



## Children & Teenagers on the Autism Spectrum



**Maccabi**

*The Best Healthcare in Israel*





Dear  
Parents,

Your child has recently been diagnosed with a communication disorder, the full name of which is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

In the following pages, you will find useful basic information aimed at helping you during these early days. This information will make it easier for you to understand and exercise the healthcare rights to which you are entitled.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Always at your service,  
Maccabi Child Development Services

## ● **What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?**

This is a diagnosis from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

It should be emphasized that ASD is **not a mental illness**, but a developmental disorder that is present from birth (congenital).

**These disorders are characterized by:**

- Difficulties in communication, interpersonal relations, and language use.
- Behavioral patterns, activities, and narrow fields of interest, repetition, difficulties in play and in relating to objects.

This is a clinical diagnosis, which is made by a developmental physician / psychiatrist / neurologist, as well as a psychological diagnosis. Sometimes an occupational therapist, speech therapist, physiotherapist, and social worker may also make the diagnosis. The diagnosis is based on collecting developmental-behavioral information about the child, as perceived and reported by people who know him/her (parents, relatives, kindergarten teacher, etc.), and comparing this data to the agreed, accepted criteria.

Giving a diagnosis is a long and complex process that differs greatly from child to child, even within the same diagnostic category. The diagnostic process is a step on the road towards the main goal – a recommended treatment plan.

## ● **Are children born with ASD?**

Many studies indicate that ASD is present from birth (congenital) and strongly linked to genetic factors, although the child's environment may also play a role. However, no single genetic basis has yet been discovered, and several genes are thought to be involved in the development of this disorder.

Because ASD affects many children in Israel and around the world, it is a subject of intense research as we try to learn more about this disorder.

- **What neurological deficits are exhibited by children with ASD?**

Psychological research shows that children on the autistic spectrum have particular difficulty understanding the thoughts and feelings of others.

The child finds it difficult to imagine and understand that there is a difference between his/her own knowledge and emotions, and those of another person. (The ability to differentiate these is called **Theory of Mind**.)

Studies show that children with ASD also have difficulty understanding facial expressions, body language, and intonation that convey thoughts and feelings. Accordingly, they also find it hard to use these means to convey their own thoughts, desires, and feelings. These children find it hard to see the "big picture" and overall meaning, and often they focus mainly on small details. Needless to say, like any other children, children with ASD still have feelings, thoughts, and the ability to communicate with people close to them, though their abilities to express themselves and understand others are impaired.



## ● What Does The Future Hold?

Medical knowledge has grown considerably both in recent years, in the field of developmental disorders in general, and in communication disorders in particular. Despite these advancements, doctors cannot predict the development of any specific child.

Experience has taught us that most children make progress and demonstrate improvement. The degree of improvement particularly depends on the child's intelligence level and language development ability. Most children will require support of some kind over the years, but there are children who can be integrated into mainstream education. Information on adults with ASD is still too sparse to make any generalizations.

## ● Treatment

Children with ASD require dedicated treatment that primarily targets their communication difficulties, with reference to their developmental data. In other words, **the children need to learn communication and social skills through a unique developmental approach personally adapted to their needs.**

The treatment must be received from a professional therapist skilled in treating communication disorders, and usually a treatment plan incorporating paramedical care such as: speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and therapeutic work (guidance) with the parents, carried out by a social worker or psychologist.

The most important factor, according to many studies, lies in providing intensive therapeutic intervention as early as possible and establishing cooperation between parents and therapists.

In this light, the early integration of the child into a suitable therapeutic education system should be considered. The Child Development Center provides initial therapy to the child and family, or alternatively refers them to a therapist in the community.

Therapy at special centers is mainly focused on the child's difficulties and on parental instruction.

The treatment is carried out on an individual basis and is based on a professional opinion, expanding the circle to include children in their age group and interactions with other children.

The treatment of children with autistic disorders is based on developmental, emotional, and behavioral therapy, and not on medical/pharmaceutical treatment.

