consist of a teacher and a school support officer with special education experience. Places within these settings are highly sought after with limited places available. Places are subject to a DECD Special Options Process which takes place in terms 2 and 3 each year for places the following year.

### Special Schools

Special Schools cater to students with an intellectual disability, and they may have a range of additional difficulties like Down Syndrome, ASD, physical disabilities and high medical needs. Classes are smaller than in mainstream and have a higher teacher to student ratio. Entry is via the DECD 'Special Options Process' mentioned above.

### Autism Specific Schools

Treetop Autism Specific School - a school for students with autism spectrum disorder - is due to open in South Australia in 2015. It will possibly be based on the current site of the (now relocated) Ashford Special School. For more information call Flora Christou on 0402 363 868 or email [treetop.autismschool@gmail.com](mailto:treetop.autismschool@gmail.com).

### Autism Intervention Programs

The program is for children/students who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and have verbal and non-verbal cognitive abilities within the average range or above.

The Autism Intervention Program (Blackwood and Modbury) provides a short-term program of up to four terms for children in the Preschool program and up to eight terms for primary and secondary students with transition back to the local school determined on completion of negotiated set goals.

The program provides an intensive and individualised program that focuses on key areas of challenge for children/students living with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's including the development of:

- Communication skills and understanding instructions
- Social skills (and the maintenance of friendships and understanding other's non-verbal communications)
- Management of restricted patterns of behaviour, including repetitive behaviours

Please note that eligibility criteria apply. For further information please contact Ann Connell-Program Leader on 8226 9930 or visit [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced/pages/autism](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced/pages/autism)

### Home Schooling and Distance Education

Home schooling is often the last resort for parents if they feel that attendance at any kind of school has not been successful. Children with ASD often face significant academic pressures, or may experience social difficulties within a school environment. In these cases, parents may consider home schooling as an option. Parents will be required to undertake an evaluation process to do this and will need to develop a plan to address the key areas of the curriculum. For further information about home schooling in Australia, visit [www.hea.edu.au](http://www.hea.edu.au).

Distance education operates outside of major city areas. Contact the South Australian Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) on 8226 1000 or 1800 088 158 for further information.



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## TRANSITIONS

Transition for an individual with ASD can be stressful and can result in increased anxiety levels. Individuals are expected to use their social skills and communication skills to effectively transition to a new environment, and this can often be difficult for individuals with ASD. Transition planning is essential to assist a smooth transition providing individuals with opportunities to be successful within a new environment.

Preparation is the key when transitioning to a new environment. Strategies that may assist individuals with ASD and their families during transition include:

- Visiting the new environment and meeting some of the new people before the transition. With permission taking photos and developing a social story
- Identifying the individual's strengths and challenges and informing relevant parties who will be involved in the transition
- The use of visual timetables, diaries, maps or wall charts to assist with structure and routine
- Prepare the individual for any transition or changes to the routine if possible
- Identifying a quiet space or safe area where the individual can retreat to if necessary
- Schedule breaks in the learning tasks or after to support students ability to self-regulate
- Using simple, consistent, direct and firm language when discussing transition stages
- Providing choices but ensuring that these are limited so that the individual does not feel overwhelmed
- Relaxation exercises such as deep breathing to reduce stress and anxiety
- Focusing on the positive elements of the transition rather than the negative

For further information and strategies about effective transitioning for individuals with ASD, you can view this under the School heading on this webpage: [www.amaze.org.au/resources](http://www.amaze.org.au/resources). Other information can also be found on many websites dedicated to Autism Spectrum Disorders. See the Useful Websites section at the end of this guide for ideas.



## EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

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Contact details for the three main education providers in South Australia are provided below.

### **Department of Education and Child Development (DECD)**

DECD manages the state school and pre-school system and is also involved in the provision of Child Care services including Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)

[www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)

Phone: 8226 1000 or  
1800 088 158

### **Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA)**

Provides information in relation to Independent schools in South Australia

[www.ais.sa.edu.au](http://www.ais.sa.edu.au)

Phone: 8179 1400

### **Catholic Education Office**

Provides information in relation to Catholic education in South Australia

[www.ceo.adl.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceo.adl.catholic.edu.au)

Phone: 8301 6600



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## EDUCATION SUPPORT AGENCIES

### **Autism SA – School Inclusion Program**

Autism SA's School Inclusion Program is able to provide support to students across all educational sectors (i.e. DECD, AISSA, CESA) across Metropolitan, Greater Adelaide and Country Regions.

The Metropolitan region is serviced as per government boundaries. Each metropolitan region team consists of an Inclusion Consultant and a School Inclusion Facilitator/s, an Occupational Therapist and a Speech Pathologist, who provide support in educational settings. Inclusion Consultants are assigned to Greater Adelaide and Country Regions.

