

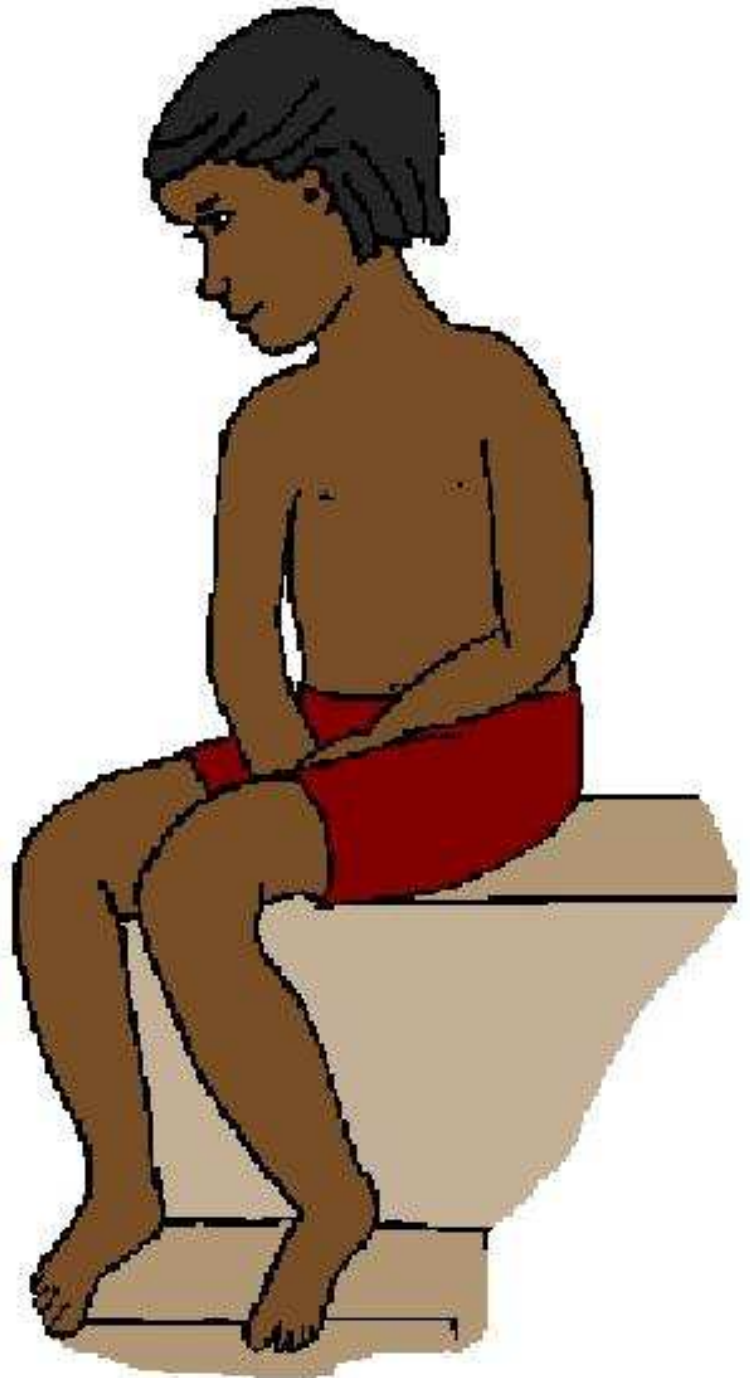
Guidance about Autism

**Educational material for health workers to
instruct people who take care of an autistic
child in Bangladesh**

*By Selma Mulder
In association with:*



*September 2001
Institute Occupational Therapy,
Hogeschool van Amsterdam*



Guidance about Autism

Educational material for health workers to instruct people who take care of an autistic child in Bangladesh

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September 2001

In association with:
Stichting Shishu Niketan

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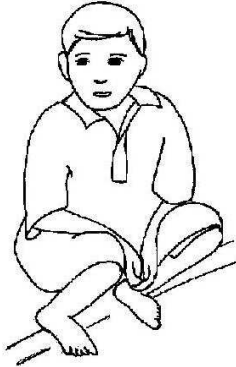
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Preface

This is a paper from a student finishing her study at the Institute Occupational Therapy (Instituut Ergotherapie) of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam.

The guidance about autism is made for 'Stichting Niketan'. A foundation in Bangladesh for aid to children with a mental handicap or cerebral palsy.

I hope this material will help health workers in Bangladesh in giving information about autism. And that it will help autistic children, their parents and other people who take care of autistic children, in their relationships and functioning during daily activities.



The guidance is developed with the help of several people. For their support and help I want to thank the following persons:

The volunteers of Stichting Niketan; Christine Hordijk, Renate Boeters, Irma de Lezenne Coulander and Agnes Schouten, for giving me the information and advice in the developing of this educational material.

Ton Satink, teacher and occupational therapist, for his supervision when I was finishing my study.

And, I want to thank Antoinette de Rooij-Termoshuizen, founder of the foundation 'Stichting Niketan', for giving information and advice and for giving me the opportunity to develop this guidance about autism.

*Selma Mulder
September 2001*

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Introduction

This educational material is about children with autism. The educational material is meant for health workers in Bangladesh to support them in giving information and instruction to people who take care of an autistic child. The goal of this material is to improve the guidance about autistic children in Bangladesh for parents and other people who take care of a child with autism.

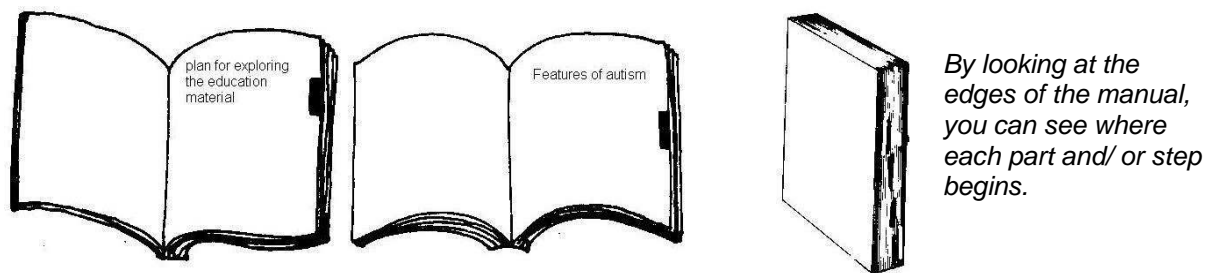
The whole guidance consists of a written manual and seventeen illustrations.

The most important parts are:

- Two plans which will take you step by step through the instructions, a plan for exploring the educational material and a plan for the presentation of the guidance.
- Eight illustrations of features of autism and nine illustrations of suggestions for dealing with features of autism.
- Information about the illustration of the features of autism and suggestions for dealing with these features.

You can find all these parts in this manual.

When you start reading from the beginning you will see all the parts, and read and use them in the right order.



Many of the ideas and suggestions in this manual are possibilities. Do not simply accept and use them. But criticise everything and adapt them, so that you may use what makes sense to you and to the people who listen to the guidance in a way that is considered useful.

Before you start with this manual, let me explain a few used concepts.

When 'he' or 'his' is used in combination with child, 'she' or 'her' is also possible.

When is written about you, the health worker who gives the guidance is meant.

Many ideas and information in this guidance is gathered from different books and other sources. Literature references are not named in the text because it disturbs the reading. The literature, which is used, is described in chapter 'Literature references'. This chapter can be found on page 7.

While developing this educational material many choices were made. These choices are explained in another paper. This paper is in Dutch and is called 'Guidance about autism, Theoretische onderbouwing'. You can find this paper at Stichting Shishu Niketan.

General information about the guidance

Introduction

This part of the manual is about the objective of the guidance, the people for whom the guidance is meant and about some of the choices that are made in the development of the educational material. The information can be helpful in understanding the guidance and the educational material.

Objective of the guidance

The objective of the guidance is giving information about autism. This objective can be subdivided into several objectives. These objectives are:

- To inform people so they can have a better understanding of what autism is and can recognise an autistic child.
- To inform people who have to deal with an autistic child about the features of autism and the abilities of an autistic child. The people will understand the autistic child better and understand why an autistic child behaves the way he does.
- To improve (a more desired) functioning and participation of the child and another person (for example his mother or another person who takes care of the child) in the family and in the community.
- To improve the relation and interaction between the child and the people who take care of the child, during the performance of daily activities, such as eating, dressing and working.

The final intention of the guidance is to make the life of an autistic child more enjoyable by using another kind of approach during the daily activities and in the interaction between the child and other people.

Target group

The guidance can be given to two different groups of people, namely:



1. The people who take care of an autistic child. For example, the mother, father, grandparents, sisters, aunts and other people who live near the child. But also health workers who work with autistic children.
2. All the people who are just interest in the information of the guidance. These may be people who take care of autistic children as well as people who have nothing to do with an autistic child.



