



# Facts and figures about autism

Facts and statistics can lend authority to written materials or validate important points. This information sheet features key facts and figures which are supported by Aspect's researchers and can be used to highlight issues reported by the media.

**Our purpose**  
**a different brilliant®**

Understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum.

## Autism in Australia

- An estimated 1 in every 40 people in Australia is Autistic.<sup>1</sup>
- Boys are three to four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.<sup>2</sup>

## Support and services

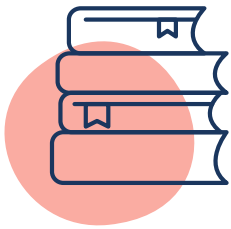
- One-third of NDIS participants are Autistic.<sup>3</sup>

A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics survey<sup>4</sup> of parents and carers found that among Autistic people:

- three-quarters need help with cognitive tasks or emotional support
- approximately half need help or supervision with communication and self-care
- 60% need help with mobility.

## Autism and mental health

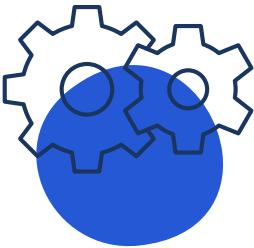
- Just over three-quarters of Autistic children have at least one mental health condition and nearly half have two or more mental health conditions.<sup>5</sup>
- About 45% of pre-school age Autistic children have one or more mental health conditions, in contrast to 14% of neurotypical youth (3–17 years) who have mental health conditions.<sup>5</sup>
- The most commonly reported co-occurring mental health diagnoses among Autistic people across the lifespan are anxiety (20%), sleep-wake disorders (13%), depressive disorders (11%), obsessive-compulsive disorder (9%), bipolar disorders (5%) and schizophrenia spectrum disorders (4%).<sup>6</sup>
- Autistic adults are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts than the general population.<sup>7</sup>



## Education

A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics survey<sup>4</sup> of parents and carers found:

- 97% of Autistic people (5–20 years) who attended school had some form of educational restriction.
- 45% of Autistic children attended a special class in a mainstream school or a special school.
- Just over two-thirds of Autistic students reported experiencing difficulty at their place of learning. The main problems were fitting in socially (53%), learning difficulties (44%) and communication difficulties (51%).
- 5% of Autistic people have a bachelor degree or higher, compared with 19% of those with disability and 35% of those without disability.



## Employment

A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics survey<sup>4</sup> of parents and carers found:

- The labour force participation rate for Autistic people of working age was 50%, compared with 61% of all working age people with disability and 85% of people without disability.
- The unemployment rate for Autistic people was 18%, more than double the rate for people with disability (8%) and almost six times the rate of people without disability (3%).

## References

1. Aspect calculation based on prevalence studies conducted from 2019–23.
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017), *Autism in Australia*.
3. National Disability Insurance Scheme (2022), *Autism*.
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings*.
5. Kerns, C.M., et al. (2021), *Prevalence and Correlates of Caregiver – Reported Mental Health Conditions in Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder in the United States*. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.
6. Lai, M. C., Kasee, et al. (2019), *Prevalence of co-occurring mental health diagnoses in the autism population: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. *The Lancet, Psychiatry*.
7. Cassidy, S., et al. (2018), *Risk markers for suicidality in Autistic adults*. *Molecular Autism*.

### Remember:

No two Autistic people are alike. If you've met one Autistic person, you've met one Autistic person.

### Based on the idea of a different brilliant<sup>®</sup>, Aspect's approach:

- Respects difference and diversity
- Builds a person's skills based on their strengths, interests, aspirations and support needs
- Develops autism-friendly environments
- Supports others to understand and embrace autism and to develop respectful supportive interactions.