



What does ASD look like?



Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is the name for a group of conditions where a person has a delay or difficulty in **three** developmental areas. Many children have some delay in one of these areas, but a child or adult with ASD has difficulty in all three areas. For example, they might:

Communication	Social interaction	Thinking (cognition) or behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be delayed in developing communication or language• have unusual ways of making themselves understood (may use objects or another person's hand to indicate what s/he wants)• find difficulty in understanding others (can sometimes appear to ignore or not to hear)• use language in an unusual way (monotone voice, copy or echo what others say, use overly formal or academic language).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• not join in with play or social opportunities• prefer to do things alone• not respond to other people's greetings, smiles or waves• not show toys, objects or share their interests with other people• have difficulty with social situations, conversation or social rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• need unusual rituals or routines (such as lining things up, completing tasks in a particular pattern, shutting doors etc)• get very upset when moving from one task or place to another or when routines are interrupted• make unusual movements near their eyes or face• over-react to loud noises or be very sensitive to particular smells, tastes or textures• have poor problem-solving or organisation skills• have a strong interest which s/he likes to talk about and takes up a lot of time• have poor coordination or motor skills.

ASD shows up differently with each individual depending on their age, gender, personality, family and cultural circumstances, severity and intellectual ability.

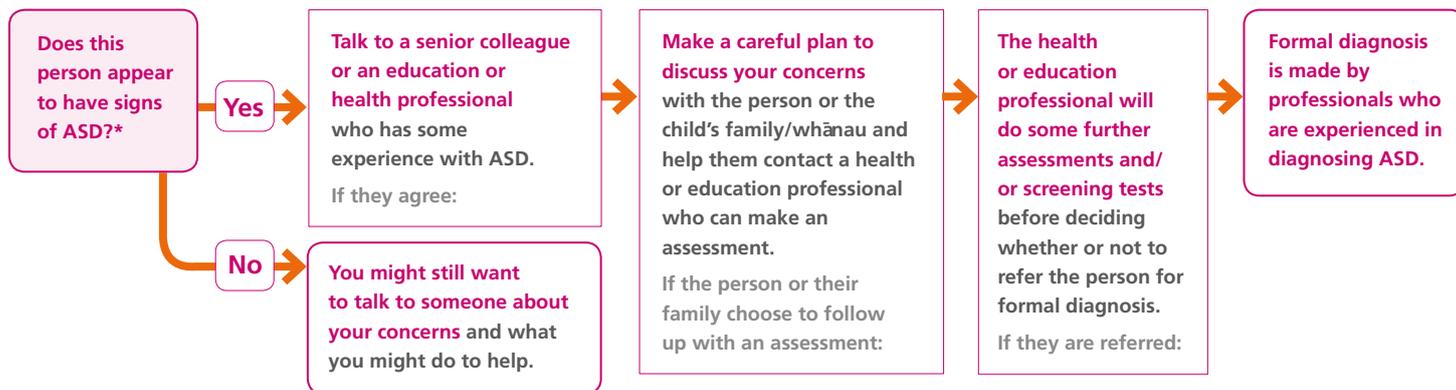
More information at: www.health.govt.nz



What do I do if I suspect ASD?

Judging whether someone may have ASD and deciding whether to discuss this with them and/or their family/whānau requires expertise and may involve more than one contact with the person. The process is summarised below.

The path to a diagnosis



* You should not refer someone without their informed consent.

During assessment and/or diagnosis families may be able to access some supporting information, resources, education, respite, and other professional advice and services.

Regardless of age at assessment/diagnosis, it is never too late for people with ASD to benefit from well-designed strategies and interventions.

More information at: www.health.govt.nz

This Quick Card is based on a summary e-booklet drawn from 'New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline' (NZ ASD Guideline) called 'What does ASD look like?' Order copies free by phoning 04 496 2277; Order no. HP5055. All guideline resources are available at www.health.govt.nz

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