School Inclusion Program services include:

- **General Consultancy:** An assessment of current needs where experienced and qualified School Inclusion Consultants with expertise in the area of ASD provide advice and strategies in collaboration with schools to determine developmental priorities. Recommendations are then made to support individuals with ASD within the educational setting.
- **Intensive Consultancy and individual support:** Skilled School Inclusion Facilitators implement specific skill building programs recommended by the School Inclusion Consultant to address the immediate priorities for students with ASD.

Your child's classroom Teacher, Principal or Special Education Coordinator will need to complete the online request form that can be found on the Autism SA website:

[www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

### **Education Complaint Unit, Department of Education and Child Development**

This service is available to families who have not been able to resolve an issue at the school level.

Phone: 1800 677 435

### **SERU - Special Education Resource Unit, Department of Education and Child Development**

Provides specialised equipment on loan and library and information services

[www.web.seru.sa.edu.au](http://www.web.seru.sa.edu.au)

Phone: 8235 2871

### **Specific Learning Difficulties Association (SPELD)**

Offers support and advice to people with learning difficulties

[www.speld-sa.org.au](http://www.speld-sa.org.au)

Phone: 8431 1655

## OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

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Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) is a facility provided by many schools and recreational groups and may be available at your child's school. A child with ASD, just like any other child, has the right to attend OSHC. If your family is likely to access OSHC, it is important that you discuss this with the school and ask them about what OSHC options are available.

### **Department for Education and Childhood Development (DECD) Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Unit**

The DECD OSHC Unit provides information, advice, support, resources and training and development regarding school age care practices and the effective management of OSHC services across all three schooling sectors including the independent and Catholic sectors. This support is available to OSHC staff, parents, school principals, approved providers, school governing councils, OSHC Advisory Committees, and the local community.

Phone: (08) 8226 6427

Email: [dec.d.oshc@sa.gov.au](mailto:dec.d.oshc@sa.gov.au)

Support for children attending OSCH and Vacation Care may also be available through South Australia's Inclusion Support Agencies (refer listing under Preschool Services).



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## RESPITE

There are a range of respite providers and service models in South Australia offering respite services for people with ASD and to families of children with a disability. Respite provides families and carers with the well-deserved break they need. Eligibility criteria determine whether people with ASD can access these services.

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre is the main point of contact for families searching for respite options within their local area. These centres are run by a wide variety of community organisations in metropolitan, regional and remote areas in Australia.

Examples of respite include in-home care and access to support workers that offer assistance when primary caregivers are taking a break away from their caring role, to provide support/time with other family members or for self-care opportunities. The general public, service providers, general practitioners and other health professionals can access information about respite including costs and eligibility criteria.

To search for a Commonwealth Carelink service in your location, you can search the Online Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Services Directory at: [www9.health.gov.au/ccsd/usr\\_general/gen\\_home.cfm](http://www9.health.gov.au/ccsd/usr_general/gen_home.cfm) or call 1800 052 222.

Or see what is happening locally at [www.carersupport.org.au](http://www.carersupport.org.au) or on 83795777.

Autism SA offers a range of respite opportunities for children and adults.

Autism SA provides weekend respite services from two Variety Respite Houses, one at Craigmore and one at Onkaparinga Hills. Respite provides a planned break for children with disabilities and their families. Priority for the respite service is given to children with challenging behaviours. The houses are specialised facilities and feature individual bedrooms, secure yards, secure kitchens, sensory rooms, large undercover outdoor areas, and playground facilities. Each service supports 4 children at a time, using skilled staff and a fun and structured program.

In addition to the overnight weekend stays, the respite service offers limited day outings during school holidays. Tailored support packages can also be developed to provide respite services to individuals.

Quotes can be provided for tailored respite packages to be purchased. Please contact Autism SA's Info Line 1300 288 476 and you will be directed to the most appropriate person to answer your query.

## POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

There are many options available to assist individuals with finding and maintaining work. There is no one size fits all approach to individuals with ASD. Some people will independently find and maintain employment where as others may require assistance depending on their capabilities. For some, supported employment options may be more appropriate. It is helpful to consult with organisations that specialise in disability employment if you are unsure of the best option.

### DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Disability Employment Service (DES) providers offer a range of services to support individual needs, including:

- help to prepare for work, including training in specific job skills
- job-search support, such as résumé development, training in interview skills, and help in looking for suitable jobs
- support when initially placed into a job, including on-the-job training and co-worker and employer support

- ongoing support in a job if required
- the purchase of vocational training and other employment-related assistance
- access to help with workplace modifications; support services; and Auslan interpreting in the workplace

More information about Disability Employment Services can be found on the Department of Human Services' website at:

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-employment-services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-employment-services)

To locate Disability Employment Services in your local area use the search directory at:

[www.jobsearch.gov.au/provider/default.aspx](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/provider/default.aspx) or phone: 13 6268.

