What ASD can look like:

Autism is sometimes called autism spectrum disorder ASD, autism spectrum condition ASC or Asperger's syndrome.

Although the signs of autism vary widely among children, young people and adults, there are two common characteristics:

- difficulties with social communication and interaction – autistic individuals may find it hard to join in conversations or to make friends
- repetitive behaviour, routines and activities – such as fixed daily routines, repetitive body movements and a hypersensitivity to certain situations.

Autistic individuals may also be under- or oversensitive to certain sounds, lights, colours and other things, known as sensory sensitivity.

What to do if you think your child needs to be assessed:

- See a GP or health visitor if your child is showing signs of autism or you're worried about their development
- If your child is at school, you can also contact the school's Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for advice
- If appropriate, the GP can refer you to a healthcare professional or a team of specialists experienced in diagnosing autism
- The specialist or specialist team will make a more in-depth assessment, which should be started within 3 months of the referral, although sometimes this can take longer. Assessment takes place over a prolonged period of time to enable the right information to be gathered.

Links to further support:

- Activities Unlimited
- Autism Education Trust
- Early Help and Social Care
- Emotional Wellbeing Hub
- Integrated Community Paediatric Services
- Local Offer – Local support groups
- National Autism Directory
- National Autistic Society
- NHS autism information
- Parenting programmes
- SENDIASS
- Suffolk Parent Carer Network
Strategies **school** can use to support a child with ASD:

- Going into school earlier to avoid the rush
- Going into school through a quieter entrance
- Sitting near an exit in a crowded space
- Access to a quiet space
- Fiddle toys, wobble cushions etc
- Giving space and time to allow children to calm
- Providing flexibility in the curriculum and learning tools
- Flexibility around school rules of conduct (e.g.: being silent or still in a library can cause anxiety for a child who is aware they may need to move or make a noise)
- Visual prompts to support the structure of tasks, the school day, the routine
- Provide time to process information and changes to routines
- Clear explanation regarding the purpose of tasks
- A listening conversation between school and home as to what strategies, key words and phrases help the child to succeed and stay safe
- Considering other avenues for expression of feelings other than words
- Consistency between home and school approaches
- Educating the whole school community about the child’s needs
- Supporting the child through unforeseen changes

If schools require further advice and guidance, they can contact the **County Inclusion Support Service (CISS)**.

Strategies that might be useful in the home:

- Routines, structure and careful boundaries
- Use clear language to avoid misunderstanding
- Allow time for processing information with clear reasons for actions
- Planning time in for change and providing opportunity to discuss changes to routine in advance
- Quiet, safe space to go to
- Agreed approach with siblings to enable situations not to escalate
- The use of visual timetables and social stories
- Reward charts
- Not too many instructions at once. Make them clear and break them into stages
- Consistency between home and school approaches
- Sharing successful strategies with extended family members and enlisting their support
- Noticing trigger points for sensory overload
- Distraction when exhibiting fixated behaviours
- Bedtime routines; make use of external time markers, such as the news pips on the radio or sound timers to signify the process.

[www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk)

Local Offer advisor - 0345 606 1490