

East Sussex Autism Spectrum Diagnostic Pathway – Pre-school and Primary

This is your step by step guide to the Autism Diagnostic Pathway. The exact pathway will vary according to your child's individual needs and it can sometimes be a long process.

Observing your child over time helps to ensure the right diagnosis and support for your child. Schools and nurseries should support your child's needs whether or not you get a diagnosis and you can access support throughout the process at the [SEND Local Offer](#) webpages.

If you have a concern about your child's development

If you think your child might be on the autism spectrum, or you have concerns about their development, you can talk to your GP, child's school/nursery, health visitor, school nurse or a professional involved with your child to discuss these concerns. If, following that discussion, it is felt a further assessment is needed, you will be asked for your consent for professionals to share information about your child in order to start the assessment process.

Paediatrician reviews the information

A paediatrician will look at the information about your child and will decide whether they need to collect more information from health and education services. You will receive a **letter** to let you know what will happen next. You might receive an appointment with a paediatrician or your child might be referred to other services for assessment. You may also have a visit from the child development nurse to gather more information about your child's development.

1st appointment with paediatrician (see separate leaflet)

This will take place at one of the child development clinic locations. The paediatrician will meet you and your child to explain what will happen in the session. You will have the opportunity to talk to the paediatrician. Health care staff will weigh and measure your child and make some basic physical observations.

For a few children the paediatrician will be able to make a diagnosis at this appointment, in other cases they might need more information.

The paediatrician will let you know whether they would like your child to be assessed by other services, for example, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, speech and language, occupational therapy, educational psychology and/or the school setting).

You will receive a **letter** after the appointment with a summary of what has been agreed.

2nd appointment with paediatrician

Almost all families will need a second paediatric appointment. During this appointment, if needed, some children may have a formal assessment. This could be the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), which involves playing and chatting with your child, or an



Autism Diagnostic Interview (ADI), a standard set of questions about your child. Not all children and young people will need these formal assessments.

If your child has been referred to other services, you will meet the paediatrician again to discuss the results of their assessments.

For many children, the paediatrician will be able to make a diagnosis after this appointment, but for some more information/further assessment will be needed.

Following the assessments, the health care professionals will make a **plan** with you and, with your agreement, share this with education and health staff involved with your child.

This document is intended to be shared with parent/carers by a health or education professional at the point that the child is referred onto the pathway.

We would like to thank the parent carers from iContact (www.icontactautism.org) for their time and energy coproducing this leaflet.