### NATIONAL DISABILITY COORDINATION OFFICERS (NDCOS)

The role of the NDCOs is to enhance post-secondary education, training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. NDCOs can provide practical assistance and advice to individuals with

disability and their families, education and training providers, as well as employment and community support agencies. Specifically, they aim to improve transitions for people with a disability from their school or community into post-school education, training, and subsequent employment.

In South Australia, there are three Regional Officers based in:

- Region 23: Adelaide, Adelaide West, Adelaide East, Adelaide South
- Region 24: Northern Adelaide, Mt Lofty Ranges, Fleurieu, Kangaroo Island, Murray Mallee, South East
- Region 25: Pt Lincoln, West Coast and Eyre Peninsula, Whyalla, Pt Pirie, Flinders Ranges, Far North (including Pt Augusta), Yorke Peninsula, Lower North, Barossa and Riverland

For contact details, please visit the NDCO SA web page or phone the number below.

[www.adcet.edu.au/Ndco/Sa/](http://www.adcet.edu.au/Ndco/Sa/)  
Phone: 8207 8652



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## GUARDIANSHIP AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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Once an individual turns 18 it is presumed that they have the capacity to make decisions for themselves, regardless of whether they have a disability. If the person is under the age of 18, parents are able to appoint a guardian in their will.

If the individual is unable to manage his or her own affairs, it is possible to have a guardian or financial manager appointed to make decisions on the person's behalf. A financial manager is able to make financial decisions (e.g. paying debts, signing contracts, arranging insurance) and a guardian is able to make decisions on other life issues (e.g. health care, education and training, service provision). Legislation regarding guardianship and financial management is tabled in the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 (SA).

### POWER OF ATTORNEY

Power of attorney is a legal agreement that enables a person to appoint another person as an attorney to take care of financial assets on your behalf if for some reason you are not able to. An attorney is a person who you trust to manage your financial assets in your absence. You are able to appoint an attorney who is able to make decisions about financial matters that will affect your child with a disability if you are no longer able to do this.

A person with a disability is able to appoint an attorney to make decisions on their behalf if they are capable of doing so. In situations where the individual has impaired decision making capacity they are not able to appoint an attorney as they will not have the legal capacity to sign a document.

### WILLS

A will is a legal document that will allow you to outline how you wish your assets to be divided after you die. A will is important for parents with a child with a disability as it provides you with the security to plan for the future support and care of your child. Without a will your assets will be distributed according to state law and will not give consideration to the special needs of your child with a disability.

A lawyer can help you to draw up a will and provide information on what needs to be included. Your will should be regularly reviewed and updated. Finding a lawyer with previous experience in writing wills for families with children who have disabilities is important.

## TRUSTS

A trust is a legal obligation by which a trustee is given the responsibility to look after the assets held in the trust for the benefit of another person or a number of people called the beneficiaries. There are many different types of trusts and can be helpful when looking after the interests of a person with a disability.

A Special Disability Trust can be established by parents and immediate family members to plan for the future care and accommodation needs of a person with a severe disability. To be eligible, the disabled person must meet certain criteria. For more information contact Centrelink's Special Disability Trust Team by phoning 1800 734 750, for the cost of a local call except from mobile and pay phones, or visiting the Special Disability Trusts page on the Department of Human Services' web site at [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/special-disability-trusts](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/special-disability-trusts)

Further information is also available from the Department of Social Services' Planning for the Future booklet available at: [www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/general/planning-for-the-future-people-with-disability-booklet](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/general/planning-for-the-future-people-with-disability-booklet)

More information about Power of Attorney, Wills and Trusts is available from the following agencies:

### The Guardianship Board

The Guardianship Board may have a role when a person is unable to make certain important decisions for themselves due to having a mental incapacity. The Board can make Administration Orders, Guardianship Orders and Orders giving consent to treatment. The Board also hears appeals under the Mental Health Act 2009, and makes orders for involuntary inpatient care and community treatment of people with a mental illness.

[www.guardianshipboard.sa.gov.au](http://www.guardianshipboard.sa.gov.au)

Phone: 08 8368 5600, or for urgent after hours matters 08 8378 3333.  
Tollfree: 1800 800 501 (SA country only)

### The Public Trustee

[www.publictrustee.sa.gov.au](http://www.publictrustee.sa.gov.au)

Phone: (08) 8226 9200 or Tollfree: 1800 673 119 (SA country only)

### The Office of the Public Advocate

[www.opa.sa.gov.au/](http://www.opa.sa.gov.au/)

Phone: (08) 8342 8200 or Toll Free: 1800 066 969 (Country SA)



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## HOUSING / INDEPENDENT LIVING

A range of housing options and support services exist to help people with disabilities access appropriate and affordable housing. These may include:

- Supported affordable rental housing
- Specially adapted, modified homes
- Shared or group accommodation
- Support to live in their own home, or the family home

More information is available from the SA Government website: [www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing-property-and-land/housing-renting-and-letting/specialised-housing-and-support/housing-and-home-assistance/housing-options](http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing-property-and-land/housing-renting-and-letting/specialised-housing-and-support/housing-and-home-assistance/housing-options)

## PUBERTY, HEALTH & WELLBEING

### PUBERTY

Puberty is a confusing time for children and teenagers. Individuals with ASD often take longer to adjust to changes than typically developing children. For an individual with ASD, the physical changes during puberty can be quite out of place with where the person is at in other stages of development, such as communication and social skills.

