

Fact Sheet

What is Autism?



positive
partnerships

Working together to support school-aged
students on the autism spectrum

What is Autism?

- Autism is also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Autism is a developmental disorder that occurs in both boys and girls across all cultures and communities.
- Autism affects how a person learns and how they interact with others and their surroundings.
- All people on the autism spectrum are unique.

What are some of the characteristics of autism?

People on the autism spectrum often have problems with communication skills, social situations, behaviour, coping with their environment and learning.

- **Communicating:** People on the autism spectrum may have problems understanding others, talking about their own feelings, following instructions, or maintaining a conversation.
- **Socialising:** People on the autism spectrum may like to play alone or may have problems making and keeping friends. They may not know how to join in a game or activity with others so they find social situations difficult.
- **Behaving:** People on the autism spectrum may have problems behaving appropriately in certain situations and environments. They may dislike change, have a strong interest in one topic or repeat actions or movements over and over again.
- **Coping with the environment:** People on the autism spectrum may have problems coping with noise, touch, certain smells, certain tastes, movement or people and objects around them.
- **Learning:** People on the autism spectrum may find learning difficult at times due to problems with attention and concentration, planning and organisation, understanding what is expected and staying motivated.

People on the autism spectrum have strengths and skills too so with regular, consistent support, progress can be made.

What can you do if you are worried about your child?

Children do develop at different times and rates. If you are concerned about your child's development see your doctor or child health nurse. It is better to have any concern checked than to **'wait and see'**.

Visit the Positive Partnerships website for more information

www.positivepartnerships.com.au