However, it is sometimes recommended to treat children with medication in the event of epilepsy, attention and concentration problems, and hearing or behavioral problems that are delaying the child's progress.



## ● Therapeutic Approaches to Communication Disorders\*

**ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)** is also known as the Lovaas Method. This approach is based on the assumption that the root of the difficulty lies with the child's natural learning ability.

This approach claims that the child can learn communication behaviors just as she/he learns any other behaviors – through encouraging imitation and through positive reinforcement.

This approach is built on a detailed learning plan that is based on observation and analysis of the child's behavior, taking into account his/her current developmental level.

Every detailed target is broken down into small tasks that the child can mimic and learn, and only after she/he has acquired the basic skills does she/he progress to more complex skills. For most children, the learning is carried out at a table and consists of mental and behavioral tasks. The therapeutic process is very intensive and may be carried out by several therapists in rotation, with a moderator responsible for the overall program.

Application of the method is carried out in Israel at some therapeutic daycare centers operated by the Israeli Society for Autistic Children (Alut), but the therapy can also be carried out at home by therapists and instructors who have undergone appropriate training.

**Integrated & DIR Methods** – These approaches focus on the various aspects of a child's development, which includes touch, movement, language, learning, and emotional and social development. DIR is a therapeutic approach based on the developmental model developed by Dr. Stanley Greenspan (it is also known as the Floortime model). It is based on the assumption that every child is born unique, and therefore the therapy must relate to the unique profile of each child, in sensory, movement and language terms. The second assumption on which the approach is based is that learning takes place in very enjoyable, motivating situations, with interpersonal integration.

During the therapy, the parents and therapists learn to recognize the child's developmental characteristics and ways of using these characteristics to encourage communication and learning.

This approach assumes parental cooperation in the therapy and requires intensive work with the child.

This therapy is carried out in Israel in kindergartens and daycare centers run by the Children at Risk charity, and in some of the kindergartens run by Alut and Ezer Mizion. This approach also can be carried out via a home-based program by therapists and instructors who have undergone appropriate training.

A therapeutic approach must be chosen in accordance with a child's needs, those of the family and the resources it has available. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages, and there is currently no significant evidence to show the superiority of any one approach over another in terms of therapeutic efficacy.