It is important to find out what kind of information the people want to hear. Do they like to hear about the features of autism and the suggestions for dealing with the features of autism. You can give the whole guidance. When the parts about the suggestions for dealing with features of autism are too much for the group, you can decide to give only the part about the features of autism.

Before the start of the guidance you can ask the people what they want and what their relation is with the subject of the guidance. With these questions it becomes clear what the target group is.

The chosen features of autism

Autism manifests itself in different (behavioural) features. These features can be divided into three categories according to DSM IV. DSM, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of mental disorders of the USA.



This is an international instrument that is widely used to come to the diagnosis of different kinds of mental disorders and diseases (see for DSM IV 'The features of autism in categories' page 23).

DSM divides three different categories in relation to autism, namely:

- Problems in social interaction,
- Problems in communication
- Repetitive and stereotyped behaviour, interests and activities.

DSM gives twelve problems, every category names four problems. In the guidance there are illustrations of six problems with explanations. Two problems of each category will be discussed. The problems are called features in the guidance.

The following features of Autism will be discussed in the guidance and are reproduced in illustrations:

- Problems with using different forms of non-verbal behaviour, such as: no eye contact, facial and body expressions and gestures.
 - Not trying to have any fun with other children or sharing activities, enjoyment or interest with them (for example by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest).
- 
- Stereotyped (returning and unvarying) and repetitive use of language or curious language. Like repeating the words other people are saying without understanding the meaning and saying strange words.
- 
- Problems in varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play. Like playing in which they have to pretend or games with fantasy.
 - Having an abnormal interest for a stereotyped way of behaving or a typical subject. The interest is abnormal because of the intensity or focus.
 - Stereotypical and repetitive movements with the body, such as banging with the head against the wall, clapping hands, rocking, turning or moving hands in front of the eyes.

Further more in the guidance two other features of autism are added. These are: extreme grief or fury without an apparent reason, and knowing no fear of danger.



The reason to draw only the named features is that all the features have a certain overlap with one of the features that will be discussed. During the guidance all the features are named, most of the time this is in the parts with the illustrations but they are also included for example in a story or a real life example.

The two added features are included in the guidance because some people in Bangladesh have questions about these features and the problems in relation to these features.

Literature references

This chapter contains a few books in the English language about autism. The books provide information that can be useful for you when you want to read more about autism.

The list is in alphabetical order of authors.

- Aarons, M; The handbook of autism, a guide for parents and professionals; Routledge, London (England) 1999.
- Baron-Cohen, S; Autism, the facts; Oxford University Press, Oxford (England) 1993.
- Catalano, R. A.; When autism strikes; Plenum Press, London (England) 1998.
- Randall, P; Supporting families of children with autism; John Wiley & sons, LTD; Chichester (England) 1999.
- Rooij-Termoshuizen, A; Manual mental disability; Stichting Shishu Niketan, Delft 2000.
- Soeharso, Prof. Dr; Helping children with mental handicap and those with behaviour problems; Community based Rehabilitation development and training Centre, Solo (Indonesia) 1995.
- Wing, J. K; Early childhood autism; clinical, educational and social aspects; Pergamon Press, Oxford (England) 1966.



A Few books in the English language about other subjects that are useful in guidance.

- Werner, D; helping health workers learn; The Hesperian Foundation, Palo Alto (USA) 1982.
- Werner, D; Disabled Village children, a guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families; The Hesperian Foundation, 2de edition, Palo Alto (USA) 1987.

In the development of this guidance the above- mentioned literature in English and the following books in Dutch were used:

- Aarons, M; Gittens, T; Autisme-werkboek sociale vaardigheden; Acco, Leuven/ Leusden 1998.
- Peeters, T; Autisme van begrijpen tot begeleiden; Hadewijch, Antwerpen- Baarn 1994.
- Snijders- Oomen, A.W.M; Autisme en aanverwante communicatie stoornissen, behandeling bij jonge kinderen; Dekkers & van de Vegt, Assen 1990.

A few websites about autism and other subjects that are useful:

- www.autismlinks.org.sg
The website of 'Autistic association Singapore', a website with information about autism.
- www.autism-society.org
The website of 'The autism society of America' ,
- www.autism.org
The website of 'The centre for the study of autism', a website with information about autism.
- www.healthwrights.com
A website with the books that are written by D., Werner (see above).

And of course the website of the foundation' Stichting Shishu Niketan'.

- www.welcome.to/ssn

Preparring and performing the guidance

Introduction

The goal of this part of the manual is to support you in the preparation and the performance of the guidance about autism. In this part of the manual you can find two plans which will take you step by step through the instructions:



- Steps in exploring the educational material.
- Steps in performing the guidance.

This part also describes the elements of guidance and the participation of the listeners. You can find this information in the following chapter.

Aspects of the guidance

In the guidance there are some aspects that are important to think about before you start with giving the guidance. These aspects have influence at the performance of the guidance and on how the guidance can affect your listeners.

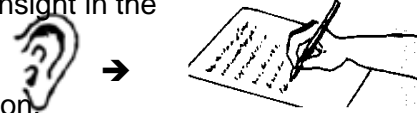
The different elements of guidance

The guidance consist of giving information, helping the persons to get insight in their own situation, giving instruction and supporting in the performing or implementation of the instructions.

Guidance can give people information about a disorder, this guidance gives information about the disorder autism. The information makes clear what autism is. The information enables them to understand the child in a better way and recognise an autistic child. The guidance about the features of autism can be given either to a large group or a small group of people.

The people who take care of the child or have to deal with him in another way can use the suggestions for dealing with features of autism for improving the relationship with the child. It is important that these people and the child get good instruction in how to perform the ways of dealing with features.

Every child is different and has his own needs. Together with the child and the other person(s)(for example his mother) you have to look for ways of dealing that matches with their specific situation. For this you and the mother need insight in the situation of the child and how other people influence the child's environment. For this you have to listen to the mother and to the child. You also have to gather information.



You can write down this information.

Choosing and using the right ways of dealing with features is difficult, that is why it is so important that you give instructions and support in the implementation of the instructions in the home situation of a child. This way the child and the mother, or another person, have benefit of the (new) approach.

You can use the illustrations as a support in the verbal instruction when you give instructions and education to a person and a child about the home situation.

When you give education about one autistic child it is best to give it individually or in a small group of people.

This manual does not go any further into the subject of helping the persons to get an understanding of their own situation, giving instruction and supporting in the performing of the instructions for the child and his mother (or another person) in the home situation.

The objective is to support the family in the emotional and practical field. Give the familymembers of the child the opportunity to tell how they are feeling about the whole situation or about some special problems they have with the child. A lot of parents do not know much about the autistic disorder their child has. It is important that they get the right information and that they have the opportunity to express their feelings. They can also use some good advice for some practical problems.

For these activities you can use the illustrations with features and suggestions, the information that is given on the back of the illustrations and the information in this manual.

Participation of the listeners

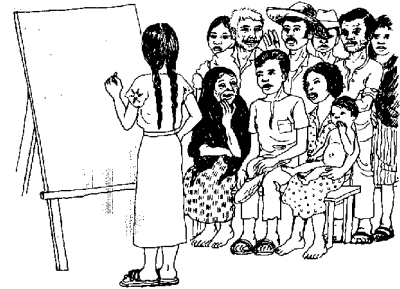
It is important that you transfer the information clearly to the audience. Beneficial to the transfer of information is that the people take part in an active way in the guidance.



Asking questions and giving space for question makes the people contributing in the guidance. The questions can make the guidance personal for the people because they tell of their own experiences.

You can use the following suggestions to promote active participation of the listeners:

- Starts the guidance by asking questions to the listeners such as: 'What do you know about autism?' and 'What are your experiences with an autistic child?'
- Ask the people if they recognise what you are telling when you tell about the features of autism. Ask the people to tell about their experience with a child with the feature of autism.
- Ask the people to tell about their autistic child. Every child is different, by hearing different stories the people get a better image of what autism is.
- Ask the people to think about ways of dealing with the child. Show them a few features and ask the people to think of an applicable way of dealing. In a discussion you can talk in the group about the suggestions of the people.
- Ask the people to give examples of how one could perform a given suggestion. Like suggestion C; 'Use gestures, mime and objects as a support in the verbal communication.' An example can be 'going asleep' personate with a gesture and an object. For example bending your head to your shoulder, holding your folding hands under your head and closing your eyes. An example for an object can be a blanket.



The named suggestions are possibilities, but you can think of other things to enhance the participation of the listeners.

Plan for exploring the educational material

Before a health worker gives the guidance about autism, it is important that he has a full command of the educational material. When you know the educational material well, you are familiar with what you are telling the people and you can answer the questions of these people a lot easier.

This plan can help you in learning to know the guidance. It is your own choice if you want to use this plan for exploring the material, you can explore the material in your own way.

The best is to work through the plan with a few other people. You can learn from each other. Look at every step to decide if you do it with the whole group, in a small group or alone. Take enough time for getting to know the educational material. You can repeat some steps of the plan. For example those that you find more important or difficult to explain.



