

“It takes the whole village to raise a child.”

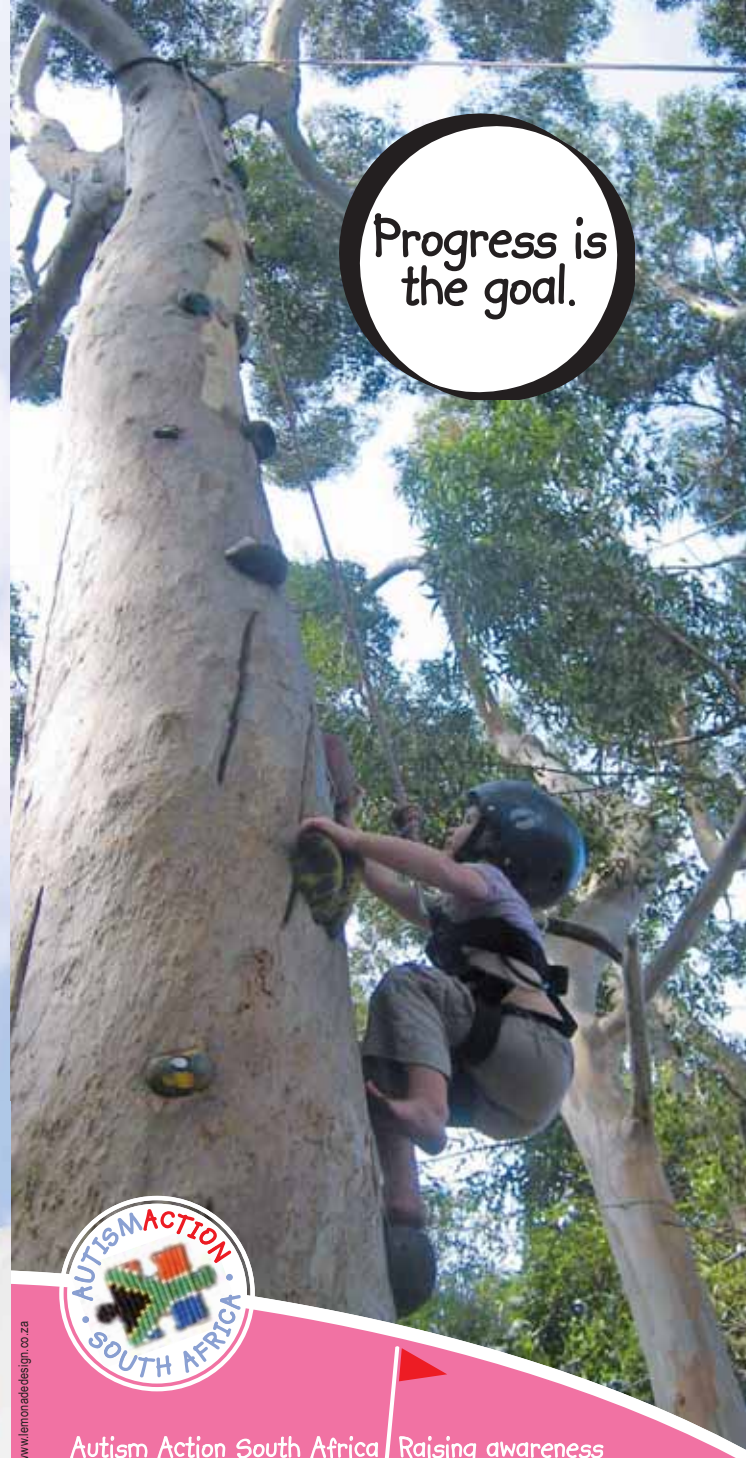
– African Proverb

You are not alone. There are millions of parents worldwide who know and understand exactly what you're going through. Your child is not an oddity or strange. You are not the world's most incompetent parent. You are among friends.

You are not powerless. Knowledge is power. You must strengthen the skills you already have and you must learn new ones. You will learn to reduce the challenges and stress and live peacefully with your child.

You have permission to take care of yourself. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for and receive help with your child. When your needs are met, you generate the energy to meet your child's needs.

You may celebrate and enjoy the gifts of your child. Catch them being good. Kiss them when they least expect it. Instead of punishing inappropriate, innocent behaviour, teach them the way to behave. Our children possess many characteristics we find admirable in successful adults. Nurture and grow them now.