## Therapeutic Educational Facilities – Kindergartens

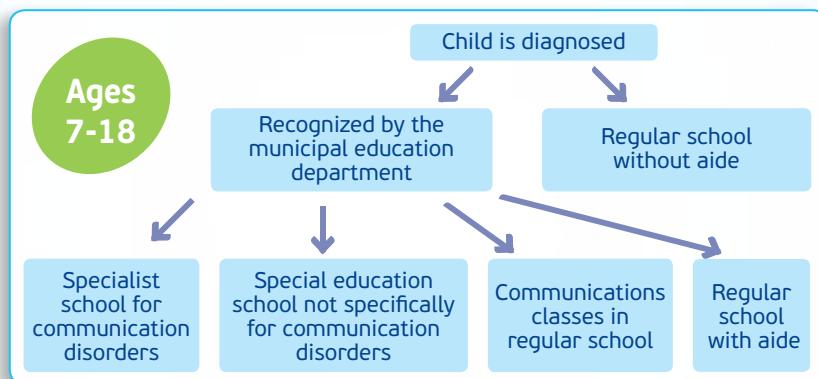
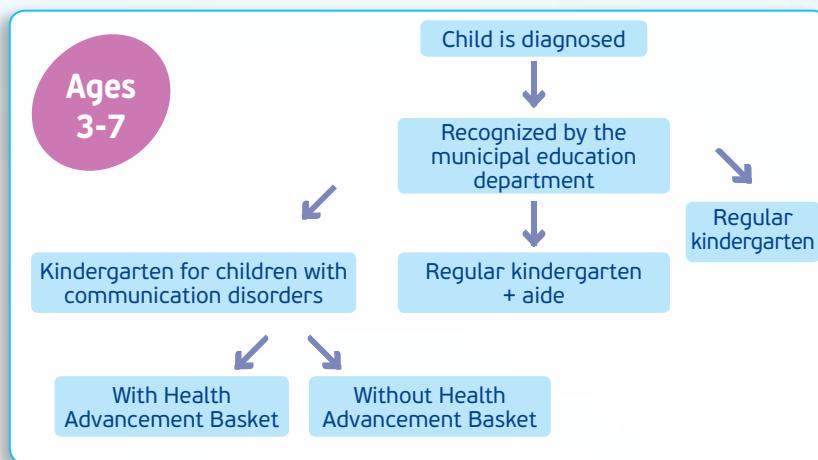
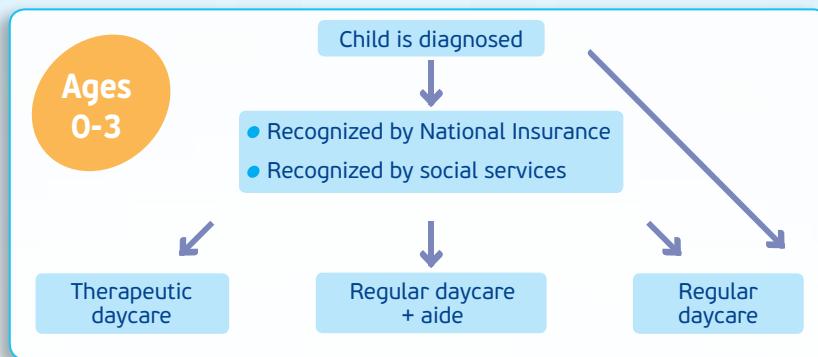
Children with communication difficulties can be integrated into regular kindergartens, with the support of an aide, or attend therapeutic kindergartens. As a rule, it is recommended that a child be educated in the most normative setting and at the highest level of functioning at which she/he can successfully learn and develop. Furthermore, intensive therapy in the same institution, wherever possible, is very important, particularly at a young age. Such therapy mainly takes place in therapeutic kindergartens. The choice of a suitable kindergarten is made according to the child's needs, development, and functioning in his/her current kindergarten.

The Center's team offers recommendations regarding suitable kindergartens according to their familiarity with the child, and in consultation with the parents.



There are other therapeutic methods that address particular issues such as loss of hearing or quality of movement, and also diets and therapies related to the child's metabolism. As these methods are not endorsed by studies or medical professionals, we can neither encourage nor discourage their use.





**Important!**

1. In order to receive educational services, the family is referred to the placement committee of the municipality's educational psychology service by the Center's psychologist, together with a suitable psychological and medical and/or developmental report. The committee provides these services for ages 3-18.
2. You should receive benefits from the National Insurance Institute named "disability benefit", used to help families with therapy costs. In order to be recognized by the National Insurance Institute, the following documents must be submitted: a current medical diagnosis by a developmental physician / neurologist / psychiatrist and a psychological diagnosis. The form to request benefits for a child with disabilities may be downloaded from the National Insurance website or obtained from a National Insurance branch near your home.
3. It is recommended to contact a social worker at social services in order to obtain recognition from the Autism Patient Treatment Department and receive details of other services.
4. Children who receive therapy as part of the "Health Advancement Basket" and/or who stay in therapeutic daycare are not entitled to treatment from Maccabi.



#### **"Health Advancement Basket"**

The Ministry of Health and healthcare services finance (with parental participation) individual paramedical therapies totaling up to NIS 10.50 per hour for children in some kindergartens or in recognized professional institutions.



## 1 Eligibility for Treatment Until Age 18

An amendment to the Health Law – The Second Additional Amendment – starting in January 2009 grants the right to treatment to all children with a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum from the day of the diagnosis until age 18.