Prepare early and explain to your child what is happening and what they may expect. There is no way of knowing what age your child will start puberty. As a general rule puberty begins for girls around 10 to 11 years of age and for boys around 11 to 13 years of age. It may be earlier or later depending on a number of factors.

Further reading on puberty and ASD can be found on the Raising Children Network Autism website: [www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/autism\\_spectrum\\_disorder\\_puberty\\_teenagers.html/context/886](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/autism_spectrum_disorder_puberty_teenagers.html/context/886)



## HEALTH & WELLBEING

Addressing the health needs of people with ASD is usually managed by your local GP or Paediatrician. Additionally the Centre for Disability Health (CDH) (Department for Communities and Social Inclusion) specialises in clinical services for people with disability including medical reviews, ordering medical diagnostic tests and recommending treatment options. They can also act as case manager when a number of health professionals are involved. Patients need to be registered with Disability Services to access CDH. The wellbeing of individuals and families is enhanced when they have access to information and services that address their needs. Wellbeing is also linked to being able to exercise choice to engage in a life which is meaningful for that person.

Agencies and support available in South Australia include:

### **Exceptional Needs Unit, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion**

A state-wide program that provides support and advice for people with complex needs, including people with disabilities, mental health conditions and chronic health problems or a combination of these. Phone: 8448 4610

### **SHINE SA (Sexual Health: information, networking & education SA)**

For relationship and sexual health support. Services include clinics, counselling, community and professional education programs, library facilities and resources  
[www.shinesa.org.au](http://www.shinesa.org.au)

Sexual Healthline: 1300 883 793  
Clinical and Counselling appointments and general enquiries: 1300 794 584

### **Community and Regional Health Centres**

Many areas have community or regional health centres that offer a range of health and allied services including speech pathology and occupational therapy. To find out if there is one in your area consult either your council or the Community SA Directory  
[www.sacommunity.org](http://www.sacommunity.org)

### **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

CAMHS deals with a range of emotional and behavioural problems. Services include counselling, inpatient and outpatient care and mental health education.

See the White Pages under SA Health for contact details for the location of your nearest service.

### **Assessment & Crisis Intervention Service**

Mental Health services for adults  
- See the White Pages under SA Health for the nearest location  
Phone: 13 1465  
Emergency Service (All hours)

### **Headspace - Australia's national youth mental health foundation**

A dedicated multi-disciplinary mental health service for young people aged 14 – 24yrs.  
[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

### **MIFSA (Mental Illness Fellowship South Australia)**

MIFSA is a community based, not for profit organisation delivering a range of programs and services for people affected by mental illness, carers and the community.  
[www.mifsa.org](http://www.mifsa.org)  
Phone: 8378 4100  
(Wayville Office)

### **Public Hospitals**

Some hospitals offer therapy services. See the White Pages under Hospitals – Public



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## TRANSPORT

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT – SUBSIDIES & CONCESSIONS**

People with permanent and severe disabilities that limit their ability to use transport independently can apply for the following assistance to travel by taxi or buses, trains and trams:

- Subsidised taxi fares are available for people with permanent and severe disabilities through the South Australian transport subsidy scheme (SATSS).
- For travel on buses, trains and trams, free fares are available for companions with the companion card or the 'plus one free companion' card.
- People who are unable to validate a ticket using on-board equipment due to physical or cognitive impairment can apply for a mobility pass. A mobility pass exempts the holder from having to validate a ticket when travelling on an Adelaide Metro bus, train or tram.

Further information is available from the Government of South Australia's Getting Around with a Disability website at: [www.sa.gov.au](http://www.sa.gov.au)

## DRIVING

For an individual with ASD, obtaining a driver's licence will be dependent on their abilities. There are no specific guidelines surrounding licence requirements for individuals with ASD because each individual presents so differently.

Problems that may affect driving include:

- May be able to demonstrate knowledge of driving rules, but have difficulty in applying them
- Difficulty multi-tasking
- Perception difficulties
- Poor coordination or physical weakness
- History of epilepsy
- Physical impairments to legs, arms, hands or spine that would affect your ability to drive a vehicle

It may be helpful to have an assessment with an occupational therapist to determine the individual's driving capabilities. Some occupational therapists will have undergone additional training in the assessment of driving skills.

Any illness, disease or disability that could affect your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle must be truthfully declared on any application or renewal form for a South Australian driver's licence or learner's permit. You may be required to disclose the diagnosis of ASD as part of these requirements.

