Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM 5.0)\(^1\) – Parent Version

ASD Diagnosis
- Meets all 3 Social Communication Deficits criteria and at least 2 Repetitive Behaviors criteria
- Symptoms are present in early childhood (may not be noticeable until social demands exceed capacity)
- Symptoms cause significant functional impairment
- Severity level is determined for each area (Social Communication Deficits, Repetitive Behaviors)

Social Communication Deficits: Persistent deficits in social communication and interaction across multiple contexts

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Severity Levels</th>
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| Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity  
- Does not show or point out objects of interest  
- Has difficulty sharing pleasure, interests, emotions  
- Has difficulty maintaining “back and forth” interactions or conversations with others  
- Has one-sided exchanges, talks “at” rather than “with” others  
- Has difficulty initiating a social interaction  
- Has difficulty responding to social overtures of others; does best when interactions are “on his/her terms”  | Level 3 – requires very substantial support  
Severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills; severe functional impairment with very limited initiation of social interaction and minimal response to social overtures from others. |
| Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction  
- Has poor eye contact, especially when others request attention; may be better on his/her own terms  
- Has blank facial expression. May direct limited expressions, like smiles, to self  
- Turns away from others during interactions  
- Has limited social use of gestures, such as pointing to express interest  
- Has poor integration of verbal and nonverbal communication  
- Has difficulty noticing or understanding nonverbal communication of others  | Level 2 – requires substantial support  
Marked deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills; even with supports in place, functional impairments are apparent; limited initiation of social interaction and reduced or abnormal responses to social overtures from others. |
| Deficits in developing, maintaining, understanding relationships  
- Has difficulty making or keeping friends  
- Has no interest in peers, or avoids peer interactions  
- Has difficulty adjusting behavior to suit different social contexts  
- For toddlers, lacks interest in shared social play (e.g., peek-a-boo), lacks imaginative play (e.g., pretending)  
- For preschoolers, plays alone, has difficulty joining group activities, engages in parallel play when peers are engaging in interactive or make-believe play | Level 1 – requires support  
Deficits in social communication skills; with supports in place, functional impairments are less noticeable; difficulty with initiation of social interaction and atypical or unsuccessful responses to social overtures from others. |

\(^1\) Includes former DSM IV diagnoses of: Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)
• For older children, does not have an identified friend, chooses solitary activities, has difficulty making new friends, doesn't understand physical boundaries

**Repetitive Behaviors:** Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities

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| ✓Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, object use or speech  
  • Paces or runs in circles  
  • Moves body into unusual positions  
  • Flaps hands, flicks fingers  
  • Spins or flips objects  
  • Lines up toys  
  • Use immediate echolalia (parroting)  
  • Uses jargon (speech-like babbling)  
  • Repeats lines from favorite videos  
  • Uses scripted or “canned” phrases  
  • Pronoun reversal (I/you) | Level 3 – requires very substantial support  
  Extreme difficulty coping with change and great distress changing activities; restricted/repetitive behaviors markedly interfere with functioning in all contexts. |
| ✓Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior  
  • Needs to do things in a particular manner, order, or sequence; becomes distraught if order is not followed  
    ○ Examples of routines: schedules, eating, object placement, dressing, driving routes, greetings  
  • Shows extreme distress at small changes  
  • Has difficulty with transitions  
  • Shows rigid thinking patterns | Level 2 – requires substantial support  
  Difficulty coping with change and distress changing activities; restricted/repetitive behaviors appear frequently enough to be obvious to casual observer and interfere with functioning in several contexts. |
| ✓Highly restricted, fixated interests with abnormal intensity or focus  
  • Has strong attachments to or preoccupations with unusual objects  
  • Has unusual interests; has normal interests that are highly focused or obsessive  
  • In younger children, intense interest in certain videos (e.g., Thomas), in certain toys (e.g., trains, cars), in numbers and letters, in mechanical objects (e.g., elevators)  
  • In older children, intense interest in certain subjects (e.g., marine animals, outer space, dinosaurs) | Level 1 – requires support  
  Difficulty switching between activities; inflexible behavior causes interference with functioning in one or more contexts. Organization and planning problems hamper independence. |
| ✓Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input; unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment  
  • Has interests that seem sensory in nature  
  • Engages in excessive smelling or touching of objects  
  • Visually examines parts of toys (e.g. car wheels), squints or peers, fascination with lights or movement  
  • Engages in repetitive dropping of objects, or watching objects fall (e.g., water, sand, balls) |  |
- Shows adverse response to specific sounds, textures, tastes, smells
- Appears indifferent to pain/temperature