This right is for up to three treatments per week, according to clinical need, from the following professions: speech therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, and social worker (156 treatments per year). **In order to exercise these rights, you should send the regional team dealing with autistic children (telephone and fax numbers can be found in the appendix) an eligibility clarification form (shown in the appendix) and a kindergarten teacher's form (for children up to age 7).**

**After obtaining a certificate of eligibility, you can contact:**

- 1. The Child Development Center.** Treatment at the Center is for children up to age 6 and in accordance with an opinion from the professional team.
- 2. Therapists under contract with Maccabi.** Before commencing the first treatment, you should complete a coverage form in the office of your local Maccabi medical center, and bring the form to the treatment session. You will need the coverage form for all treatments carried out by the therapist.
- 3. Maccabi supplementary insurance policyholders are entitled to various treatments under the supplementary insurance policy between the ages of 3-18.**

Children in therapeutic daycare and children receiving the Health Advancement Basket within an educational framework receive all the treatments in this educational setting. In addition, these children are entitled to additional treatments through Maccabi's supplemental insurance policies.

## 2 Rights to treatments in the health basket

- **Ages 0-3** Treatments in child development or by participating therapists without a co-payment.
- **Ages 3-18** Treatments in child development within the framework of the basket, provided at the Child Development Center or by a participating therapist. These treatments are provided with a co-payment on presentation of the coverage form.

### Rights under Maccabi supplementary insurance

#### Maccabi Kessef Policyholders (ages 3-6)

Every child is entitled to a total of 30 treatments from the supplementary insurance, in accordance with a professional referral:

1. Additional paramedical treatments, only after all the treatments in the health basket have been used. (**Only applies to children who attend a therapeutic facility or receive the Health Advancement Basket.**)
2. Complementary treatments – expression and creativity (art, drama, music, movement, bibliotherapy), animal-assisted therapy, therapeutic horse riding, water therapy, therapeutic sport.

#### Maccabi Zahav Policyholders (ages 3-18)

Entitled to a total of 30 treatments from the supplementary insurance, in accordance with a professional referral – supplementary treatments – expression and creativity (art, drama, music, movement, bibliotherapy), animal-assisted therapy, therapeutic horse riding, water therapy, therapeutic sport.

#### Maccabi Sheli Policyholders (ages 3-18)

Entitled to an additional 20 supplementary treatments every year in addition to the rights granted under Maccabi Zahav, in accordance with a professional referral. The treatments are subject to a co-payment.



All treatments are subject to a co-payment, in accordance with the regulations applicable to supplementary health services.

Current rates can be obtained from Maccabi health centers, the "Maccabi Non-Stop" helpline on **\*3555**, and the Maccabi website at [www.maccabi4u.co.il](http://www.maccabi4u.co.il)



### 3 Maccabi's Welfare Fund

The fund grants financial assistance to families with children who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum. This assistance is conditional on membership in the fund of two years' standing, as well as other criteria.

This assistance is given when a child is receiving ongoing private treatment, with treatments recommended by the Child Development Center, or by the diagnosing party.

Obtaining a grant involves submitting a formal application via the administrative office of your local Maccabi medical center.

In order to clarify your rights, please ask at the Maccabi medical center office. More information can be found on the Maccabi website at [www.maccabi4u.co.il](http://www.maccabi4u.co.il)





## Additional Rights and Services

### ● **Recognition of the child by the National Insurance Institute (NII)**

A child who has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder is entitled to recognition by the National Insurance Institute, and to receive child disability benefits.

**You should contact your nearest NII branch with the following documents:**

1. An application for child disability benefits (download from the NII website, [www.btl.gov.il](http://www.btl.gov.il)).
2. Doctor's certificate.
3. Detailed diagnosis from the Child Development Center team / mental health clinic / professional clinic at a hospital. The diagnosis includes a medical and psychological diagnosis.
4. Details of your personal bank account.
5. ID cards of the child's parents / legal guardian.
6. Certificate of studies and treatments.



Recognition by the NII allows the family to receive discounts and other benefits such as: income tax credit points, municipal tax discount, Bezeq discount, foreign worker employment authorization, disabled parking sticker.

