

If you are worried about your child's development and you, or your GP, think your child may have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) your child may be referred for an autism assessment. This assessment is to work out if your child meets the criteria for a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A diagnosis of Autism is often made by a team of people. This team may include a:

- Paediatrician
- Child Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Speech Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist

How do I organise an assessment?

There are several ways you can organise an ASD assessment.

1. There are a number of services funded by the government that specialise in the assessment and diagnosis of ASD. These services usually have a multi-disciplinary team of people working together.

In Ballarat there is the "Infant and Child Mental Health Service (ICAMHS). This service is free however there can be a long waiting list. You can contact ICAMHS directly; however you will need to provide a referral letter from your Paediatrician if you want an assessment for ASD. The phone number for ICAMHS is 53 203030.

2. There are a number of private services in Victoria that specialise in the assessment and diagnosis of children with ASD.

Being private means they are not funded by the government so you will have to pay a fee. The fees can range in price so it is worthwhile looking around. The waiting list for these services can be shorter.

The Amaze website (formally Autism Victoria) www.amaze.org.au is a good place to start looking at options.

3. A paediatrician is able to make a diagnosis of autism if they have enough evidence from a team of people to support a diagnosis. This information can come from a Psychologist, Speech Pathologist (SP) and/or Occupational Therapist (OT). Usually you would meet with these people individually and they would provide information back to the paediatrician. There is a cost involved in seeing these people. Again, the fees for these services will vary.

Does Pinarc do ASD assessments?

Pinarc is able to support families looking for an ASD assessment by providing information to help a Paediatrician make an ASD diagnosis. There are different types of information we can provide to your Paediatrician depending on your circumstances and the other services working with your child.

We do not receive government funding to do these assessments, therefore we need to charge a fee. Eligible families may receive a rebate of from Medicare.

Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy Assessment

At Pinarc, our Speech Pathologists (SP) and Occupational Therapists (OT) work together to collect information to give to your Paediatrician to help them diagnose ASD. They will meet with you and your child to:

- Complete a parent interview
- Look at your child's skills
- Carry out formal assessments (where appropriate)

We expect this will take about 1 ½ - 2 hours to complete. Your SP and OT will then provide a written report to you and your Paediatrician. We can also offer a follow up session to discuss these reports and start talking to you about the things you can do to support your child's development.

The cost of this assessment is \$730.00 however eligible families can receive a rebate of approx. \$300.00 from Medicare. If you have reached your Medicare threshold the rebate may be higher. The follow up session is an extra cost.

In order for you to claim a Medicare rebate your Paediatrician needs to make a referral for assessment using Medicare item numbers 110 - 132. We encourage you to discuss this with your Paediatrician

Speech and Language Assessment Only

If you have been working with other services such as a psychologist, your Paediatrician may request a speech and language assessment only before making and ASD diagnosis. This is because a delay in speech and language development is one of the criteria for making an ASD diagnosis.

Pinarc is able to complete a speech and language assessment and provide a written report to your Paediatrician. We expect this assessment would take 1 – 1 ½ hrs to complete. This assessment would cost \$365.00.

Again, you may be able to claim some of the cost back as a rebate from Medicare.

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS -2)

Your Paediatrician may request for your child to have an ADOS assessment. This is an assessment developed specifically to identify features of ASD and it is used with a speech and language assessment to support a diagnosis of ASD. Pinarc has staff trained in using the ADOS assessment.

The cost of this assessment is \$420.00 however eligible families may receive a rebate of approx. \$175.00 from Medicare. If you have reached your Medicare threshold the rebate may be higher.

In order for you to claim a Medicare rebate your Paediatrician needs to make a referral for assessment using Medicare item number 110 -132.

We expect this assessment would take 1 – 2 hrs to complete.

The ADOS assessment can be completed on its own or with a Speech and Language and/or Occupational Therapy assessment.

To find out more or make a referral please contact Pinarc's Central Intake on phone 53 291398.

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