

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)



Source:
UWTSD
(2024)

Introduction

Autism is a spectrum, implying that every Autistic person is different (NHS, 2022). According to Lord, C *et al.*, (2020), ASD is a concept to describe individuals who have a particular blend of impairments including social interactions, repetitive behaviours, intense interests, or sensory behaviours, which all begin during the early years of life. According to the National Autistic Society (2025), the UK Government's prevalent survey found there are around 1 in 100 people who are autistic. However, The National Autistic Society (2025) believes more than 1 in 100 people are autistic, which corresponds to more than 700,000 people across the UK.

Diagnosis

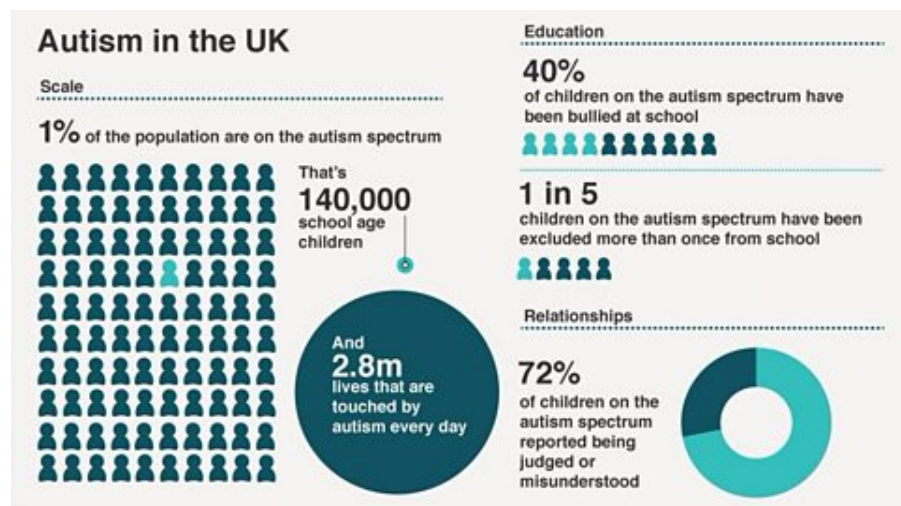
The NHS (2022) say that the signs of Autism in young children include: not responding to their name, not partaking in much pretend play and performing repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands or rocking their body. The NHS (2022) states that Autistic girls may have a tendency to hide some Autistic traits by copying how other children close to them behave in an attempt to fit in. The National Autistic Society (2024) states how vital it is for girls to receive a diagnosis of Autism, so they can access the correct support and understand themselves better.

Statistics

Ratio of autistic boys and autistic girls varies from 2:1 to 16:1. with a more recent approximate update of 3:1.

According to the National Autistic Society (2024), the concept of taking a child for an Autism Assessment is about collecting information about them. The aim of the assessment is to use the information gathered to conclude whether a child is Autistic or not. During an assessment for Autism, the assessors will need to take into consideration the current circumstances of the individual.

Source: BBC Teach (2025)



Barriers

According to Inanc *et al.*, (2018) & Russell (1993), parents of children with SEND (or ALN in Wales) are less likely to have their psychological needs met, but more likely to experience financial issues. Holland, J, Pell, G and KIDS (2017) conducted a study which focussed on the holistic view of parenthood. The data gathered suggested that there was a high volume of parents who were struggling with having their emotional needs met. According to Goin-Kochel, Myers and Mackintosh (2007), parents of children on the autistic spectrum typically complete a variety of treatments and therapies including, behavioural and educational interventions. Goin-Kochel, Myers and Mackintosh (2012) discovered that parents were finding alternative ways to seek treatments for their children, despite some professionals suggesting genres of interventions.

Ghanouni *et al.*, (2019) discovered that those with ASD typically deal with a wide range of challenges, including

difficulties in both verbal and non-verbal communication and misconception of socio-emotional concepts, according to the American Psychiatric Association, (2013). Locke *et al.*, (2012); Mactavish and Schleien (2004) stated that having social interaction may be an ideal environment to form friendships, to develop self-identity, modeling 'typical' behaviour, together with strengthening socio-emotional skills by communicating with peers in a comfortable environment.

Benefits

According to Lilley *et al.*, (2022); Powell and Acker (2016), Autistic individuals may feel a sense of self-acceptance and self-understanding post-diagnosis. Huang *et al.*, (2021); Wilson *et al.*, (2023) state that with the combination of joining the autistic community and receiving a diagnosis, it can be an essential aspect to lift any shame and internalised ableism. Ruiz Calzada *et al.*, (2012) says that receiving an autism diagnosis can help individuals to gain access to reasonable adjustments in work or school to make life more accessible. According to Thompson-Hodgetts *et al.*, (2020), many autistic people chose not to disclose their identity, and therefore, missed out on the potential benefits of disclosing their identity.



Source:
Hughes. C
(2025)
Personal
Image

Strategy

According to the NHS (2022), to aid an autistic child's communication, it can be productive to allow extra time for the child to understand what has been said and looking for other forms of communication, such as Makaton. According to Rutherford *et al.*, (2019), visual aids can be used to lessen anxiety and improve participation with peers. It was stated by Arthur-Kelly *et al.*, (2009) that parents discovered that teaching their children how to utilise the visual aids was a challenge and as parents, they were provided with a lack of support on how to use the visual aids successfully.

What is a Feelings Fan?

A feelings or emotions fan is a concept that can aid children who struggle with communication, for example children on the autistic spectrum or children who struggle to communicate their emotions effectively. A feelings or emotions fan consists of emotions with both symbols and words representing the variety of emotions a child may encounter throughout the course of their day, including happiness, nervousness or sadness.

However, the disadvantage to the feelings fan is there is very little to no research on it. Therefore, it can make it extremely difficult for families and practitioners to find alternative ways to communicate with their children.