

The following tool is for use by professionals when gathering information where there are concerns relating to the autism spectrum.

The statements below do not apply to every child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and some will apply to children who do not have an ASD. There may also be other factors causing similar difficulties e.g. other disorders/conditions, developmental delays or early experiences.

The information can contribute to the initial screening for a neurodevelopment disorder. Further more detailed assessments which look at degrees of difficulty are required to reach a diagnosis

Use this tool as a prompt in discussion with the parent. It is not a checklist. It is important to include everyday examples of the child's behaviour/difficulties rather than the phrases below.

Does the child have communication delays or difficulties?

- Had early speech and language therapy or delay
- Uses language oddly
- Uses an odd-sounding voice tone or volume
- Pauses in unusual places when speaking
- Avoids eye contact when speaking/listening
- Does not gain attention of others before speaking
- Interrupts or talks too much
- Frequently repeats words or phrases which could include those heard on TV or DVDs
- Has difficulty understanding jokes and sarcasm / interprets language literally
- Can be very articulate
- Misunderstands simple instructions
- Misinterprets or does not respond to the body language or facial expressions of others
- Shows inappropriate body language and facial expressions

Does the child have unusual play and social skills?

- Lines up toys
- Collects things in an obsessive way
- Plays with the same things over and over again
- Prefers to play alone and avoids social interaction
- Does not take things to others to show or share
- Seeks out social interaction but seems to get it wrong a lot of the time
- Prefers the company of younger or older children/adults
- Makes friends but can't keep them
- Forms intense, smothering relationships with one friend
- Has difficulties taking turns, sharing, playing team games or doing group activities
- Likes to be in charge and struggles when rules change
- Lacks tact or is unintentionally rude

Does the child have unusual reactions to everyday situations and/or need extra support in daily living skills?

- Likes routine and struggles when routine changes
- Has rituals and routines that need to be met
- Struggles to cope with and/or needs lots of warning of new places and situations
- Struggles when things go wrong/are not what he/she expected
- Needs lots of prompting in order to complete daily living tasks or tasks have to be done for him/her
- Overreacts, is over emotional or aggressive
- Withdraws into themselves
- Shows little reaction/understanding of others feelings
- Behaves in a risky way, with no sense of danger
- Notices fine details but may miss the overarching meaning
- Has a very good rote memory
- Struggles to concentrate if not interested

Does the child have unusual physical or sensory behaviours?

- Rocking, flapping, pacing, spinning
- Fussy eater, i.e. sensitive to food texture, taste, colour, presentation or mixing foods
- Licks or eats unusual things
- Dislikes being touched and/or prefers touch on own terms
- Overreacts to pain/injury or does not react to this
- Sensitive to noise or may make a lot of noise
- Dislikes messy play / other tactile activities
- Has concentration difficulties, fidgety behaviour
- Has poor co-ordination / odd gait or posture
- Sleep difficulties
- Toileting difficulties
- Stomach or intestinal issues
- Clumsiness, delays in coordination, tip toe walking.