

# Autism Spectrum Differences

A quick reference chart to help identify individuals with autism spectrum differences when no intellectual impairment is present

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	Average to Above Average Intellectual Abilities	Average to Low Average Intellectual Abilities with Some Variability	Average to Low Average Abilities with Language Skills Deficit
<b>Use of language</b>	Language skills well developed; usually have developed one or more areas of passionate interest; conversation with others focuses on conveying facts and details about preferred topics	Language skills typically less developed than in children with average to above average intellectual abilities; use of language is prompt-dependent on adults; may have developed one or more areas of passionate interest but have difficulty sharing details with others	Often display a well-developed vocabulary for labeling; use of language is rote and self-directed with frequent use of scripted language
<b>Social and emotional pattern of differences</b>	Usually initiate and extend social exchanges even though they do so on their agenda; most comfortable with adults or younger children; peer relationships are often a source of anxiety; may have difficulty regulating emotional states	Prompt-dependent on adults to structure social exchanges; will initiate and extend as long as structure is present; lack flexibility in their play routines; may become anxious and agitated during loosely structured language and social interactions	Become anxious with social exchanges and do not generally initiate or sustain social interactions; tend to remove themselves from social exchanges; most comfortable with others when sharing sensory interests and limited language is used
<b>Sensory use</b>	Have developed one or more areas of passionate interest; sensory-driven quality to their narrative when sharing information with others about preferred topics; may resist touching sensory toys; unusual body movements are subtle but repetitive	Display some drive to establish sensory-driven play but can be redirected by the examiners; during social play, tend to create rigid and inflexible play routines; infrequent display of unusual body movements and mannerisms	Tend to focus intently on the sensory aspects of toys; seek out manipulative materials with visual and tactile features; create repetitive sensory routines as a means to self-regulate anxiety; frequently display distinctive unusual body movements and mannerisms
<b>Cognitive pattern</b>	In average range; verbal may be higher than nonverbal; WISC-IV Working Memory sometimes lower than other areas; written expression is frequently an area of challenge	Cognitive pattern of development is uneven; typically show higher nonverbal and lower verbal abilities	Cognitive pattern of development is uneven; typically show higher nonverbal and lower verbal abilities, often with distinctive skill discrepancies