

What is AUTISM? Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life. What is AUTISM? Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life. What is AUTISM? Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life. What is AUTISM? Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life. What is AUTISM? Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life.



## Possible Interventions

- Parent training – for example “More Than Words ®” – The Hanen Program for Parents of Children on Autism Spectrum and Relationship Development Intervention.
- Speech-language therapy
- Occupational therapy/sensory integration therapy
- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Floor-Time
- Dietary interventions
- Biomedical interventions.



**BARBADOS  
COUNCIL**  
For the Disabled

**The Barbados Council for the Disabled is a national grouping of all organizations for and of people with disabilities, dedicated to the health and well-being of its members and all others with disabilities in our society.**

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## What is AUTISM?

Autism is a lifelong disability which typically manifests itself during the first 30 months of life.

It is characterized by the presence of abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a restricted repertoire of activities and interests.

Other common symptoms include sleeping, feeding, toileting problems, self injurious and self stimulatory behaviours.

Manifestations of the disorder vary greatly depending on the developmental level and age of the individual.

The degree of Autism varies from mild to severe and severely afflicted persons can appear to have significant intellectual challenges.



## Statistics

The incidence of autism is said to be as high as 10 per 10,000 live births. It does occur four times more often in boys than girls. Autism is found throughout the world in families of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

## Diagnosis

Diagnosis of autism is based on observation of the child's behaviour. There are no medical tests that can diagnose autism. It can be difficult because autism sometimes occurs in association with other disorders which affect brain function such as: Attention Deficit Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and intellectual impairment.

Early diagnosis is essential as it maximizes potential successful outcomes for the child. Once identified, a child with autism can benefit from specialized education programs.

## Treatment

There is no cure for the condition, but treatment of children with autism is centred around six goals:

- 1 Stopping the inappropriate behaviours that prevent the autistic child from relating and communicating with others.
- 2 Increasing the attention span, joint attention with communicative partners and perceptual skills needed to improve learning.
- 3 Helping the child learn self care skills.
- 4 Providing opportunities and support for the child to learn how to socialize with others.
- 5 Enriching the quantity and quality of language to increase communication skills.
- 6 Educating parents to empower them to take an active role in their child's education and social skills development.