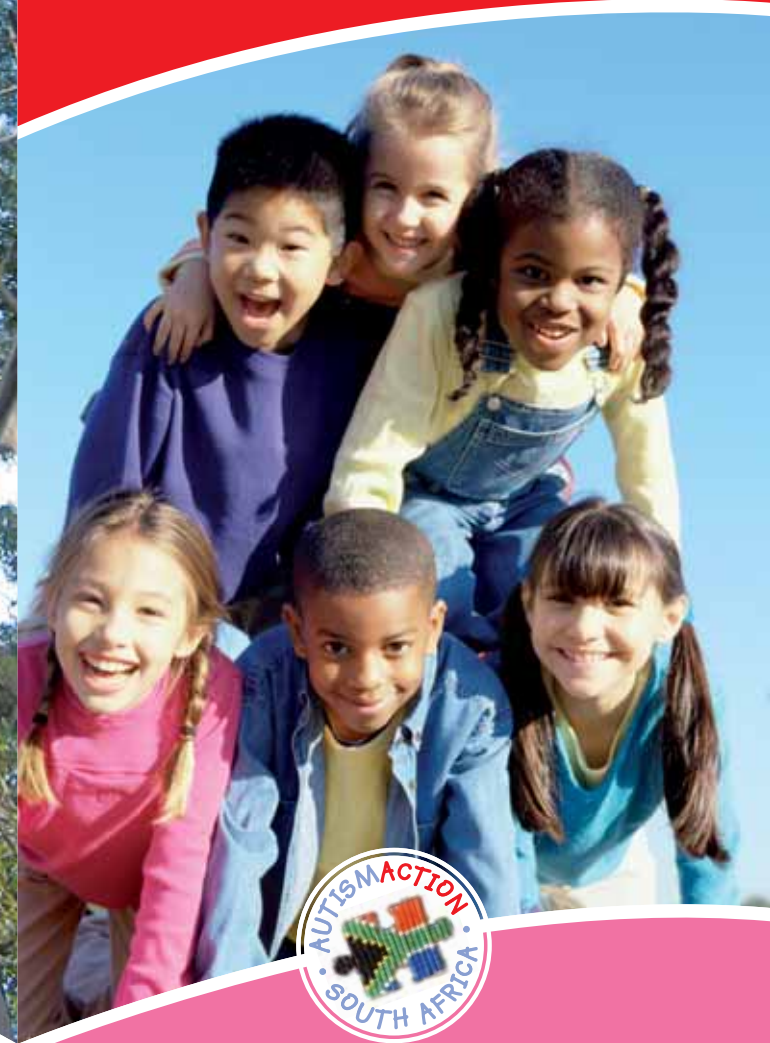
Progress is the goal.



Autism Action South Africa | Raising awareness
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Lemonade Design | www.lemonadedesign.co.za

Chances of winning the lottery 1:14 million
Chances of having a child with autism 1:150



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The early warning signs of autism

If you have noticed any of the following behaviours, your child may be exhibiting some red flags for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Please consult a doctor or ASD professional for further diagnosis.

- Your child takes no interest in other children.
- Your child does not use his/her index finger to point or to indicate an interest in something.
- Your child does not bring objects to you to show you something.
- Your child does not imitate you (e.g. if you make a funny face, will your child do the same?)
- Your child doesn't respond to his/her name when called.
- Your child doesn't engage in pretend play with dolls, cars or other toys.
- Your child seems oversensitive to noise (maybe plugging their ears).
- Your child sometimes wanders with no purpose or stares at nothing.
- Your child does not check your reaction by looking at your face when faced with something unfamiliar.
- Your child doesn't understand what people are saying.
- Your child engages in repetitive behaviours, also known as self-stimulatory behaviours, or stimming.

Examples of ASD characteristics -

can be exhibited by some children to varying degrees such as:

Handflapping, walking on their toes, excessively twirling in a circle, self-injurious behaviours such as hand-biting, banging their heads on various surfaces; visually tracking toys or objects with their peripheral vision, excessive continuous tapping on objects, difficulty and delay in being potty trained beyond two years of age.

Perserverative Behaviours – either saying or doing one thing over and over again regardless of the response.

If you suspect or have been told that your child may be on the spectrum, please contact your doctor and have a professional evaluation done. This is not a full and comprehensive list of symptoms; merely a guideline.



So what can we do now to help our child?

Empower yourself with knowledge

Welcome to the fascinating world of autism. This is not a catastrophe, although you might feel like it is. You are allowed to grieve for the child you thought you had and come to terms with the child you now have. Once you realize the gift you've been given, you will rejoice in your child's uniqueness. Service providers will come and go; you are the only constant in your child's life. Get involved and stay involved. Do whatever it takes to end on success.

Take action

The diagnosis never defines the child. Start today and find out all you can about how to help your child. Research all the available options and draw up a plan of action. Contact us to find out how to start.

Love your ASD child

Some of the characteristics of ASD kids are intensity, persistence, sensitivity, perceptiveness, and a tendency to be very cautious. Make a list of the characteristics you see in your child. Make a list of all the characteristics of successful people you know or admire. Notice the similarities.

Trust your own instincts

You know what your child needs. You know when it needs to be done. Be careful of the labels you use to describe your child or how you let others describe your child. You are your child's advocate for the next 18 years. Speak up and be heard. Time is of the essence. Wasted time is wasted opportunity. The younger the child, the greater the opportunity for progress. Start now. Progress is the goal.

Visit www.autismaction.co.za

We welcome your input and will attempt to answer any questions you have as quickly and as accurately as possible.