For further information see: [www.mylicence.sa.gov.au/road-rules/the-drivers-handbook/obtaining-licence](http://www.mylicence.sa.gov.au/road-rules/the-drivers-handbook/obtaining-licence)

## AUSTRALIAN DISABILITY PARKING SCHEME

The Australian Disability Parking Scheme provides eligible people with a nationally recognised Disability Parking Permit. People with disabilities who meet the criteria will be able to park nearer to their destination with the permit. Often people with an ASD do not meet the criteria for a parking permit.

Further information is available from the "Getting around with a disability" page on the Government of South Australia's website at: [www.sa.gov.au](http://www.sa.gov.au)



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## SOCIAL, SPORT & RECREATION

Community participation for individuals with ASD is beneficial in the growth of social skills, communication skills, health and independence. Autism SA or Disability SA will be able to provide you with information about what is available in your area. Some recreation opportunities may be for all individuals in the community, while some may be ASD or disability specific. Choosing recreation for your child will depend on their interests, your financial situation, transport, individual needs, and availability of groups in your area.

### Companion Card

Companion Card is a card issued to people with a permanent disability who require attendant care support. It allows a companion to enter free of charge to participating venues and activities when accompanying an individual with a permanent disability.

You can apply for a Companion Card if you live in South Australia, you have a significant and permanent disability, due to the impact of your disability you are unable to participate at most community venues and activities without attendant care support and your need for this level of support will be lifelong. More information about the eligibility criteria is available from:

[www.sa.companioncard.asn.au/index.html](http://www.sa.companioncard.asn.au/index.html)

Phone: 1800 667 110

### MAINSTREAM PROGRAMS

To find out about recreation activities in your area that are available to all children an internet search will usually provide a few ideas. You may also be able to find out about recreation by asking other families in your area or talking to people at your child's school or child care. Your local council may also be able to assist you with finding recreation opportunities nearby.

### SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Organisations providing social, sport and recreational services and support to people with disabilities in South Australia include:

#### Recreation Link Up

Provides a recreation information service and personal recreation plans for people with disabilities.

Recreation Search:

[www.reclinkup.ymca.org.au/search.aspx](http://www.reclinkup.ymca.org.au/search.aspx)

[www.sa.ymca.org.au](http://www.sa.ymca.org.au)

Phone: 8200 2500

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**Inclusive Sport SA - previously South Australian Sport & Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties (SASRAPID)**

Promotes and supports the inclusion of people with integration difficulties in sporting and recreation activities. The program also offers Rapid Swim and Aquatic Therapy for Children with Autism.

[www.inclusivesportsa.com.au](http://www.inclusivesportsa.com.au)

Phone: 81522474

**Office for Recreation and Sport, Government of South Australia**

The Office for Recreation and Sport is the lead agency for the State Government's policy on sport and active recreation. It provides Information and support for clubs and organisations to include people with a disability and information and participation opportunities for people with a disability.

[www.recsport.sa.gov.au](http://www.recsport.sa.gov.au)

Phone: (08) 7424 7677

**Sports Connect**

Sports Connect is a national framework that develops pathways for people with a disability to get involved in sport. For more information visit the Australian Sports Commission website.

[www.ussport.gov.au/participating/disability](http://www.ussport.gov.au/participating/disability)

**Nican**

Nican provides information on recreation, tourism, sport and the arts for people with disabilities in Australia. It is funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and aims to provide inclusive services for people with disabilities. The website has a search option where you can find services in your area that support recreation activities for individuals with special needs.

[www.nican.com.au](http://www.nican.com.au)

Phone: (02) 6241 1220

Freecall: 1800 806 769

**Riding for the Disabled**

Riding for the Disabled Association SA Inc is a voluntary, not for profit, organisation providing horse riding and related activities as sport, active recreation and basic therapy for people with disabilities. Through horse riding at RDA SA, people of all ages can enjoy a safe, stimulating, healthy activity

[www.rdasa.org.au](http://www.rdasa.org.au)

Phone: (08) 8331 1833



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

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## SWIMMING

Learning to swim is an important part of childhood, with swimming lessons currently offered in many Australian schools. For some children with ASD, learning to swim can present many challenges. Some children with ASD may be able to participate in regular community or school swimming lessons, while others may require a modified program.

For regular swimming programs contact your school, council or local swimming pool.

For modified swimming lessons for children with autism and other disabilities contact:

### **Swimming and Aquatics Program, Department for Education and Child Development**

The Program has a water safety program for eligible students with disabilities.

[www.decd.sa.gov.au/  
swimmingandaquatics/pages/  
Home1/home/?reFlag=1](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/swimmingandaquatics/pages/Home1/home/?reFlag=1)

### **Rapid Swim program**

A water awareness, confidence, safety and learn to swim program for people of all ages with an integration difficulty, who require more support than they can obtain from a regular learn to swim program.

