

# Signs of Autism in Girls/Females

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Girls/females are more likely to go undiagnosed or get misdiagnosed. They often do not present in stereotypical ways and are more likely to mask.

Signs of autism in girls:

Please note that this is not a full comprehensive list and girls may still present with other more stereotypical traits as well.

## Social

- Wanting to fit in
- Masking: Autistic girls are more likely to mask their autistic traits and be actively aware of any aspect of their behaviour or mannerisms that may not fit into the social norm.
- Mimicking other people: Mimicking other people is often part of masking. It is a way to fit in.
- Being shy
- Not responding to their name
- Not liking being the centre of attention or drawing attention to themselves
- Becoming intense in friendships very quickly
- Being seen as quirky
- Can come across as flirty

## Emotional

- Being self-aware: Because of a desire to fit in, or not get things wrong, autistic girls can end up very self-aware.
- Not knowing how they feel
- Often getting labelled as 'sensitive': While they may not always be able to identify how they are feeling, they are often labelled as overly sensitive or emotional.
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Easily upset over seemingly small things.
- Desire to make friends but difficulty maintaining relationships

- Relying on others to speak for them or guide them, particularly in social settings
- Preferring to socialise one on one rather than in groups

## Sensory

- Sensory processing disorder: Autistic girls may be hypersensitive to their surroundings or be sensory seeking. They may struggle in loud environments and may have a tendency to become overstimulated. Which may present as distress, anxiety, becoming withdrawn, having outbursts, getting frustrated or becoming upset.
- Difficulty focusing in busy or loud environments: Autistic girls may not be able to function well in environments such as classrooms due to sensory difficulties and this may look like bad behaviour or learning challenges.
- Difficulty or rigidity with clothing: Autistic girls may have issues with particular aspects of clothing such as tags or seams due to sensory issues.
- Proprioceptive or vestibular challenges: Autistic girls may be clumsy or lack coordination. This can also mean they may have a particularly strong dislike for, or avoidance of sports.
- Being fussy with food or being considered a 'picky eater'

## Rigidity

- Strong need for rules and often being labelled as a 'goody-two-shoes'
- Being 'bossy' or needing control: They can get upset when playing with other children who do not follow their plan.
- Need for routine and being on time or early
- Difficulty with change
- Being a perfectionist

## Other

- Other cooccurring conditions, allergies, digestive issues etc.
- Intense interests: these can be in things that are socially acceptable at first glance, such as art or science.
- Emotional attachment to objects or toys beyond what is expected
- Daydreaming or creating imaginative worlds
- Having a strong sense of justice and need for things to be right