Choose one person who is responsible for the educational material. His task is taking care of the different parts of the material to stay together and are kept in a good condition.

Steps in exploring the educational material

Step 1

Look at the illustrations with the numbers 1 up to 8, one by one. Read the texts on the back aloud.

Step 2

Think of an example of your own for every feature of autism. Write the examples down, later on you can use them in the guidance, for example in answering questions. You can also write down the examples other people know.



Step 3

- Lay down the illustrations of features in a way every one can see them. Put the illustrations with the suggestions (letters A up to H) on a pile and shuffle them. Take one illustration with a feature and search an illustration with a suggestion that is applicable to the feature. When you do this you can read the text on the back of the illustrations with the suggestions. When you have chosen one, you tell why you think this suggestion for dealing with features of autism is useful for this one specifically. In the group you can discuss what the opinion is of others about your choice. Write down your choice and also write your own argumentation for it.



- Take a new illustration with a suggestion and look again for an applicable illustration with suggestions. Discuss your choice in the group and write down anything that is useful. Put the illustration with the suggestion back in the pile and lay aside the illustration with the feature. Keep doing this until there is no illustration with a feature left. The illustrations with the suggestions must be put back in the pile because they are applicable to more than one feature.
- You can check in the chapter 'suggestions for dealing with features of autism' if you have chosen the right features to the suggestions.

You can also give your own suggestions as a replacement for the given suggestions. Other people can think of your suggestions, ask questions about it and learn from it.

Step 4

- Read the whole manual, take enough time for it. Write down the things you do not understand and questions that you have. When you have read the whole manual, you discuss with other people the things you do not understand and the questions you have.
- Review and read the texts of the illustrations with the numbers 1 up to 8, with the letters A up to H and with the symbol ★ once again. You did not see the illustration with the symbol ★ before, so pay more attention to this illustration and the text on the back of it as well as the text in the manual. Explain why these general conditions are applicable to more features of autism.



Step 5

In the manual you have read about participation of the listeners during the guidance. In the chapter some suggestions are given but there are more possible ways or questions that you can use to enhance the participation.

Think of questions and other means you can use. Write them down and discuss them in the group. The things you invent can be used later on in the guidance.

Step 6

Make a list for yourself or with the group of what you have to do before and during the guidance. Look with each other if you write them down in the right order. This list can be used when you are giving the guidance, it avoids forgetting.



Step 7

- Practice the guidance by trying it on each other. Take your time to prepare for the practice.



The people who are not doing the guidance practice can play for example a parent who comes to listen to the guidance. They can make up questions and give tips like how to do something better. Also tell the speaker what he did well during the practice.

- Change turns and let someone else practice on the guidance.

When you (and the others) think you know the educational material and you succeeded in giving the guidance, you can give the guidance for a target group.

Plan for the performing of the guidance

You can use the following steps during the performance of the guidance. It is a plan for giving information during the guidance. The steps are summarised in this chapter. The following pages of this manual are ordered like the steps in the plan. You can recognise the different parts by the different colours, every part has a label with the number of the step at the edge of the page. By following the steps you give the guidance correctly. With every step is described what you can do at that part of the guidance. Texts and materials that you need in that step can be found after the description of the step. When you have read or performed the step you can continue with the following step, by turning the coloured page.

Steps in performing the guidance

Preparation

- Check if you have all the parts of the educational material.
- Look for a good location.
- Choose a good time for the meeting .
- Know which target group you are giving the guidance (see page 5)
- Read through the manual once more.
- Get the people acquainted with the guidance (and the time and place of the guidance) and invite the people to the guidance meeting.



The guidance

Step 1

Explain the objective of the educational meeting.



Step 2

Tell the story about Mintu

Step 3

Give an introduction to the guidance with an explanation about autism.

Step 4

- Hold up an illustration with a feature and tell the explaining text.
 - Explain what the people can see on the illustration of Shuhel.
 - Explain the other example to the people.
 - Show gestures, which belong to the feature.



Step 5

Ask the listening people about their experience with a feature of autism. And ask the people if they have questions about the information you are giving them.



Step 6

Repeat step 4; showing a illustration and explaining about the feature. After that repeat step 5; asking questions.

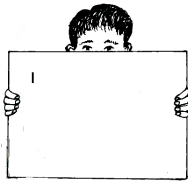
Do this until you have shown all the illustrations about features. When you have done this, you go on with step 12. Only when you want to tell about the suggestions for dealing with features, you proceed with step 7.

Step 7

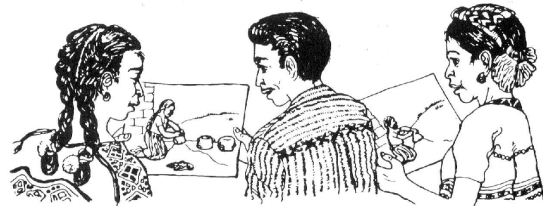
Give an introduction to the guidance about the suggestions.

Step 8

Show the people the illustration with the symbol ★. Explain what they see on the illustration with the help of the text on the back of the illustration, as well as why the general conditions are applicable to the features of autism.

Step 9

- Hold up an illustration with a feature and explain once again what it represents. After this you hold up an illustration with suggestions that is applicable to the feature. It is best to start with the illustration with number 1 and letter A on the back in the left corner.
- Explain what the people can see on the illustration. You can do this with the help of the text on the back of the illustration. Explain to the people why the suggestion is applicable for a feature.

Step 10

Ask the audience about their experience and ask them if they have any questions.

Step 11

Repeat step 8; showing an illustration and telling about the suggestions. After that repeat step 9; asking questions.

Do this until you have shown all the illustrations about suggestions (illustrations with the letters A till H).

Step 12

Tell that this the end of the guidance and that the people can always come to you (or another health worker) with questions.

If you want you can give a summary of the features and/ or the suggestions for dealing with the features, to the people.



Preparation

Before starting with the guidance a certain amount of preparation is necessary. When you have done the preparation you can start with step 1.

- Check if you have all the parts of the educational material. The whole guidance consists of a manual, eight illustrations with features of autism and nine illustrations of suggestions for dealing with features of autism. You can use the contents for checking the parts of the manual.
- Look for a good location. The place should have enough room for the number of people that will attend the guidance. Look for a place where you can stand in such a way that everyone can see you.
- Choose a good time for the meeting. It is important to keep in mind how much time the guidance will take, decide if you want to use breaks or do it in one continuous stretch. It is also a possibility to divide the guidance in different parts over more than one day.
- Know which target group you are giving the guidance (see page 5). When you know this you can decide which information you will give in the guidance.
- Read through the manual once more.
- Inform the people about the guidance (and the time and place of the guidance). You can do this by telling the people or by an announcement poster.
- And invite people to the guidance meeting.



Step 1

- Explain the objective of the guidance meeting.

Objective: giving information and education about autism.

The guidance informs and explains the people about the features of autism and the possibilities of an autistic child.

People who take care of an autistic child can use the information and instructions for a better relationship and mutual understanding with the child during the performance of daily activities, such as eating, dressing and working. With this information (and the help of a health worker) the child and another person (for example his mother) can come to a more desired functioning.



When you have done step 1 you can continue with step 2. After turning the next coloured page you will find step 2.

Step 2

- Tell the story about Mintu

Stories can bring learning closer to life, especially true stories told from personal experience. Real -life examples can help people look at things in a different way. Also real- life examples make it easier to understand what you want to tell about children with autism.



- After telling the story you can ask the listeners if they recognise something in it of their own experiences with an autistic child.

When you have done step 2 you can continue with step 3. After turning the next coloured page you find step 3.

The story about Mintu

When Mintu was born his parents and grandparents were excited because he was the first boy in the family. His grandmother loved to hold Mintu, but she noticed that he did not smile back at her, he did not cuddle up like his mother did when she was a baby. He just lay there. He would lie for hours watching nothing but the clouds. Friends said what a good baby Mintu was and how lucky his parents were.

Mintu did not start to make sounds or copy his parent's behaviour when playing. He could walk by the time he was nine months old, but he did not talk. He did not talk until he was two years old, and then only a few simple words his family could understand.

Mintu still did not respond to his parents. He only played with one block, which he kept banging on everything. He carried it everywhere and yelled and screamed if he could not find it. Mintu also was mad about water. When he had a chance he walked in the water and splashed himself. He could do this for hours and hours. When it rained he wanted to go outside and he danced in the rain. Those were the only times it looked like he was smiling.



By the time he was five years old Mintu had grown quite tall and strong, but he did not play with other children. He would sit and rock himself and stick one finger in his ear. For a while he spat out food with lumps in it, would not chew, and still wanted to drink from a bottle.



He screamed whenever he was taken to new places, so his parents started to leave him at home. His father ignored Mintu, he could not play and he did not do what other children liked to do. Most children liked following their father or mother and trying to do what adults did.

