

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS AUTISM?

- **Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**, is a term used to describe a wide range of unique brain conditions. These conditions affect the way some people think, feel, and interact with the world around them.
- Not every person experiences autism in the same way and that means the support they need **may be different for each person**.



Autism affects 1 out of every 66 children in Canada



AUTISM HAS NO CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

There are children and adults with autism coming from all cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

SOME COMMON SIGNS OF AUTISM...

It's important to note that signs of autism can **vary from person to person**, and not all children with autism will display all of them. Children with autism may:



- Not speak at the same age as other children
- Not use non-verbal language like waving goodbye or nodding
- Not use a wide range of facial expressions to express their thoughts and feelings
- Find it hard to make friends and understand social cues
- Be sensitive to loud noises, bright lights, or certain textures of food or clothing
- Do repetitive actions or play (line up toys in order, repeat words or phrases, or have a strict routine)
- Become focused on specific interests and always want to talk about them

WHO CAN I TALK TO FOR SUPPORT?

Getting support early can make a big difference in helping children with autism thrive and reach their full potential.



If you're concerned about your child's development and notice several of these signs, it's a good idea to speak with a healthcare professional or specialist for a proper evaluation and support. You can start by talking to your family doctor about your concerns. They will refer you to a specialist to begin the assessment process.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

- **Autism Ontario** | autismontario.com
 - An excellent source of general information on autism, local resources, and the steps you can take to having your child assessed.
- **Sesame Workshop on Autism** | sesameworkshop.org/topics/autism
 - A collection of videos and information for children with autism and their parents. Includes tips for parenting and supporting children with autism, explaining autism to your child, etc.
- **Lumenus Mental Health, Developmental & Community Services**
 - www.lumenus.ca/core-clinical-oap-services
 - A centre in the Toronto area that provides supportive care to children and families focused on mental wellbeing, child development, autism and early years intervention services. Translation services are available at the centre as well.
- **About Kids Health website** | aboutkidshealth.ca/autism
 - This website is put together by the Hospital for Sick Children and offers helpful information for parents, teens, and children. The information is also available in multiple languages.
- **LAMP Community Health Centre** | <http://www.lampchc.org>
 - A multi-service centre that provides a wide range of health and community services and can refer to other local health services
 - <https://lampchc.org/programs-services/community-health-programs/ask-community-information/newcomer-services/>
 - ASK! Community Information offers a range of supports to newcomers through a Settlement Counselor

Diagnosis is not a label; it's a path to the right support for you and your child.