

Preparing for Your Child's ADI-R Assessment: A guide for parents and carers

What is the ADI-R?

The Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised (ADI-R) is a detailed interview carried out by a trained assessor with a parent or carer.

It focuses on your child's development, communication, social interaction, play, and behaviour, both now and in the past. The ADI-R is one of the gold standard tools used as part of an autism assessment.

Who takes part?

- The interview is with you (parent or main carer), not your child.
- Your child does not usually attend the session.
- The information you provide helps the assessor build a clear picture of your child's development.

What happens during the assessment?

- A trained assessor will ask structured questions about your child's development and behaviour.
- Topics include:
 - Early language and communication
 - Social development (friendships, interactions, relationships)
 - Play and imagination
 - Repetitive behaviours or unusual interests
 - Current strengths and difficulties

- The interview usually lasts 2–3 hours, sometimes longer. Breaks are offered if needed.

How to prepare

Think about your child's early years

- Try to recall how your child developed in their toddler and preschool years (e.g., first words, first sentences, play with others).
- If possible, gather notes, baby books, or talk to other family members who knew your child when they were younger.

Bring examples

- Be ready to share everyday examples of how your child communicates, plays, or reacts in social situations.

Practical preparation

- Set aside quiet, uninterrupted time.
- Arrange childcare if your child is at home.
- Have water/tea/coffee nearby.

During the interview

The assessor will guide you

- Questions may feel repetitive or very detailed — this is normal and part of the structured format.
- If you're unsure of an answer, it's okay to say so.
- You can ask for a break at any time.

Your role

- Answer as honestly as you can, even if something feels difficult to talk about.
- Remember — there are no right or wrong answers. The aim is to understand your child's unique profile.

After the interview

- The assessor will use the information to support the diagnostic process.
- You may be asked for additional reports (e.g., from school, health visitors, or therapists).
- The results will be explained to you in a follow-up meeting, together with next steps and support options.

Key Reminders

- The interview is with you, not your child.
- It takes 2–3 hours — plan ahead.
- Bring your knowledge, examples, and memories.
- Be honest and open — this is about building the clearest picture of your child.

Questions or Concerns?

If you have worries about the length of the interview, need breaks, or have specific accessibility needs (e.g., needing the interview split over more than one session), please let your Care Coordinator know before the appointment.

Your insight as a parent is central to the assessment — you know your child best.