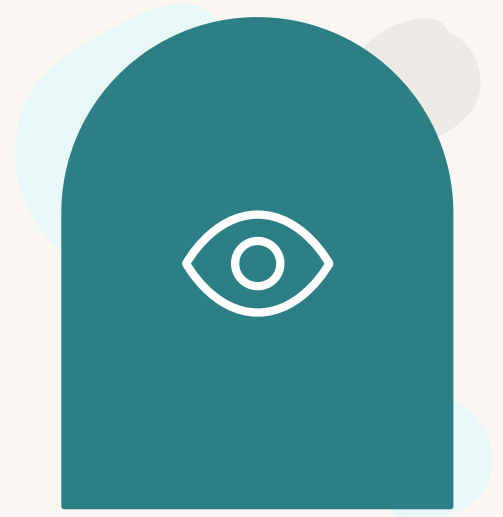


EARLY SIGNS

Noticing the *early signs*

Every child grows at their own pace. But some differences in how a child communicates, plays and responds are worth talking to a health worker about. The earlier you ask, the earlier your child can get support.



Talk to a health worker if *your child...*

- By 12 months
- doesn't babble
 - doesn't point, wave, or use other gestures
 - doesn't respond when you call their name

- By 16 months
- doesn't say any single words

- By 24 months
- doesn't put two words together on their own, rather than only repeating what they hear

At any age

loses words or social skills they used to have. Don't wait – ask for an assessment straight away.

OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- Rarely looks at faces, or shares enjoyment with you, like showing you a toy
- Plays with toys in unusual, repeated ways, such as lining them up
- Gets very upset by small changes in routine
- Reacts strongly to sounds, textures, lights or smells
- Repeats movements, such as flapping hands, rocking or spinning
- Prefers to play alone most of the time

These signs don't mean a child is autistic, and only a qualified health professional can diagnose autism. They do mean it's worth asking.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

You know your child *best*

- 1 **Write down what you notice**
Note what happens, when, and how often. Short videos on your phone help a health worker see what you see.
- 2 **Talk to a doctor, nurse or clinic**
Share your notes and ask for a developmental assessment. Bring this leaflet if it helps.
- 3 **If you are still worried, ask again**
If you are told to “wait and see” but your worry doesn’t go away, it’s okay to ask again, or to ask for a second opinion.
- 4 **Keep talking, playing and reading together**
You don’t need a diagnosis to start. Follow your child’s interests, keep routines predictable, and celebrate small steps.

REMEMBER

You are not alone. Your child is not broken.

Autism isn’t caused by anything you did, and it isn’t a curse. With understanding and the right support, autistic children learn, grow and thrive.

FIND SUPPORT NEAR YOU

Trusted schools, teachers, autism centres and health specialists across Africa.



Health specialists
[africaautismalliance.org/
resources/health-specialist](https://africaautismalliance.org/resources/health-specialist)



Autism centres
[africaautismalliance.org/
resources/autism-center](https://africaautismalliance.org/resources/autism-center)



Schools
[africaautismalliance.org/
resources/schools](https://africaautismalliance.org/resources/schools)



Teachers
[africaautismalliance.org/
find-a-teacher](https://africaautismalliance.org/find-a-teacher)

Questions? Talk to us

Message us on WhatsApp at
+27 71 398 1414 or email
info@africaautismalliance.org.

Given to you by _____

Clinic or contact _____