[www.inclusivesportsa.com.au](http://www.inclusivesportsa.com.au)

### **VACSWIM program**

Children with a disability are encouraged to participate in the annual VACSWIM program. The instructor in charge should be consulted when enrolling a child with a disability. If participation is conditional upon special precautions being taken, the child can only attend classes if additional supervision can be arranged through consultation between the instructor in charge and the parent or caregiver (this will ensure a responsible person is keeping the child under observation at all times).

Email: [vacswimsa@ymca.com.au](mailto:vacswimsa@ymca.com.au)  
[www.vacswimsa.com.au/program-  
information/disabilities/](http://www.vacswimsa.com.au/program-information/disabilities/)  
Phone: (08) 8200 2525

## FAMILY SUPPORT & TRAINING

### SUPPORT GROUPS AND COUNSELLING

As a parent or carer of an individual with ASD it is important that you also care for yourself.

There are a vast number of local and web based support groups available for parents and carers in most areas of South Australia. For a list of support groups in your area go to [autismsa.org.au](http://autismsa.org.au) or call Autism SA's Info Line on 1300288476.

**Autism SA** provides family support services including Post Diagnostic Appointments, training workshops, social media, Online Library and Info Line.

**The National Carer Counselling Program** provides short-term counselling and emotional and psychological support services for parents/carers. The counselling helps reduce stress, improve coping skills, and facilitate, where appropriate, the continuation of the caring role. The counselling program is delivered through the state and territory carer associations.  
Free call 1800 242 636.

An excellent reference guide for families has been developed by the **Association for Children with a Disability** – 'Helping you and your family'. It will provide you with information and strategies to assist with looking after yourself as a carer. A free copy can be downloaded or ordered from the association's website: [www.acd.org.au](http://www.acd.org.au)

**Lifeline** provides telephone counselling services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 13 11 14.

### General Counselling

Parent/Carers may also benefit from seeing their own therapist for support and coping strategies. Speak to your GP about how to access a Psychologist for yourself.



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## PARENT EDUCATION

### Early Days

The Early Days program is a series of free face-to-face or online workshops for families of children aged six years or younger who have recently been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder or are going through the assessment process. Early Days aims to assist parents and carers of children with ASD by providing workshops on a range of topics such as introductory workshops for families of newly-diagnosed children, and skills-based workshops to provide families and carers with practical strategies on topics such as encouraging early interactions, behaviour management strategies, helping your child cope with change, and encouraging play and social learning.

For information about face-to-face workshops please contact Autism SA or refer to dates and locations posted on the Autism SA website.

The Early Days online workshops were developed to complement the Early Days face-to-face workshops. Online workshops topics include: building your resilience to stress, supporting siblings, sleep, fathers and self-management.

For more information on the Early Days online workshops please visit the Raising Children Network Autism Website: [www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/early\\_days\\_autism\\_workshops.html](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/early_days_autism_workshops.html).

### Family Workshops

Autism SA provides quality interactive workshops presented by facilitators with experience and expertise in the field of ASD.

Family Workshops are a range of workshops for families on a variety of topics. These can range from introductory sessions on what is ASD, through to a series of workshops aimed at assisting families to understand behaviour and other common issues. The workshops are available to families of registered clients and are a great way to meet other families and receive information and support from an Autism SA consultant.

For a full list of family workshops, visit [www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au), or call the Info Line 1300288476 to book your place.



### **Positive Partnerships**

Positive Partnerships are a national series of workshops specifically for parents and teachers of school-aged students with ASD. The aim of the workshops is to provide families and teachers with practical strategies to improve the educational outcomes for school aged students with ASD. In addition to face-to-face workshops, there are also a number of online modules that can be completed. For more information about Positive Partnerships visit [www.positivepartnerships.com.au](http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au)

### **Raising Children Network Autism Website**

The Raising Children Network website at: [www.raisingchildren.net.au/autism](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/autism) is a Government initiative and contains resources and information for families on all parenting issues. As part of the Helping Children with Autism package, an entire section of the website is devoted to parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The website contains a wide range of information about raising children with ASD, with fact sheets on issues that many parents face. There is also a parent forum where you can log in and post questions and answer questions from other parents who are also raising a child with ASD. There is also a useful guide to therapies which gives information on the various therapies you might hear about in Autism, and what we know so far about the evidence for their effectiveness.



# SERVICES & SUPPORT

## ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to express their views, to access information and services, to find out about options and make decisions, and to secure their rights. Some helpful advocacy organisations are:

### Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service

A confidential service that receives and acts on complaints from people with disabilities and their carers.

[www.dacssa.org](http://www.dacssa.org)

Phone: 8297 6500

### Family Advocacy

Trains and supports parents in gaining access to services.

[www.familyadvocacy.org.au](http://www.familyadvocacy.org.au)

Phone: 8340 4450 or  
1800 856 464

### Independent Advocacy

Provides advocacy for people with an intellectual disability

Phone: 8232 6200 or  
1800 999 884

### Disability Rights and Advocacy Service (DRAS)

Provides advocacy for people with a disability from a non-English speaking background.

