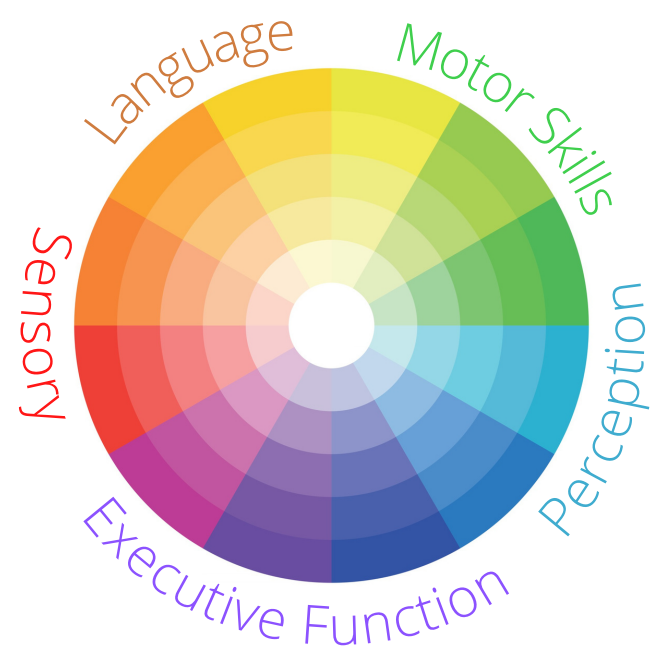
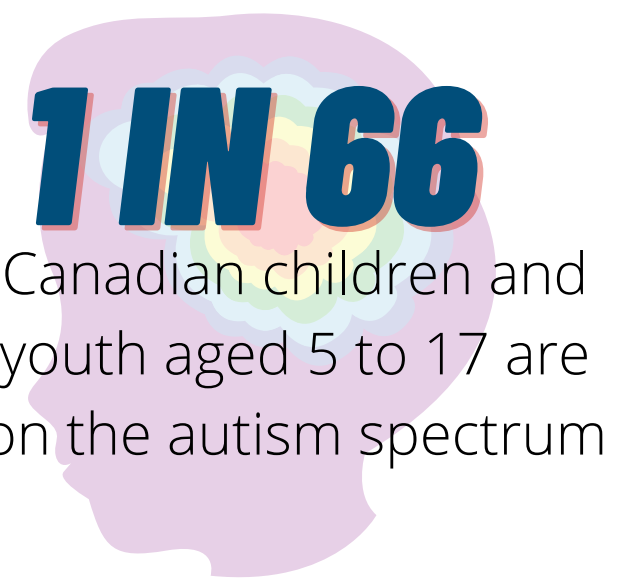


# WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism/autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a condition that encompasses challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication.

The exact cause of ASD is unknown but is influenced by many genetic and environmental factors, science has confirmed that vaccines do not cause ASD.



## THE SPECTRUM

The spectrum shows the 'traits' or different ways the brain processes information. ASD is not measured on a straight scale of not autistic to "very autistic", for example, a person may experience sensory overload in loud and crowded places despite having great communication skills. Every person with ASD is different and they may function differently depending on the circumstances.

## POSSIBLE INDICATIONS

All individuals with autism experience different strengths and challenges, therefore, many factors will contribute to the diagnosis. Some can have accompanying conditions like ADHD or be articulate in conversation, and as a result, are diagnosed at a later age.

**BY 6 MONTHS**

Limited/ no eye contact, few/ no big smiles, or other warm, engaging and joyful expressions

**BY 9 MONTHS**

Little/ no back and forth sharing of sounds, smiles or other facial expressions

**BY 12 MONTHS**

Little or no babbling, back and forth gestures, response to name

**BY 16 MONTHS**

Very few/ no words

**BY 24 MONTHS**

Very few/ no meaningful 2-word phrases (not including mimicking or repeating)

## COMMON CHALLENGES

- Loss of previous speech, babbling, social skills.
- Avoidance of eye contact.
- Persistent need to be alone.
- Difficulty understanding others' feelings.
- Delay in language development.
- Echolalia- repetition of words/ phrases
- Resistance to minor changes in routine and surroundings
- Restricted interests
- Repetitive behaviours such as flapping, rocking, spinning etc.
- Unusual and intense reaction to sounds, smells, tastes, textures, lights, and/or colours.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recreational activities are important for individuals with ASD, as they provide opportunities to practice social skills, physical aptitude, and motivation.



**Self-Confidence**



**General Life Skills**



**Hobbies**

- Playing cards
- Drawing
- Photography



**Team Sports**

- Hockey
- Soccer
- Scouts



**Individual Sports**

- Track
- Skiing
- Hiking