



Introduction to iMsocial™

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) typically have impairments in communication, social development and social understanding. These impairments create difficulties in relating to people, particularly where the complex rules of everyday social behaviour can be confusing and hard to understand. Children also have difficulty understanding and responding to other people's behaviours, thoughts and emotions. These difficulties are often described as having limited empathy and sympathy for others. For children with ASD, the difficulties in developing peer relationships and often makes them appear aloof, rude, and socially insensitive.

The communication impairment in ASD is very complex and affects the whole communication system. This includes understanding the use of speech and non-verbal methods of communication such as eye contact, facial expression, gesture, and body language.

The iMsocial™ program targets specific areas of social learning, such as communication skills and self-safety skills. Not only is the focus on the skill itself but also on the rules of social interaction. The targeted learning areas aim to build a social toolbox of skills that will help children to interact with peers and build friendships.

Each social skill within the iMsocial™ program will start at a basic level and is built up to a more complicated level. The advanced skills however won't start at a basic level and requires children to have mastered the previous skills.

Each skill module will have an explanation on how to teach the skill using video modeling and will also have extra activities that will support children to both learn and reinforce the skill.

Importantly, while the iMsocial™ program has been developed for children with an ASD both with and without an intellectual disorder, the program can also benefit children who are having difficulty in social situations or utilising self-protective behaviours.

References

American Psychiatric Association (2013), *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edn, American Psychiatric Association, Washington DC, pp. 50 – 59.

Autism SA (2011a), *About Autism*, Brochure, Autism SA, Netley.

Autism SA (2011b), *About Asperger Syndrome*, Brochure, Autism SA, Netley.