



## **Does my child have autism?**

In India, it is very variable, who makes the diagnosis of Autism. It appears to mostly be a doctor's role (paediatrician, neurologist, psychiatrist). Essentially, the diagnosis should only be made through thorough observation, assessment and consultation with all involved with the child including family, school and any other professionals who your child sees. The information provided here is purely to provide further information for families. It is not possible to answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no' if your child has Autism.

Please note: Just because your child shows one or some of the characteristics which may be found in Autism does not necessarily mean they definitely have Autism. Children can show various behaviours as they grow up which can be associated with Autism but, unless they are part of a wider profile of difficulties, these behaviours alone are not sufficient to give a diagnosis of Autism. If you have any concerns, however minor, please speak to your family doctor.

For children who are still very young e.g. under four years old, it is often not appropriate to give a diagnosis of Autism unless the diagnosis is very clear. Even in older children, professionals have to consider very carefully if it is appropriate to give a diagnosis and, for some children, it is not always possible or appropriate to give a diagnosis straight away. Professionals need to be completely sure that this diagnosis is correct before they make it.

Some children show characteristics which may resemble those found in Autism however there are a number of other conditions which may explain their profile of needs. These include language delays and disorders, social communication difficulties, attention difficulties and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder amongst others (these can be diagnosed instead of OR alongside Autism). Another



thing to consider is Asperger's Syndrome. Asperger's Syndrome is an autistic spectrum disorder characterised by difficulties in social interaction, alongside restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests. It differs from other autistic spectrum disorders because children show relatively good learning and language skills. By seeking further assessment and support, you will be able to find out if your child's profile of strengths and needs may be explained by a diagnosis of Autism and/or another diagnosis such as those listed above.

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