When Mintu was six years old, he had been kept at home, sitting mostly by himself. He did not speak, only made strange noises when he wanted something.

Now his mother seems to understand what he wants. His mother spends a lot of time on the communication with Mintu. She repeats things, draws things, points to objects and makes gestures. Now Mintu can understand more clearly what his mother says to him.

Mintu always joins his mother when she is going to wash the clothes in the pool. During the time his mother is doing the washing, Mintu splashes himself.

Once his mother tried to do the washing of a pair of shorts together with Mintu. She held Mintu's hand and together they scrubbed the clothes. Mintu liked it and wanted to wash more clothes.

From that moment on Mintu helped his mother every time with washing. He was good at it. When he walks to the pool with his mother, he straight away knows what is expected from him. He sits at the waterside and does the washing. During that activity he is very quiet, you can see he likes doing it. During the rest of the day he is also more calm. He is still a boy who is difficult to deal with. But his mother can understand her boy better and better. Mintu can deal with the world around him in a better way because of the new approach of his mother and because of the daily returning familiar activity of washing with his mother.

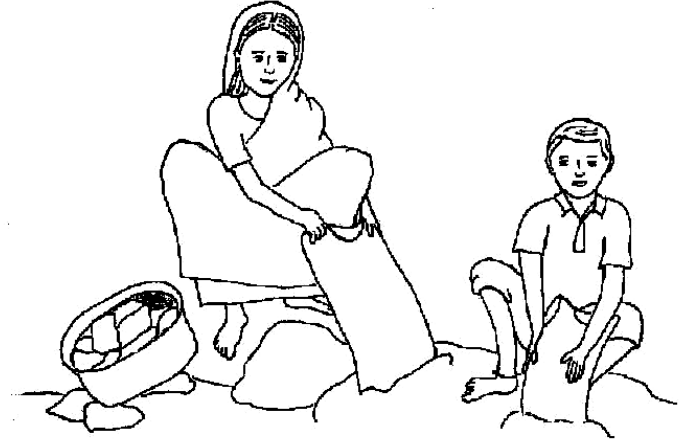
The story is about Mintu, an autistic boy. In the story different features of autism are named. Some named features are:

- Mintu did not copy his parents' behaviour when playing.
- Mintu did not play with other children.
- Mintu sat and rocked himself.
- He screamed when he was taken to new places.
- He had problems in the interaction with the people around him.
- He played with a block in a stereotyped way.

The story tells about the disabilities of Mintu because of the autistic features but it also tells us that an autistic child has possibilities. And the story also tells about the difficulties for the parents and the feelings of misunderstanding. For parents it can be difficult to raise an autistic child.

When the abilities of an autistic child are used the child can have participation in the family. Like Mintu, who helps his mother with the washing. Mintu is very good at that kind of work and he loves it.

An autistic child needs a different approach than another child. But he is able to do a lot and he can be very good at it.

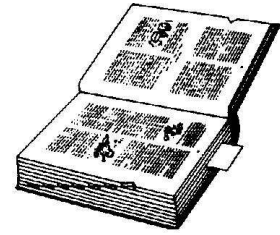


Step 3

- Give an introduction to the guidance with an explanation about autism. You can use the following text, but you can tell it in own understandable words.

You can also use parts of the DSM IV. The problems of autism are named very clearly. When you have other articles or texts about autism, you can also use them in this short explanation of autism. It depends on the listeners what you will use and tell.

Behind the page with the title 'Gathered information about autism' you can place the articles and other texts.



When you have done step 3 you can continue with step 4, step 5 and step 6. After turning the next coloured page you find these steps.

Explanation about Autism

You can give the following explanation at step 3 in the performing of the guidance:

An autistic child is born with the disability of autism. When a child has autism most of the time it is not immediately visible. When you are busy with the child, play or talk with him, little by little it becomes clear that the child is different from other children of his age.

Autism is a disorder that influences some aspects of the development of the child, for example the development of speech or play. Only some aspects of the development are disrupted or different but this influences the entire behaviour of the child.

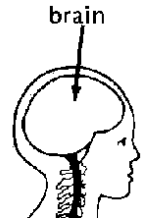
It is a permanent, very severe handicap that can not be cured.

The handicap manifests itself in the psychosocial development of children.

The probable cause of autism is a disorder in the brains. Autistic children have problems with processing in the brain of stimuli (or information) which comes from outside and inside the body. They do get the stimuli (such as hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling of something) from their senses (such as their eyes, ears, nose and mouth) but giving them the correct explanation is difficult. Because that is so difficult for the autistic child the world is chaotic, a chaos of many impressions without any connection or meaning.

Because of the disorder in the brain, autistic people do not develop like normal at the social, cognitive and motor developing areas.

That is the reason why autistic children above all things have problems in social interaction, communication and behaviour.



Children with autism are likely to do the following things:

- They may have unusual responses to the environment and have unusual behaviour. For example: becoming very excited at a light or sound, or when touched. Some children have special sense symptoms, like having a high tolerance for pain or over-sensitive for certain materials. Things other children interpret as comforting (being cuddled or held by an adult) they may find frightening or even painful. Some autistic children may not respond at all, and seem to be in a trance or deaf. Many times an autistic child is called deaf, and sometimes a deaf child is called autistic. It is important that it is clear



what kind of disorder the child has. A difference between a deaf and an autistic child is that most of the time the deaf child can express himself better with emotions, gestures and body postures. An autistic child has problems with expressing himself in a normal way and understanding the expression of another person.



- They have problems with spoken language (speech). For example: they may not learn the names of food, drinks, or clothes and simply cry when they want something. If they do learn these names, and use them, they do not put long sentences or have conversations with others.
- They have problems making friends and understanding other people. The social skills are very limited. For example: they may be able to play beside other children, but not share toys or obey the rules of a game. Their play lacks imagination, they do not imitate what they see adults do in the same way, and do not learn from that experience.
- Their play will seem odd, or disorganised. Young children repeat activities over and over again to learn. There is a purpose to what they do, they bounce balls, push cars along, fit puzzles together. Children with autism use repetition differently and do not learn from that activity in the same way. They may simply carry toys around, only turn the car wheels, or roll a ball over and over again. There is no purpose to the activities they repeat.
- Their development is uneven. Usually young children develop their physical, speaking, hearing and social skills about the same time. Once children can move they can follow adults and watch them, this is how they learn.

Then, when they can speak they begin to control the world by using words, 'I want to go too', 'I am hungry, please may I have...' They learn to do the things without any special training. However, children with autism do not learn that way, for example: they may have good physical skills, they walk, run and jump, but they may not learn to use words and always have problems sharing or playing with other children.

Children with autism are trying to make sense out of what they see and hear, but their behaviour is difficult to understand, as it is so unusual.

The way an autistic disorder manifests itself is very individual, but the cause of the disorder is always the same: A disorder in the informationprocessing of the brains; They do get the stimuli from their senses but they do not process it correctly in their brain.



There are autistic children with a normal intelligence but also children who are mentally retarded. Some autistic children have an abnormal high intelligence level or are talented in one specific thing, like painting.

Autism can not be cured. With intense care it is possible to improve the performance of daily activities of the child and the people around him. For this the child needs a lot of individual attention.

An autistic child needs another kind of approach in the way they are raised and in the interaction. This approach can make the world liveable for the child. With the illustrations and descriptions of the features of autism will become clear what autism is.

The features of autism in categories

Autism manifests itself in different (behavioural) features. These features can be divided into three categories according to DSM IV. DSM, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of mental disorders of the USA. This is an international instrument that is widely used to come to the diagnosis of different kinds of disorders and diseases. Autism is one of the disorders in this DSM.

The three categories with the different features are as follows:

1. Problems in social interaction:

- a) Problems with using different forms of non-verbal behaviour, such as: no eye contact, facial and body expression and gestures.
- b) Not being able to have any relationships with children of the same age
- c) Not trying to have any fun with other children or sharing activities, enjoyment or interest with them (for example by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest).
- d) Not sharing any emotional or social feelings with other people.



2. Problems in communication:

- a) Delay in, or no development of spoken language (and also no compensation through alternative ways of communication such as gesture or mime)
- b) When they can speak they are still not able to start and to maintain a conversation with someone.
- c) Stereotyped (returning and unvarying) and repetitive use of language or curious languages. Like repeating the words other people are saying without understanding the meaning and saying strange words.
- d) Problems in varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play. Like playing in which they have to pretend or games with fantasy.



3. Repetitive and Stereotyped behaviour, interests and activities:

- a) Having an abnormal interest for a stereotyped way of behaving or a typical subject. The interest is abnormal because of the intensity or focus.
- b) Needing to perform specific and non-functional routines or rituals. Always wanting to do the same things in the same way.
- c) Stereotypical and repetitive movements with the body, such as banging with the head against the wall, clapping hands, rocking, turning or moving hands in front of eyes.
- d) Continually being busy with and focused on parts of objects



Gathered information about autism

Step 4

- Hold up an illustration with a feature and tell the explaining text.
It is best to start with the illustration with number 1 on the back in the left corner.
Try not to read to the people but try to tell the text by heart and use the back of the illustration as a support. That is a reason why it is important that you have a good command of the educational material before you start with giving the guidance.
You can find the illustrations behind the chapter that is titled 'features of autism'
- Explain what the people can see on the illustration of Shuhel. You can use the explanation that is written in the chapter that is titled 'Features of autism'.



