

# Autism Spectrum Disorders, NDIS and Disability Support Services



## Discover the range of disability support services for those with autism and their carers

### About Autism

Autism spectrum disorder, also known as autism, is a disability that affects how a person experiences and engages with the world around them.

Autism is a **neurodevelopmental disability**, which means it is caused when the brain develops differently early in life. In autism, this generally causes communication, social and behavioural difficulties.

Autism is different for everyone. It is called a spectrum disorder because it can range from mild social or communication difficulties, to severe disability that makes it hard for a person to live independently, and may require in-home care.

There are a lot of **myths and stigma around autism**. Autism is not an intellectual disability or a mental illness, but someone with autism might also have these disabilities.

Research has shown **autism is not linked to vaccinations**.

Autism affects around one in 150 Australians, and has been diagnosed in **greater numbers in recent years**. This might be because testing and awareness of autism have improved.

There is no 'cure' for autism, but its effects on a person's life can be managed with the right support. NDIS support coordinators such as our experienced team can connect you to the services you need.

### Signs and diagnosis

Autism has some common difficulties and behaviours that you might notice in your child, or recognise in yourself if you are an adult who has not been diagnosed. These include:

- Difficulty communicating, expressing emotions and thoughts, or delays in language development. The person might show signs of nonverbal communication, not use hand gestures, not smile or respond to others, or have delayed or limited speech development.
- Social and emotional difficulties. Your child might not react to others' facial expressions or emotions, not play with other children, not make eye contact, or lose control of their emotions frequently.
- Strong reactions to sensory input, such as smells, bright lights or loud noises.
- Hyper-focus and repetitive behaviours and interests like only playing with a particular toy, wanting to talk or learn about one topic, or following routines rigidly, and becoming distressed when these change.
- Body movements like flapping hands, jerking limbs, or walking on their toes.

Not everyone with autism will show difficulty in all of these areas, and signs **vary across ages**, and **genders**. Research suggests autism is diagnosed more often in boys and men because it presents differently and is **less well understood** in girls. Many people are not diagnosed with autism until adulthood, at which point they may require supported independent living services, depending on the severity.

If you think you or your child show signs of autism, your **doctor** can support you through diagnosis. They might refer you to specialists experienced in diagnosing autism, including psychiatrists, paediatricians, psychologists or speech pathologists.

Assessment and diagnosis is different for everyone, depending on your **age and signs of autism**. Diagnosis can involve assessments and questions about mental and emotional health, childhood and development, and tests to diagnose communication and social difficulties.

In cases where autism has other effects on your child's health, the doctor might refer you for tests to rule out or identify other conditions.

The long-term impact of autism depends on the effects it has on a person's life and the supports they receive to manage these effects.

## Services and support

There are many support services available for people with autism in Australia. Amaze, an autism support organisation, provides information about where to get help for people with autism at all life stages.

Getting support early for young children with autism and developmental delay can benefit a child's long-term development, and help families understand and navigate the condition. Disability organisations dedicated to providing supports to children such as Raising Children Network have information on **therapies, services and supports available** for children with autism and their families.

People with disability under 65 years old can apply for access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS funds disability-related **supports and services** for people with permanent and significant disability and can be accessed with NDIS support coordination providers.

If you are noticing signs of **developmental delay** in your child, you can contact your local Early Childhood Early Intervention NDIS partner. They will connect you to supports and services, and guide you through the NDIS application process if your child's disability is permanent and significant. Find out who to contact about the **NDIS where you live**.

Autism can be challenging for families and carers to manage, too. It is important carers get the help they need. Carer supports are available through **government support programs**, the NDIS for **carers of NDIS participants**, and the **Carer Gateway**.

Autism support organisations provide more information about autism, and where to get help:

- **Amaze Australia**
- **Autism Awareness Australia**
- **Raising Children Network**
- **Autism Spectrum Australia**

## How Claro can support you

At Claro, we provide disability and allied health services tailored to your needs. Our disability services range from everyday supports like help with shopping and transport, to more complex services such as overnight care and supported independent living.

While we continue to grow our team and the services we can offer across Australia, we currently offer supports to clients over 18 years old. **Get in touch today** to find out what services we offer near you.

We also partner with **Plena Healthcare** to provide allied health services like occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech pathology. These services can be provided **in-home** and by the same team members, so that you can focus on building a long-term connection and understanding about your care.

We can also help you manage your **disability supports**. If you are an NDIS participant and have funding for **Support Coordination**, our experienced and knowledgeable **Support Coordinators** can work with you to connect you to the services you need.

Fill out our **enquiry form** and we will contact you to discuss the right support and disability service options available.

## Resources

- **Autism, Health Direct**
- **Asperger's Syndrome, Health Direct**
- **Autism in Australia, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder, Better Health Channel Victoria**
- **Amaze Australia**
- **Autism Awareness Australia**
- **Autism, Raising Children Network**
- **Autism Spectrum Australia**
- **Neurodevelopment, Murdoch Children's Research Institute**
- **Understanding the NDIS**
- **How ECEI Works**
- **Carer Gateway**



## Contact details

Claro Aged Care and Disability Services

Find us at [claro.com.au](http://claro.com.au)  
Call us on 1300 303 770