[www.malssa.org.au](http://www.malssa.org.au)

Phone: 8351 9500 (South Australia)

### Legal Services Commission

Information and services regarding legal matters including child support, guardianship, criminal matters and more.

[www.lsc.sa.gov.au](http://www.lsc.sa.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 366 424

### Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia

A national organisation directly representing people with ASD and their families. The organisation regularly develops and promotes national policy, and reports on outcomes.

[www.a4.org.au/a4](http://www.a4.org.au/a4)

## OTHER SERVICES AND DIRECTORIES

### Connecting Up

Publishes: Directory of Community Services South Australia: Online Directory [www.sacommunity.org](http://www.sacommunity.org)

[www.connectingup.org](http://www.connectingup.org)

Phone: 8212 8555

### Local Councils

Councils run community centres and offer a range of community services including respite. Contact your local council to find out more.

For council search go to: [www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=210](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=210)

### Disability Information Resource Centre (DIRC)

Provides an information and referral service. Publishes: Disability Info Directory.

[www.dircsa.org.au](http://www.dircsa.org.au)

Phone: 8236 0555 or  
1300 305 558

# FAQS / FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **WHAT CAUSES AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?**

The cause of ASD is unknown at present but it is generally accepted that it is caused by variations in brain structure or function. There is evidence to suggest that genetics plays an important role in the cause of ASD; it is likely to be multiple genes. Genes may create a “susceptibility” to developing ASD but researchers have not yet identified a single “trigger” that causes ASD to develop. There is no medical or genetic screening currently available.

## **HOW COMMON IS ASD?**

ASD affects 1 in 100 individuals (Fennell and Gillberg, 2010) in Australia and more males than females. The male to female ratio is approximately 4:1 (Freitag, 2007, Abrahams and Geschwind, 2008).

## **DO ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD HAVE AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?**

Some individuals with ASD have an intellectual disability whilst some have average or above average intelligence. Often individuals with ASD show an uneven pattern of skills having areas of particular strength and other areas where support may be required.

## **HOW DO INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD COMMUNICATE?**

Individuals with ASD vary greatly in their communication skills. Some individuals are highly articulate and effective communicators; often well above their chronological age. Some individuals may never develop language whilst others may only develop simple language skills. Some may not develop speech at all but may communicate with devices, signing, pictures or writing. Those who do communicate verbally may still have difficulties with the subtleties of language, such as tone of voice, knowing when to stop talking and adapting their language to suit their audience.

## **HOW DOES ASD AFFECT A PERSON DURING THEIR LIFE?**

ASD is a lifelong condition. Most individuals will require varying degrees of support throughout their lives. The supports are unique to the needs and age of the individual. Such supports work on the areas that can best support the person to fulfil and maximise their potential. Using evidence based interventions and supports are important to ensure the success of the programs as these interventions have been researched and have shown positive outcomes.

For further information about the evidence based approach, refer to the Autism and Evidence Based Practice Factsheet available from the Autism SA website:

[www.autismsa.org.au/factsheets](http://www.autismsa.org.au/factsheets)



# HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR ASD SERVICES & SUPPORT

This list provides a sample useful websites related to ASD. URLs were correct as at 1 July 2014.

Website	URL	General Information	Strategies	Education & Training	Resources	Interventions & Therapies	Printables	Siblings	Adults	Personal stories
Asperger's Disorder Homepage	<a href="http://www.aspergers.com/">www.aspergers.com/</a>	x			x					
Aspires (Asperger syndrome Partners & Individuals Resources, Encouragement and Support)	<a href="http://www.aspires-relationships.com/index.html">www.aspires-relationships.com/index.html</a>	x		x	x				x	x
Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders	<a href="http://www.autismadvisoryboard.org.au">www.autismadvisoryboard.org.au</a>	x								
Australian Psychological Society – find a psychologist	<a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/findapsychologist">www.psychology.org.au/findapsychologist</a>					x				
Autism Help	<a href="http://www.autismhelp.info">www.autismhelp.info</a>	x	x		x			x	x	
Autism resources – a hub for information	<a href="http://www.autism-resources.com/">www.autism-resources.com/</a>	x	x		x					x
Autism SA	<a href="http://www.autismsa.org.au">www.autismsa.org.au</a>	x		x	x	x		x	x	
Autism Society of America (USA)	<a href="http://www.autism-society.org/">www.autism-society.org/</a>	x	x				x	x	x	x
Autism: Medline Plus	<a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/autism.html">www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/autism.html</a>	x								
Autism: news & videos about autism	<a href="http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2008/news/autism/">http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2008/news/autism/</a>		x		x					x