## ● **Social Services Departments**

The national department for assisting people with autism is part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and provides responses via local social services departments.

In order to receive recognition by the department, you should contact the responsible social worker in your local municipality's social services department.

Initial recognition is given on a temporary basis until age 6. You will need to renew the recognition before age 6, when permanent recognition is given.

The rights given to children recognized by the department are as follows: participating educators, clubs, summer camps, assistance at a regular daycare center, protected housing, hostels.

Services are provided in accordance with the existing budget. More details: [www.moisa.gov.il](http://www.moisa.gov.il).

## ● **Housing Rights**

Discounts and exemptions are available in the following areas: home purchase tax, exemption from Land Registration Office registration fees for disabled people and assistance in purchasing an apartment via loans. You are advised to consult a legal advisor regarding these matters.





## Charities & Organizations

### ● **Alut**

Established by parents this association works for the advancement of children on the autism spectrum. It provides families with advice and support, and operates within an educational and therapeutic framework.  
Tel: 03-5718188, more information at: [www.alut.co.il](http://www.alut.co.il)

### ● **Beit Lauren (Part of Alut)**

A center that assists the families of children with PDD or autism. The center provides information services, advice, and support in an individual or group setting. It operates a parent helpline on 03-6709094.  
More information at: [www.beit-lauren.org.il](http://www.beit-lauren.org.il)

### ● **Association for Children at Risk**

This association operates therapeutic kindergartens and daycare centers.  
Tel: 03-5730130. More information at: [www.childrenatrisk.co.il](http://www.childrenatrisk.co.il)

### ● **Kesher**

Information services, guidance, support, and advice for parents of children with special needs. National Helpline: 1-700-501-601.  
More information at: [www.makom-m.cet.ac.il](http://www.makom-m.cet.ac.il)

### ● **Autistic Community of Israel**

A community for and managed by people on the autism spectrum in Israel.  
More information at: [www.aci.selfip.org](http://www.aci.selfip.org)

### ● **"Effie" Asperger Association**

A charity established by parents for children and adults with Asperger's, providing families with advice and support.  
Tel: 09-7651031, more information at: [www.asperger.org.il](http://www.asperger.org.il)

### ● **Ezer Mizion**

This charity runs projects and programs to support Israel's special needs community. Tel: 03-5257010, more information at: [www.ami.org.il](http://www.ami.org.il)



## Eligibility Clarification Request Form

Child's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

ID No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Cellphone \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Cellphone \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Framework (Current School Year) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. of Educational Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Diagnostic Institute \_\_\_\_\_

My child has received / has not received (circle as appropriate)  
treatment within the "Health Advancement Basket" from the Association  
for Children at Risk / Alut / Milman Center / Other \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix to the Eligibility Clarification Form

Dear Kindergarten Teacher,

Re: Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ ID No.: \_\_\_\_\_

On 1.1.2009, the second additional amendment to the State Health Insurance Law came into force, regarding rights to paramedical treatments for children diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum. Under this amendment, healthcare services are to supply treatments to children diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum, from birth until age 18. The exceptions to this rule are children aged up to 7 years who receive treatments from the Health Ministry as part of the "Health Advancement Basket", and children in therapeutic daycare. Therefore, as a condition of this eligibility, we must clarify whether the child is in therapeutic daycare or whether she/he is receiving treatments funded by the Health Ministry with parental contributions ("The Health Advancement Basket").

In order to clarify eligibility, please mark one of the following options:

- I wish to confirm that the child is receiving treatments within the kindergarten, funded by the Health Ministry and with parental contributions ("The Health Advancement Basket").
- To the best of my knowledge, the child is receiving treatments in the afternoons, funded by the Health Ministry and with parental contributions ("The Health Advancement Basket").
- To the best of my knowledge, the child is not receiving treatments within the kindergarten or in the afternoons funded by the Health Ministry and with parental contributions ("The Health Advancement Basket").
- I have no knowledge regarding whether the child is receiving treatments within the kindergarten or in the afternoons funded by the Health Ministry and with parental contributions ("The Health Advancement Basket")
- The child attends a therapeutic daycare.

