

# **Autism Assessment Guide For Families**

Information for parents and caregivers about  
the assessment process, what to expect, and  
how we'll work together.

## Meet Nat

Nat has over 20 years' experience supporting autistic children and young people across education and speech pathology settings. She is a Certified Practising Speech Pathologist and member of Speech Pathology Australia and the WA Autism Diagnosticians' Forum (WAADF), with additional training and experience in neurodiversity-affirming autism assessment, including training in the administration of the MIGDAS-2.



Nat is passionate about living authentically and empowering the young people she works with to communicate and connect with others in ways that are meaningful and joyful to them. Nat is Autistic & ADHD (AuDHD) and mum to two AuDHD daughters, giving her both professional and lived experience of the wonderfully messy reality of neurodivergent family life.

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# Why might a speech pathologist be involved after an initial diagnosis?

In Western Australia, schools often require evidence that more than one professional has contributed to or confirmed an autism diagnosis. This reflects national best-practice guidelines for autism assessment, which recommend a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach ensuring diagnostic confidence.

A speech pathologist contributes to the diagnostic process by:

- Providing a comprehensive assessment of your child's communication, social connection, and learning profile, including:
  - Identifying your child's authentic social communication and learning profile, including their strengths, needs, and preferences
  - Identifying barriers to participation, including environmental demands and expectations that impact regulation and wellbeing.
  - Building understanding and awareness through discussion and explanations that help the adults in your child's life better understand their individual profile.
  - Making practical recommendations to support your child's communication, connection, learning, and participation across home, school, and community settings.
- Contributing to diagnostic consensus through:
  - Completing a comprehensive assessment to provide evidence for a consensus diagnosis and levels of support.
  - Determining whether a language impairment specifier is applicable.
  - Providing comprehensive supporting evidence to ensure the child's communication, social connection, and learning needs are appropriately recognised for funding and supports.

The diagnostic report is designed to complement the original assessment rather than duplicate it. It focuses on building a practical understanding of your child's neurotype, identifying their autistic traits through a strengths-based lens, and making functional recommendations for supports and accommodations at home and school.

# The Autism Assessment Process

## Parent and teacher questionnaires

These questionnaires help me learn about your child across different settings and provide detail about your child's development and experiences at home and school.

## Telehealth parent interview with Nat

This telehealth session is an opportunity to share your child's story, including their developmental history, strengths, support needs and everyday experiences. Your insights help me build a comprehensive and individualised understanding of your child and plan for a fun, child-led session in your home.

## Child's session with Nat in your home

This session is child-led, playful and affirming, including sensory tools, toys, objects of interest and opportunities for movement to support authentic engagement. Nat comes prepared and ready to deep dive into your child's special interests and favourite topics!

## Analysis and report writing

This time is allocated to analyse questionnaires, assessment data and observations, consider these in relation to the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, make a diagnostic formulation and prepare your child's written report. Reports are typically completed within 2 weeks of the assessment sessions.

## Telehealth parent feedback session

This session explores your child's social communication profile, building a rich understanding of their neurotype and the environments and accommodations that will support authentic and successful social connection, communication and learning. Families are supported to feel confident in taking the next steps in exploring, celebrating and supporting their child's neurotype in a neuroaffirming and strengths-based way.



## Fees

Assessment fees include direct assessment time, comprehensive clinical analysis, and a detailed diagnostic report.

### Speech Pathology Assessment

**\$1,440**

#### Additions to the assessment process

At times, additional information may be needed to further inform the assessment and diagnostic process.

#### School Observation

Where appropriate, school observations can be included as part of the assessment process. Observing your child in their familiar school environment provides valuable insight into their social and communication style, and helps build a fuller understanding of how they navigate sensory, cognitive, and social demands in everyday settings.

#### Language Assessment

In some cases, an additional language assessment may be recommended to help build a fuller understanding of your child's communication profile. This ensures that any language needs are clearly identified and recommendations are individualised for your child.

**Medicare** If your child's paediatrician or psychiatrist has provided a referral for an autism assessment, you may be eligible to claim a Medicare rebate. The relevant MBS item number and assessment fee are provided below for reference and to assist you in confirming your rebate eligibility with Medicare:

*Speech Pathology*

2 x MBS Item No. 93033 @ \$360

2 x MBS Item No. 82005 @ \$360 (Total \$1,440)

#### Private Health Insurance

If you have Extras cover for Speech Pathology, you may be eligible for a rebate towards some components of your assessment. Coverage and rebate amounts vary between health funds and policies, so we recommend contacting your insurer before commencing the assessment.

# Autism diagnosis and funding

WA schools may apply for additional disability funding to support autistic students. For an autism diagnosis to be recognised for this funding, it must be agreed upon by **two** eligible practitioners (qualified and experienced in Autism assessment) from different disciplines, including agreement on the child's level of support.

**Paediatrician**

-or-

**Psychiatrist**

-or-

**Clinical Psychologist**

-or-

**Educational Psychologist**



## A comprehensive diagnostic report

When accompanied by a diagnostic report from one of the above professionals, Nat's qualifications, comprehensive assessment process and diagnostic report meet the requirements for disability funding in Western Australian schools. The diagnostic report can also be submitted to support application to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



## Do we need to see a paediatrician or psychiatrist first?

A paediatrician or psychiatrist referral is not required for an autism assessment with a Speech Pathologist, nor is it required for NDIS or WA school funding purposes (if a clinical or educational psychologist has completed the initial assessment and diagnosis). However, a referral from a paediatrician or psychiatrist may enable families to access Medicare rebates for the assessment.

## Any questions?

If you have any questions or would like to talk further about the assessment process, please touch base – I'm happy to chat!

[natalie.willacy@gospeechppathology.com.au](mailto:natalie.willacy@gospeechppathology.com.au)

## Looking to explore a little more?

Nat's website has a set of articles and resources to support families who are beginning to explore autism through the neurodiversity affirming lens. Click the link below for articles like 'Talking with your child about their autism diagnosis' and free resources like "Autistic strengths cards".

**Resources**