- Explain the other example to the people, you can find this example immediately after the description of the feature and illustration. You can also use other examples, if you have these.
- Show gestures, which belong to the feature.
In the part 'Features of autism' you can find a description of gestures of a feature if this is applicable.

Step 5

- Ask the audience about their experience with a feature of autism. And ask the people if they have questions about the information you tell them. This way you will involve them more.
You can do this after showing an illustration and explaining it, or during the showing and explaining.



Step 6

- Repeat step 4; showing an illustration and explaining about the feature. After that repeat step 5; asking questions.
Do this until you have shown all the illustrations about features.
When you want to tell about the suggestions for dealing with features, you proceed with step 7. Only when you want to finish the guidance, you proceed further with step 12.

After turning the next coloured page you will find the steps 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. When you want to continue with the suggestions for dealing with features of autism, you can proceed with these steps, after doing step 6. When you want to continue with step 12, you have to turn the page with on the edge of the page written 'Step 12'.

The Features of autism

In this chapter you can see in small pictures the illustrations with features of autism. The goal of this chapter is to inform about the features of autism.

The texts with the titles 'features' and 'illustration', written next to the pictures is also written at the back of the illustrations.

The illustrations are explained in a few sentences, you can use this text in the explanation during the guidance. With every feature a real-life example is given.

Some features have a description that consists of gestures. You can make these gestures as a support of the illustrations and verbal explanation.

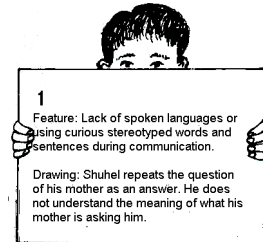


You can find the numbers on the front of every feature and also at the back of an illustration in the left corner. Eight Features of autism are drawn and will be discussed in this guidance. But there are more features, the eight features are only a selection.

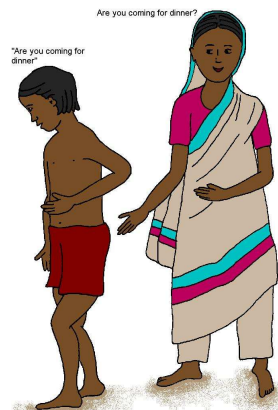
The way an autistic disorder manifests itself is very individual, but the cause of the disorder is always the same: A disorder in the information processing of the brains; They do get the stimuli from their senses but they do not process it correctly in their brains.

The features that are described can be manifest in different ways. Not every named feature has to manifest itself with an autistic child.

In the illustrations you see Shuhel. Shuhel is an autistic boy. In the illustrations you can see which features of autism Shuhel has.



The features



1. Feature: Lack of spoken language or using curious stereotyped¹ words and sentences during communication.

Illustration: Shuhel repeats his mother's question as an answer. He does not understand the meaning of what his mother is asking him.

Shuhel can speak a little. It looks as if he can speak very well, because he says whole sentences. But he can only repeat things that are said to him. And when you check, you will find out he does not understand the meaning of what he is saying.

Example: Jewel began to speak at an age of four years. He never spoke before but he immediately used difficult words.

He uses his own private language, he uses words the wrong way but in a consequent manner. He says 'blanket' when he means bed. He for instance calls himself 'you'. When his mother asks 'Do you want food', Jewel answers 'You want food'.

One can not have a conversation with Jewel although he uses sentences of five words.

He also talks to himself. When he does so, he uses words or sentences that are said to him during the day or he uses texts from books. For other people this speaking is difficult to comprehend.

¹ Explanation: Stereotyped means returning and unvarying behaviour (or speech)

2. Feature: Playing with one object in a stereotyped way and not vary or try other new toys.



Illustration: Shuhel only plays with jars. He places the jars in a stereotyped way of playing in a pattern. In this pattern the jars are placed in a line and between two jars is a space that is the same every time.

The way Shuhel is playing is not normal, he is bounded to a dysfunctional ritual. For him it is a way of expressing himself. Because he is bounded to it, a new toy or game is difficult. It gives tension and that is something he wants to avoid. Always doing the same gives him a feeling of certainty and safety.

Example: Korim is six years old. He looks like a normal boy of his age. The whole day he taps on his favourite objects, the bricks outside the house and bottles inside the house. When the bottles or bricks are taken away from him, he gets upset. He reacts to nothing. Offering other toys has no effect, he throws them away. He only wants to play with the bricks and bottles.

3. Feature: Problems with using and understanding of gestures and postures in the interaction with other people.



Illustration: Shuhel does not understand that his mother gesticulates with her arm that he has to come to her.

Shuhel has problems with using and understanding gestures. When someone is only doing a gesture he usually understands something is expected of him. But what? Most of the time he does not know what someone wants. He reacts to the gesture but most of the time he does something else than is asked of him. Other examples of gestures that Shuhel does not understand are saying hello and smiling.

Example: Moyna has difficulties with communicating. When someone smiles at her, she never smiles back like other children do. She does not smile back because she does not understand what a smile means. Moyna does not talk. There was a time that she talked, but suddenly she stopped talking.

She does not react to other people, sometimes she only seems to react to her mother.

Gestures: give examples of gestures that we use in communication but are difficult to understand for an autistic child. You can make the following gesture:

- The gesture for 'hello': the right hand bringing to the head.

4. **Feature:** Problems in playing with other children and sharing toys with other children.

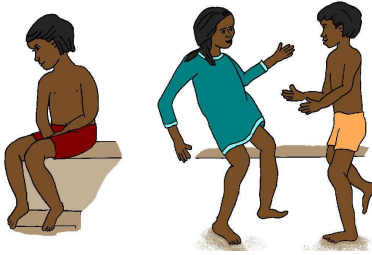


Illustration: Shuhel keeps aloof of other playing children, he prefers to play alone.

The reason why Shuhel does not play with other children is that Shuhel does not understand what the other children are saying. And why they are doing the game in that specific way. It is too difficult for him, so it is more fun to play his own game alone. In his own game he knows what he can expect, there are no unexpected things that could confuse him.

Example: When Narkis plays with another girl, she always beats the other girl. Narkis starts with beating when the other girl takes the toy from her. The other girl only wants to play together with the toy. Narkis does not understand that and is getting mad.

Narkis also beats the girl when she touches her during playing. Narkis beats because she wants to protect herself, she experiences being touched by another as a threat.

5. **Feature:** Abnormal interest for certain movements, objects and patterns.

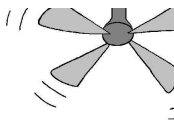


Illustration: The turning movement of the ventilator and the wheels of a toy fascinate Shuhel. He copies the turning movement in his body movement.



Shuhel is crazy about turning things. When he looks at an object that has a turning movement, he focuses on it. That you can do other things with the object or that it is meant for something else is not understood by Shuhel. This is the way of playing he likes to do.

Example: Kazal is a two-year-old girl. For months now she only closes and opens the door over and over again. The smile on her face tells she is enjoying it. She can look fascinated at the door when someone else opens and closes it. The movements opening and closing fascinate her, every time she says: 'open' and 'close'. When she says 'open' she spreads her arms and when she says 'close' she brings her arms together with the clapping of her hands.

6. Feature: Stereotyped and repetitive movement with the body.

Illustration: Shuhel 'flutters like a bird' with his arms and hands in a curious way or beats himself in the face when he is excited or afraid.



Shuhel is quickly confused. When there are too many things to distract him, like too much noise, he has to process all these things in his brains. This is difficult for him, for Shuhel the world seems chaotic, a chaos of many impressions without any connection or meaning.

He has to express his emotions about all these things.

Expressing himself is very difficult. The only way of expressing for him is beating himself. When he is excited about nice things his way of expressing is fluttering like a bird. Also with other emotions, like grief or happiness, fluttering and beating is his way of expressing himself.

Example: Jarina always has a bead between her fingers. She holds it between two fingers and turns it with the fingers of her other hand. She is doing the turning movement with her fingers when she is excited. She is excited when there are many people near her or when she is in unknown surrounding environment. For Jarina it is difficult to express her emotions. The stereotyped movements are her way of expressing herself when she is scared but also when she is very happy.

When Jarina does not have a bead, she still will move her fingers. Then she moves all her fingers up and down and makes the same turning movement only this time without a bead.

Gestures: give examples of gestures or movement used by autistic children in their stereotyped movement. You can make the following gestures or movements:

- The movement of jumping up and down and spinning around: jump a few times up and down, and spin around your body axis.
- The movement of rocking with body or head: sitting on the ground you rock with your body and head first to the left and then to the right. Repeat this a few times.
- The movement of fluttering: flutter like a bird with your arms, and make little jumps with your feet.
- The movements of turning of arms and fingers: turn with your arms, hands and finger when you have spread your arms.