Kindergarten Name:

Kindergarten  
Teacher's Name:

Date:

Kindergarten Address:

Kindergarten Tel. No.:

Kindergarten Type:



## Regional Contact People

### **Northern Region**

Social worker, secretary, administrative manager  
Tel: 04-8810700 | Fax: 073-2284383 | [zafon\\_pdd@mac.org.il](mailto:zafon_pdd@mac.org.il)

### **Sharon Region**

Social worker, secretary, administrative manager  
Tel: 09-7478130 (ext. 5) | Fax: 073-2132094

### **Central Region**

Social worker, secretary, administrative manager  
Tel: 03-7614060 | Fax: 03-7178286 | [hashalom\\_pdd@mac.org.il](mailto:hashalom_pdd@mac.org.il)

### **Jerusalem & Shfela Region**

Social worker, secretary, administrative manager  
Tel: 03-9634777 (ext. 2) | Fax: 073-2284407

### **Southern Region**

Social worker, secretary, administrative manager  
Tel: 08-8688146, 08-6267255 | Fax: 073-2132489



## Child Development Centers

Region	City	Address	Contact
South	All Negev Branches	4 HaTikvah St., Beersheva 84893	Fax: 073-2132489
South	Rehovot, Yavne, Mazkeret Batya & Gedera	Institutes Center, 2 Oppenheimer St., Rehovot	Fax: 073-2123838
South	Ashdod, Gan Yavne	Rashbi Branch, 15 Rashbi St., Zain Quarter, Ashdod 77650	Fax: 073-2284712
South	Ashkelon, Sderot & Surrounding Area	3 HaGvura St., Ashkelon	Tel. 08-6747666 Fax: 073-2284748
Center	Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak, Givatayim, Bikat Ono, Shoham, Elad & Eilat	Maccabi HaShalom, 2 Tuval St., Corner of Yigal Alon St., Tel Aviv 67897	Fax: 073-9178291
Sharon	Sharon Region, including Petah Tikvah, Netanya & Hadera	14 HaBanim St., Hod HaSharon 45268	Fax: 073-2132094
North	Haifa & Surrounding Area	Check Post, 10 Marconi St., Haifa 32951	Fax: 073-2284336
North	Carmiel & Misgav Region	128 HaShoshanim St., Carmiel	Fax: 073-2132747
North	Residents of the Valleys Region	14 Upper Yitzhak Rabin St., Nazareth Illit	Fax: 073-2284310
North	Residents of the Western & Lower Galilee	8 Ehad HaAm St., Nahariya 22442	Fax: 073-2284407
Jerusalem & Shfela	Holon, Azor	9 Tzeelim St., Holon 58308	Fax: 03-5032671
Jerusalem & Shfela	Bat Yam, Rishon LeZion, Nes Ziona, Ramla, Lod	1 Lishansky St., Rishon LeZion 75650	Fax: 073-2284407
Jerusalem & Shfela	Jerusalem, Beitar Illit, Efrat	42 Agrippas St., Alliance Building, 1st Floor, Jerusalem 94301	Fax: 02-6238240
Jerusalem & Shfela	East Jerusalem	8 Al-Isfahani St., Jerusalem	Fax: 073-2132204
Jerusalem & Shfela	Beit Shemesh	19 Nahal Dolev St., Ramat Beit Shemesh 99090 Park Center Mall, Ramat Beit Shemesh 99090	Fax: 073-2132643
Jerusalem & Shfela	Maccabim, Modiin	53 Emek Dotan St., PO Box 36, Modiin 7170301	Fax: 073-2284426
Jerusalem & Shfela	Modiin Illit	46 Avni Nezer St., Kesem Center, Modiin Illit	Fax: 073-2284427

## Notes

## Notes





***There are healthcare services... and there's Maccabi***