



Girls and Autism

The way that boys and girls are assessed for autism is the same, however the areas in which they face challenges can be different.

There are generalisations here though: some girls present with typically “male” autistic traits and some boys will present with the “female” traits and this can often mean that diagnosis is difficult.

For girls with complex needs, the autistic traits may be clear but for many in mainstream schools the autism is masked.

Girls with autism are more likely to:

- Have special interests, but ones that are culturally more acceptable such as Harry Potter, boy bands or horses.
- Seem to be better able to manage social situations when they are young. This gets harder in later primary years as they approach adolescence.
- Be more likely to be withdrawn/passive than aggressive.
- Mask their differences.
- Have friends who support them, or rely on friends to speak for them. They might be seen as shy when young.
- Unusual sensitivity to sensory changes.
- Difficulty in moderating feelings when frustrated.
- Be unusually moody, anxious or depressed.
- Have social difficulties that increase with age.