7. Feature: Extreme grief or fury without an apparent reason.

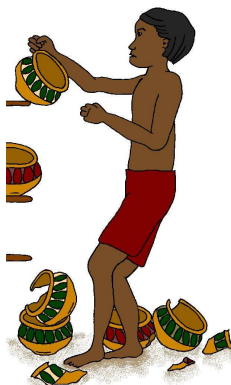


Illustration: Shuhel has an outburst of fury in which he breaks stuff around him. It seems he does not see that he is doing something wrong.

For Shuhel it is difficult to express himself. When he wants something but his mother does not understand what or when he can not have it, he gets an outburst of fury. In his fury he can not control himself and breaks everything around him. This way he is expressing his discord.

Example: Every day Nasmul has an outburst of fury. In such an outburst of fury he scratches himself with his nails. Sometimes he also scratches other people when they come too close to him during an outburst. The fits usually last 10 minutes, after this he is so tired he falls asleep.

8. Feature: Knowing no fear of danger with the consequence of being found in dangerous situations.

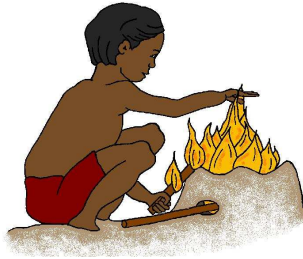


Illustration: Shuhel is playing with fire, he does not see the danger of the hot flames. His arm is in the fire which causes burns.

The dancing of the fire flames fascinates Shuhel. He wants to touch them, but that causes burns. He has a high tolerance of pain, so the pain does not alert him for the danger. Shuhel does not realise what the danger of fire is.

Example: Julhas is a ten-year-old boy. When he is scared he sits down and does not stand up for a long time. His mother and father have to talk to him for a couple of hours before he stands up and walks again. When he walks he takes no notice of the traffic. He has no fear of being knocked down by a car. Sometimes he stands still or sits in the middle of a road. You can tell Julhas a hundred times he has to look out for the cars, but he does not see the danger and the next time he will still be walking among the cars.

Step 7

- Give an introduction to the guidance about the suggestions.

You can give the following introduction:

In this part of the guidance we will tell you about suggestions that can be used for dealing with an autistic child.

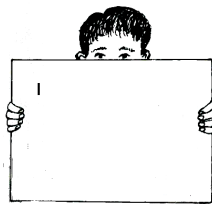
The suggestions do not always work the way they are described in the argumentation.

Every child is different and has his own needs. That is also the reason why instructions of a field worker or another health worker are important in applying a suggestion for dealing with autism for a child. A way of dealing with a feature never has an immediate result.

The child needs time, sometimes he needs weeks, months or even years. And during that time a way of dealing with his feature of autism has to be rehearsed, over and over again.

The suggestions are one way of dealing with a feature of autism, but it is not always the right way for every child. With the suggestions we want to give an image of the possibilities an autistic child has with the use of another kind of approach during the raising and in the interaction with him. It helps making the world liveable for the child. With the illustrations and descriptions of the suggestions, it will become clear in the guidance what the possibilities are.

Step 8



- Show the people the illustration with the symbol ★. Explain what they see on the illustration with the help of the text on the back of the illustration, as well as why the general conditions are applicable to the features of autism. You can find the information for this in the manual, the explanation is titled: Argumentation (see chapter 'suggestions for dealing with features of autism').

- You can find the illustrations with suggestions for dealing with features of autism after the chapter 'suggestions for dealing with features of autism'.

Step 9

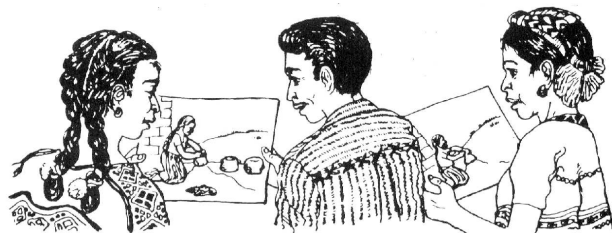
- Hold up an illustration with a feature and explain once again what the people should see in it. After this you hold up an illustration with suggestions that are applicable to the feature.

Mind that some suggestions for dealing with features of autism are applicable to more than one feature of autism (see the chapter 'suggestions for dealing with features of autism').

It is best to start with the illustration with number 1 and letter A on the back in the left corner.

- Explain what the audience can see on the illustration. You can do this with the help of the text on the back of the illustration.

Explain why the suggestion is applicable for a feature, you can find the information for this in the manual, the explanation is titled: argumentation (see chapter 'suggestions for dealing with features of autism').



Step 10

- Ask the audience about their experience and ask them if they have questions. You can do this after showing an illustration and explaining it, or during the showing and explaining.

Step 11

- Repeat step 9; showing an illustration and telling about the suggestions. After that repeat step 10; asking questions. Do this until you have shown all the illustrations about suggestions (illustrations with the letters A up to H).

When you have done step 7 up to 11 you can continue with step 12. After turning the next coloured page you find step 12.

Suggestions for dealing with features of autism

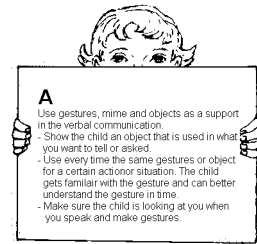
In this chapter can be found suggestions for dealing with features of autism. The aim of this chapter is to explain how to deal with the features of autism.

With every suggestion there is a reference as to which features the suggestion is applicable.

Moreover, an explanation is given why the suggestion can be useful for a specific feature. You can find this under 'argumentation'.

The suggestions serve only to assist someone to deal with a child that has a feature of autism.

You can find the letter written before every suggestion also at the back of an illustration in the left corner.



The suggestions do not always work the way they are described in the argumentation. Every child is different and has his own needs. That is also the reason why instructions of a field worker or another health worker of a centre, are important in the implementation of a suggestion. A health worker has to evaluate how the way of dealing with a feature is working for a child and the people around him.

A way of dealing with a feature never has an immediate result. The child needs time, sometimes he needs weeks, months or even years. And during that time a way of dealing with a feature has to be rehearsed, over and over again.

The guidance and the illustrations about the suggestions for dealing with features can be used as a support in the instruction of parents and other people who take care of autistic children.

The suggestions



- ★ General conditions for dealing with features of autism. Some ways of dealing with autism are applicable to many features of autism. The following points are useful:

- **Visualise words, feelings or activities by gestures and/or objects.**
- **Repeat things, activities, words etc. over and over again.**
- **Make the environment of the child peaceful; not too much noise, not too many people and by giving the child one thing at a time to focus on.**
- **Give the child a fixed place for each of his activities.**

Illustration: Shuhel has to eat. His mother is doing the gesture that is used for eating and holds a plate to make clear that he has to eat. She repeats the gesture she makes and the words she is saying, which gives Shuhel more time to understand what his mother wants. His toys are hidden behind a board, they do not distract him of the food. Shuhel is sitting on his stool, where he always sits on during dinner.

These general conditions are applicable to many features of autism because you can use them in almost every situation. You always have to keep this general condition in mind when you are dealing with an autistic child.

Argumentation for the general conditions:

For autistic children verbal communication is difficult to understand. Through making the communication visual, with gestures and objects, the child can understand it better. Using simple words and short sentences is also important for a better understanding by the child. A child needs time for getting familiar with something that is why it is important to repeat everything. You have to do this every time because most of the time the child will not remember you have done or said the same before. The cause of this is the small differences between the occasions.

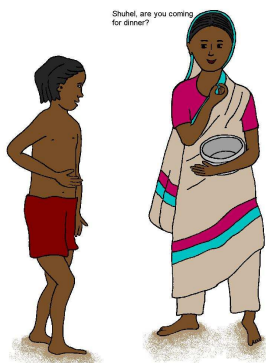
The child is very easily distracted by the things around him. For example it is difficult for the child to eat when a toy lies next to his plate or when he hears a loud noise.

The toy or the noise divert his attention from his food.

When an activity is always done at the same place it becomes clear what is expected from the child when it is taken to that place. For example always playing behind the house and always having dinner in the corner inside the house.

You can do the same with objects.

Using the same places and objects helps in the communication and makes the child feel at ease.



A. Use gestures, mime and objects as a support in the verbal communication.

- Show the child an object that is used in what you want to tell or ask.
- Use every time the same gestures or object for a certain action or situation. The child gets familiar with the gesture and can better understand the gesture in time.
- Make sure the child is looking at you when you speak and make gestures.
- You can also use pictures as a support in the verbal communication.
- Use simple words and short sentences in the verbal communication.

Illustration: Mother asks Shuhel to come for dinner. She says it, holds the jar and makes the gestures that we make when we are eating.