Website	URL	General Information	Strategies	Education & Training	Resources	Interventions & Therapies	Printables	Siblings	Adults	Personal stories
Resources at hand (online supplier of books on Autism Spectrum Disorders)	<a href="http://www.resourcesathand.com.au/">www.resourcesathand.com.au/</a>				x					
Carol Gray (social stories)	<a href="http://www.thegraycenter.org">www.thegraycenter.org</a>	x			x	x				
Child & Youth Health	<a href="http://www.cyh.com">www.cyh.com</a>	x						x		
Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres	<a href="http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au">www.commcarelink.health.gov.au</a>	x								
Coping: a survival guide for people with Asperger syndrome	<a href="http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~alastair/survival">www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~alastair/survival</a>	x	x						x	
Disability Employment Australia- Employment support	<a href="http://disabilityemployment.org.au/provider-search/sa/">http://disabilityemployment.org.au/provider-search/sa/</a>			x					x	
Do 2 Learn	<a href="http://www.do2learn.com">www.do2learn.com</a>	x					x			
Donna Williams	<a href="http://www.donnawilliams.net/">www.donnawilliams.net/</a>	x		x	x	x			x	
Ellen Notbohm	<a href="http://www.ellennotbohm.com">www.ellennotbohm.com</a>				x					
Forum on Alternative and Innovative Therapies	<a href="http://www.healing-arts.org/children/autism-overview.htm">www.healing-arts.org/children/autism-overview.htm</a>	x	x			x				
Free Printable Behaviour Charts	<a href="http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com">www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com</a>	x					x			
John Elder Robison	<a href="http://www.johnrobison.com/">www.johnrobison.com/</a>	x			x				x	x



# HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR ASD SERVICES & SUPPORT

Website	URL	General Information	Strategies	Education & Training	Resources	Interventions & Therapies	Printables	Siblings	Adults	Personal stories	
Jungle Chart	<a href="http://www.junglechart.com">www.junglechart.com</a>						x				
Mental Illness Fellowship SA – Mental Health support	<a href="http://www.mifsa.org">www.mifsa.org</a>				x	x			x		
Minds and Hearts	<a href="http://www.mindsandhearts.net/">www.mindsandhearts.net/</a>			x	x	x			x		
NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)	<a href="http://www.ndis.gov.au">www.ndis.gov.au</a>				x						
National Disability Services	<a href="http://www.nds.org.au/links?s=SA">www.nds.org.au/links?s=SA</a>	x				x			x		
National Institutes of Health: Autism	<a href="http://health.nih.gov/topic/Autism">http://health.nih.gov/topic/Autism</a>	x									
OASIS (Online Asperger’s Syndrome Information and Support)	<a href="http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger">www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger</a>	x			x					x	
OT Australia – find an OT	<a href="http://www.otaus.com.au/find-an-occupational-therapist">www.otaus.com.au/find-an-occupational-therapist</a>					x					
Positive Partnerships	<a href="http://www.autismtraining.com.au">www.autismtraining.com.au</a>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Raising Children Website	<a href="http://raisingchildren.net.au/">http://raisingchildren.net.au/</a>	x	x							x	
Research on autism interventions	<a href="http://www.researchautism.net">www.researchautism.net</a>	x	x			x					
Sensory Tools website	<a href="http://shopau.sensorytools.net/as_allproducts">http://shopau.sensorytools.net/as_allproducts</a>			x	x	x	x				

Website	URL	General Information	Strategies	Education & Training	Resources	Interventions & Therapies	Printables	Siblings	Adults	Personal stories
Siblings Australia	<a href="http://www.siblingsaustralia.org.au">www.siblingsaustralia.org.au</a>				x			x		
Speech Pathology Australia – find a speech pathologist	<a href="http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/information-for-the-community/find-a-speech-pathologist">www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/information-for-the-community/find-a-speech-pathologist</a>					x				
Stephen Shore	<a href="http://www.autismasperger.net/">http://www.autismasperger.net/</a>	x		x	x					x
<a href="http://www.autismexpertshore.com/">http://www.autismexpertshore.com/</a>				x	x		x			x
Sue Larkey	<a href="http://www.suelarkey.com.au">www.suelarkey.com.au</a>	x		x	x					x
Temple Grandin's website	<a href="http://www.templegrandin.com">www.templegrandin.com</a>		x		x		x			
The Incredible 5 Point Scale	<a href="http://www.5pointscale.com">www.5pointscale.com</a>	x			x			x	x	x
The National Autistic Society (UK)	<a href="http://www.nas.org.uk">www.nas.org.uk</a>	x				x				x
Therapy Connect Resource	<a href="http://www.therapy.amaze.org.au">www.therapy.amaze.org.au</a>	x		x	x				x	
Tony Attwood	<a href="http://www.tonyattwood.com.au">www.tonyattwood.com.au</a>	x	x		x				x	x
Wendy Lawson	<a href="http://www.mugsy.org/wendy">www.mugsy.org/wendy</a>	x	x		x				x	x
Wrong Planet	<a href="http://www.wrongplanet.net">www.wrongplanet.net</a>	x	x		x				x	x





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