

**Tasmanian Autism Spectrum
Diagnostic Assessment Service (TASDAS)
FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS/CARERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

What is the Tasmanian Autism Spectrum Diagnostic Assessment Service (TASDAS)?

TASDAS provides comprehensive diagnostic assessment for children and youth (under 18 years of age) suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The team works with private/public diagnostic services including paediatricians, child/adolescent psychiatrists and psychologists, when a decision has been reached that a specialised autism spectrum assessment is appropriate. Referrals can be for an initial diagnostic assessment or for an additional comprehensive assessment to confirm a diagnosis.

Who is able to access the service?

This statewide service is available to children and youth under 18 years of age. The service conducts regular assessment clinics in various locations around the state.

Who can refer?

Referrals can be made by a paediatrician, child/adolescent psychiatrist or by a psychologist.

What information is required prior to referral?

- Completed referral forms and signed parent consent
- paediatricians letter/summary

Referrals will be prioritized if accompanied by a:

- Communication assessment by a speech pathologist and
- Cognitive assessment (by a psychologist) and/or developmental or adaptive assessment by an allied health professional/paediatrician

The service understands at times families may have limited access to local speech pathology or psychology services prior to the specialised autism spectrum assessment. The team will have some **limited** capacity to include these assessments in the diagnostic service.

What happens during the process of assessment?

The TASDAS assessment process focuses on answering one central question only: “Does the child have an autism spectrum disorder?”. Therefore the assessment does not provide a more general picture of the child’s development. The assessment involves observation and interaction with the child, as well as an in-depth interview with parents regarding the child’s developmental history, observations and concerns. It also includes teacher interviews and observation of the child with peers where possible. The assessment is approximately 6 hours.

What happens after the assessment?

After the assessment is completed and feedback and recommendations discussed with parents, a comprehensive report of the assessment is provided to the parents/carers, the referring professional and to the paediatrician, school, and/or other relevant services according to parent/carer consent. The report includes programming suggestions and recommendations for referral to appropriate agencies/service providers.

How much does it cost?

There is no charge for this service. This service is a joint initiative between the Department of Health & Human Services (Human Services – Disability, Child, Youth & Family Services) and the Department of Education (Students with Disabilities). TASDAS is working in collaboration with Autism Spectrum Australia to develop and provide this service.

Any questions?

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Website: http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service_information/services_files/tasdass (for referral forms and information)