This suggestion is applicable to the following features:

- Feature 3: Lack of spoken languages or using curious stereotyped words and sentences during communication.

Illustration: Shuhel repeats the question of his mother as an answer. He does not understand the meaning of what his mother is asking him.

- Feature 1: Problems with using and understanding of gestures and postures in the interaction with other people.

Illustration: Shuhel does not understand that his mother gesticulates with her arm that he has to come to her.

Argumentation for using gestures and objects:

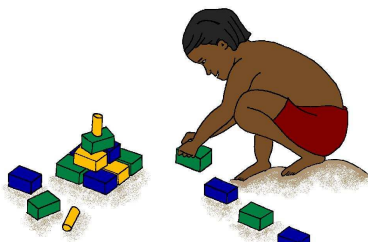
For autistic children it is difficult to learn verbal communication. You have to make the communication visual for the child. You can do this by using objects and gestures as a support of the verbal communication.

Using of an object when you do the gestures makes the communication easier to understand for the child. The object is something the child always will see in a specific situation, for example a jar he always sees during diner time. When you let him see the jar he will think it is time to eat. You can use an object and gesture for every activity.

By using the same object and gestures every time for the same activity the child will get more familiar with it, and it will be easier for the child to understand the meaning of the object and the gesture in time.

If gestures are too difficult because the child does not see the link between the gesture and the meaning, you can try to use pictures or photos (see suggestion C).

It is also good to go back to a lower level of speaking in which you only use short sentences and simple words. Also use many of the same words. The language looks less difficult this way for the child.



B. Decrease the stereotyped way of playing and try to increase varied playing with other toys or objects.

- Give the child other objects with which he can do the same things as the objects he only wants to play with.
- Probably the child does not want the new toy. By playing together with him and by giving him enough time he will use the new toy.
- When the child knows and accepts the new toy you can use it to play other games with him. You can teach the child to put the toy in another pattern for example.
- Give the child a lot of time to get used to the new toys or objects.
- Play together with the child when you introduce new toys or games.
- Choose a game that is not too difficult for the child.
- Choose a structured game, games that consist of recurrent actions and clear rules.
- Encourage the child and give him compliments.

Illustration: Shuhel plays with blocks. First he places the blocks also in a stereotyped way in a pattern, like he did with the jars. When he is used to playing with the blocks he can make other things with the blocks like a tower.

This suggestion is applicable to the following feature:

- Feature 4: Playing with one object in a stereotyped way and not vary or try other new toys.

Illustration: Shuhel only plays with jars. He places the jars in a stereotyped way of playing in a pattern. In this pattern the jars are placed in a line and between two jars is a space that is the same every time.

- Feature 5: Abnormal interest for certain movement, objects and patterns

Illustration: The turning movement of the ventilator and the wheels of a toy fascinate Shuhel. He copies the turning movement in his body movement.

Argumentation for increasing varied playing:

Changes of things or behaviour are difficult to understand for an autistic child. He needs more time than other children do for understanding the meaning of changes and for dealing with changes. Even a little change in furniture or new clothes can make the child upset.

Unexpected things such as a late meal or a delay of the bus can bring the child in panic.

Resistance to changes is the reason why an autistic child always plays with the same objects in a stereotyped (recurring and unvarying) way. It is also the reason why most of the time the child does not accept new toys.

It is difficult for the child to play with other objects or toys in a less stereotyped way. That is why it is important that you first play together with the child. You always have to follow the interest of the child, although these activities might look strange or pointless.

At first the child will not like it when you interfere in his stereotyped activities but after a while the child will learn to accept your presence. After a while you can show the child other toys or games. You can play in a different manner with his toy or with another toy in a stereotyped way. Make sure it is not too different from the activity that has the special interest of the child.

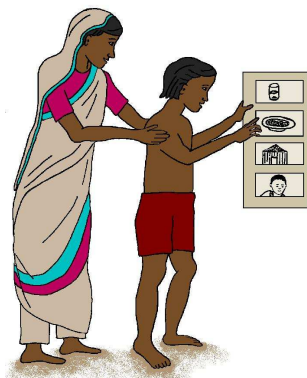
First show the game or toy to the child, then play the game together or play together with the toy, after that maybe the child can, and wants to play the game alone or wants to play alone with the toy. You have to play together for many times and you have to do the game over and over again.

It is important that the child has a positive experience with the new game or toy, that is why it is better not to use a too difficult game. Rewarding the child, for example with compliments (use gestures so the child understands it better) when he is playing the new game stimulates the child.

When the child accepts the new game or toy, you can try new ways of playing or new toys. It takes a lot of time before you have this result. Try to play every day and do this on at fixed hours. In that way the child knows what he can expect.

See also the suggestions and argumentation of E and F.

C. Use pictures as a support in the communication. For example: use a picture of a plate to make clear it is time to eat.



- Point to the picture when you want to tell or ask the child something.
- When you point to the picture you also say what you want to tell or ask.
- The child can use the pictures to make clear what he wants by pointing to it.
- The mother can use a picture to make clear what she wants from the child by pointing to it or by putting the picture before the eyes of the child.
- By putting the pictures on a wall you and the child can always use the pictures for clear communication.
- Use the pictures every time.
- Use simple words and short sentences in the communication.

Illustration: Shuhel and his mother use pictures of objects, persons or actions to make clear to each other one what they want.

This suggestion is applicable to the following features:

- Feature 1: Problems with using and understanding of gestures and postures in the interaction with other people.

Illustration: Shuhel does not understand that his mother gesticulates with her arm that he has to come to her.

- Feature 3: Lack of spoken languages or using curious stereotyped words and sentences during communication.

Illustration: Shuhel repeats the question of his mother as an answer. He does not understand the meaning of what his mother is asking him.

Argumentation for using pictures:

For autistic children it is difficult to learn verbal communication. You have to make the communication visual for the child. You can do this with objects (see suggestion A).

Pictures or photos can also be useful. For example: by showing two pictures the child can choose; 'do you want rice or potatoes?' Or by showing the child a picture of a meal, the child knows it is time to have lunch.

Children can express themselves by pointing to pictures, which will make the communication between the child and another person a lot easier.

By using the pictures every time the child gets familiar with the pictures. The use of a picture makes the child understand what is expected of him.

You can make a picture for every word, feeling or activity. But it is less work to just make pictures of a few important recurring activities or words, such as eating, going to bed and playing.

Pictures are more difficult to understand for an autistic child than objects as a support in the communication. First choose for the use of objects (see suggestion A) because the child can better understand this.

It is also good to go back to a lower level of speaking in which you only use short sentences and simple words. Also use many of the same words. The language looks less difficult this way for the child.



D. Increase playing with other children by doing it together with the child and by using a structured way of playing.

- When the child has to play together with other people, let him first play with one person. This person has to be well-known and trusted by the child. For example the mother of the child.
- When the child has to play with another child, then first let him play together with his mother and the other child.
- Give the child instructions in what he has to do in the game.
- Choose a game that is known by the child and that is not too difficult for him.
- Choose a structured game, games that consist of recurrent actions and clear rules.
- Encourage the child and give him compliments.

Illustration: Shuhel is playing together with his mother and another boy. They are playing with a ball.

This suggestion is applicable to the following feature:

- Feature 2: Problems in playing with other children and sharing toys with other children.

Illustration: Shuhel keeps aloof of other playing children, he prefers to play alone.

Argumentation for increasing playing with other children:

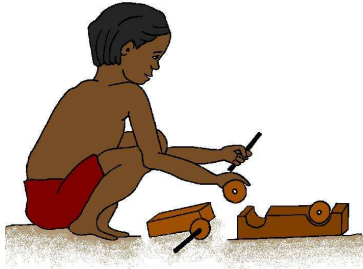
Most of the time an autistic child does not understand the rules and the behaviour of the other children. They do not know how to handle the situations of playing together or situations such as making contact with another child or playing together with one toy.

By telling the child in simple sentences, or by using gestures and pictures, what he has to do during playing makes it easier for him to handle the situation. The adult can make the game structured by giving him instructions. Instructions like; 'throw the ball to Jewel' or 'catch the ball, Shuhel'. The instructions help in ensuring that the child knows what is coming.

Unexpected things during playing can make the autistic child confused.

When the child does not understand how to behave in playing with other people he does strange things like beating and screaming. Many children also stay away of other children because they do not want to get in a confusing situation.

- E. Increase the interest for different movements, objects and patterns of a child. Do this by giving the child other objects and ways of playing. When you do this you have to take his interest as a starting point.



- Let the child do other things with the object or toy that has his interest.
- Let the child get familiar with another object that makes the movement that fascinates him.
- Give the child a lot of time to get used of the new toys or objects.
- Play together with the child when you introduce new toys or games.
- Choose a game or toy that is not too difficult for the child.
- Encourage the child and give him compliments.

Illustration: Shuhel constructs a toy with wheels. The toy consists of many individual parts. Before Shuhel can turn the wheels of the toy, the movement that fascinates Shuhel, he has to construct the toy out of the different parts.

This suggestion is applicable to the following features:

- Feature 5: Abnormal interest for certain movement, objects and patterns

Illustration: The turning movement of the ventilator and the wheels of a toy fascinate Shuhel. He copies the turning movement in his body movement.

Feature 4: Playing with one object in a stereotyped way and not vary or try other new toys.

Illustration: Shuhel only plays with jars. He places the jars in a stereotyped way of playing in a pattern. In this pattern the jars are placed in a line and between two jars is a space that is the same every time.

Argumentation for increasing the interest:

Lots of autistic children have an 'abnormal' interest for a certain movement and also make these movements with their body. Well-known movements are turning and clapping his hands. They do the same movements over and over again. The movements look useless, but for the child the movements are a way of expressing himself and a way of having fun. By giving the child another way of playing with the object that makes the movement that has his interest, you stimulate diversity in playing. For example a child always opens and closes the door over and over again. The movement opening and closing fascinates her, every time she says: 'open' and 'close'. When she says 'open' she spreads her arms and when she says 'close' she brings her arms together with clapping of her hands. You can use other things to open and to close, like a jar or box. You can increase her interest for the movement of a door by giving her other objects or toys with which she can do the movement of opening and closing.

When you try to increase the interest of a child for a certain game you first have to do it together with the child. You always have to follow the interest of the child and give the child enough time.

Also see the suggestions and argumentation of D and F.



F. Let the child do the stereotyped and repetitive movements with his body so long as he does not injure himself or another person. Find another place, time and way of doing his stereotyped movements when he injures himself or another person.

- Give the child (soft) objects that he can use for his stereotyped movement with his body. Make sure he can not injure himself or another person with this object either.
- Show or give the child a place where he can make his stereotyped body movements without injuring himself or another person.
- Teach the child to do the stereotyped movements only at certain times. Give him different moments on the day when he can do his stereotyped movements. For example every day when he has eaten.
- Tell the child why he should not do the movement that injures him or another person.

Illustration: Shuhel beats on a tabla instead of his face when he is excited or afraid. Shuhel also 'flutters' with his arm when he is excited or afraid.

This suggestion is applicable to the following feature:

- Feature 6: Stereotyped and repetitive movement with the body.

Illustration: Shuhel 'flutters' with his arms and hands in a strange way or beats himself in the face when he is excited or afraid.

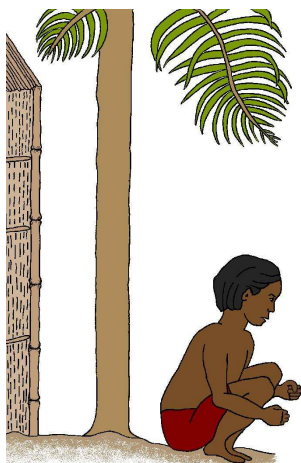
Argumentation for (not) letting to do stereotyped movements:

For the child the stereotyped movements are a way of dealing with the world around him. The child gets a lot of impressions of the world in which he lives. Because the autistic child can not handle this, he uses his own ways of dealing with it.

The child needs the stereotyped movement, so it is important not to forbid it.

Many autistic children do their stereotyped movement when something changes in their environment. The child has to deal with this change.

When the child hurts himself or breaks stuff with his stereotyped movements he should be persuaded to stop because he could get hurt. Do not forbid the movements but try to change them in a safe way of moving. You can change this by changing the environment or the movements itself. Also see the suggestions and argumentation of D and E.



G. Give a child with extreme grief or fury a place where he can be alone, it is restful, he cannot injure himself or other people and he cannot break stuff.

- Give the child his own place where he can come round again or where he can vent his fury.
- Sometimes it helps to give the child something that he can use to vent his fury. Like beating on a soft object.
- Some children run away when they are left alone on a quiet place without any walls or a fence. When you have a second room or house you can use this as a place for the child where he can be alone when he is suffering extreme grief or fury.
- When not necessary don't lock up the child, look for another option first.
- Take away objects that can break from a child with an attack of fury.
- Do not let the child alone when he can injure himself.

Illustration: Shuhel sits behind the house when he has an outburst of fury. Behind the house it is restful and he cannot damage things.

This suggestion is applicable to the following feature:

- Feature 7: Extreme grief or fury without an apparent reason.

Illustration: Shuhel has an attack of fury in which he breaks stuff around him. It seems he does not see that he is doing something wrong.

Argumentation for giving a place to come round again:

The extreme grief or fury, that often recurs, in an autistic child often seems without an apparent reason. Yet it is important that you observe if there really is no reason. Often it is a resistance against changes, a reaction to too many impressions or a reaction of fears. But although it is an autistic child, it is still a child. Every child knows grief or fury, for example about something they want but can not get.

Because the fury or grief often is a reaction of getting too many impressions, it helps when the child can be in a quiet place. It gives the child rest. When it always is the same place, the place becomes a safe haven for the child.

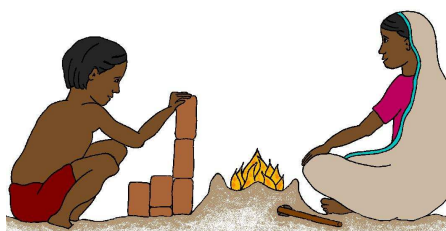
When a child injures himself or another or damages things it sometimes helps if he can vent his fury at something that can not injure him or break. Most of the time the child does not want to injure himself or another or break stuff, he is blind by his fury and can not control himself. An autistic child often does not understand the meaning of doing pain to someone or breaking stuff. That why is it is so difficult for the child to learn why he must not injure or break.

By making the environment safe, the child can not cause so much damage in his fury.

When there are no things to break, the child does not break it.

Do not let the child alone when he can injure himself, you can protect him from very dangerous things. As a child is alone in a quiet place always look after a while, if everything is all right.

- H. Do not leave the child alone in dangerous situations and enclose dangerous places with something to prevent the child from getting hurt.



- Stay in the presence of the child in dangerous situations.
- Enclose dangerous places with walls or enclosures.
- Tell the child why it is dangerous for him and give him warnings.

Illustration: Shuhel is sitting behind a little stone wall at the fire. The stones and the presence of his mother prevent Shuhel from playing with the fire, which is dangerous.

This suggestion is applicable to the following feature:

- Feature 8: Knowing no fear of danger with the consequence of being found in dangerous situations.

Illustration: Shuhel is playing with fire, he does not see the danger of the hot flames. His arm is in the fire what causes burns.

Argumentation for preventing the child in dangerous situations:

Some autistic children just do not see the danger of something. It is also difficult to teach them what is dangerous and why it is not safe.

It is important to tell the child that something is dangerous and that you repeat this over and over again. But because it is so hard to understand it is also necessary that the environment around the child is safe. Prevent the child from coming in dangerous situations. You can prevent this by staying with child in the dangerous situations and by fencing the places with enclosures.

Step 12

- Tell the audience that this is the end of the meeting and that the people are invited to come to you (or to another health worker) with questions.
Tell the people that you or another health worker can give help and instructions with the application of suggestions with their child.
- If you want you can give a summary of the features and/ or the suggestions for dealing with the features, to the audience. They can reflect on the information with the summary when they are at home. You can find the different summaries (with some copies) after this page. The summaries just consist of illustrations, to make it easier to understand. You can copy these summaries.



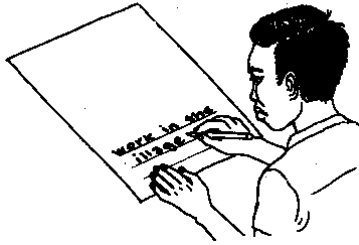
Summary: The features of autism

Summary: Suggestions for dealing with features of autism

Evaluation

If you have suggestions to improve this manual and/ or the illustrations, you can write down your comments and hand them over to the foundation 'Stichting Shishu Niketan'. If you have any ideas for a supplement, it would be appreciated when you tell the foundation.

For your comments you can use the evaluation form.



Evaluation form

Please answer the following questions and/ or send your comment to the foundation 'Stichting Shishu Niketan'. It would be appreciated if you also write down your suggestions for improvements.

If you need more space for your comments or suggestions, you can use the back of the evaluation form.



- What is your profession and social/ educational background? And how many times have you used the educational material?
 -
 -

- Which parts of the educational material do you use?
 -
 -

- Is the manual well organised?
 -

Suggestions:

- Which parts of the manual can you use immediately and are easy to use? Which parts of the manual are difficult to use?
 -
 -
- Do you think the manual is too long? What parts would you leave out or would you shorten?
 -
 -

Suggestions:

- What was lacking in the educational material? What should be added to the manual?
 -
 -

Suggestions:

- Are there parts of the manual where the language is too difficult to understand or parts where the language is 'too simple'?
 -
 -

Suggestions:

- Which topics need more explanation and/ or examples?
 -
 -

Suggestions:

- Other general comments and/ or suggestions: