• The Good Start (Arjessa alkuun - järjestölähtöinen varhainen tuki) project develops early support methods in cooperation with the member associations and brings peer know-how into everyday life.

IMPORTANT EVENTS
• Autism Winter Days
• World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD), April 2
• Member association day and the union meeting
• Autistic Pride Day (APD), June 18
• Empowerment Days in November
• Open House event in December

AUTISM SPECTRUM
Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are neurobiological developmental disorders of the central nervous system. They include many types of individual functional impairments, but also strengths. The characteristic features include unusual or deficient social interaction and communication skills, unusual reactions to stimuli, and restricted or stereotypical behavior.

Autism is found worldwide and in all social classes. According to estimates, people with autism spectrum disorders make up one percent of the population, i.e. approximately 54,000 people in Finland. The most severe autism spectrum disorders can lead to serious disability.

SUPPORT AND HABILITATION
The diagnosis, support, and habilitation for people with autism spectrum disorders, as well as the services provided by society, vary in different parts of Finland. Individual support can be required in all phases of life, but the nature of support may change with age. Habilitation is used to promote the ability to function, the inclusion, and the well-being of people with autism spectrum disorders. Properly timed support and habilitation can prevent exclusion. Building a good everyday life requires multi-professional cooperation between the people with autism spectrum disorders, their families, the staff at their operational environments.
THE ORGANISATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

supported by Finland’s Slot Machine Association RAY.

Finland is located in Oulu. The Association’s operation is located in Kouvola, and the local office for Northern Finland is located in Helsinki, the local office for Southeast Finland is located in Kuopio, and the local office for Northern Finland is located in Oulu. The Association’s operation is supported by Finland’s Slot Machine Association RAY.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ASSOCIATION

• Promotion of interests and lobbying
• Supporting member associations
• Communication and training
• Providing guidance and advice
• Development work in the field of autism
• Peer support activities
• Coordination of the Autism Network (Aunet) of autism professionals

The Association consists of 27 local member associations operating in different parts of the country, with approximately 3600 members. The Association’s headquarters are located in Helsinki, the local office for Southeast Finland is located in Kuopio, and the local office for Northern Finland is located in Oulu. The Association’s operation is supported by Finland’s Slot Machine Association RAY.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

27 member associations with approx. 3600 members
Union meeting
Association board
The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome personnel in Helsinki, Oulu, and Kuopio

PROMOTION OF INTERESTS

• The Association distributes information about the autism spectrum, habilitation methods, and different methods of coping with everyday life.
• The Association promotes cooperation between people with autism spectrum disorders and their families and professionals.
• The Association influences the legislative process and financial decisions with the help of local and national political decision-makers.
• The Association collaborates with social and health organizations promoting similar issues.

The Association engages in promotion of interests internationally with the Nordic autism organizations and the Autism-Europe association and World Autism Organization.

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

The local member associations offer their members peer support, clubs, events, training, and local knowledge on the autism spectrum. The member associations are also in charge of promoting the interests of people with autism spectrum disorders locally.

The member associations are open to people with autism spectrum disorders, their families and relatives, professionals, and other people with an interest in the autism spectrum. The membership of a local member association of the Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome can be applied for directly through the member association or using the online form on the Association’s web site.

The Association supports the operation of its member associations by providing guidance, advice, and financial support. The member associations are encouraged to collaborate actively with other local associations. To support cooperation within the field of autism, the Association has established networks for autism professionals (Aunet) and peer families.

COMMUNICATION

The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome publishes the Autismi magazine, issued four times per year, and the online magazine www.puoltaja.fi. The Association produces bulletins, guides, leaflets, and reports for the field of autism.

The Association’s web site (www.autismiliitto.fi), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Autismiliitto), Twitter account (www.twitter.com/Autismiliitto), and electronic news letters distribute information to member associations, people with autism spectrum disorders and their families, education, healthcare, and welfare professionals, and other people with interest in the matter.

LIBRARY

The Association’s library holds books and dissertations related to the field of autism and a reference library. The library is open to everyone and books are also available for interlibrary loans.

GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

The Association offers guidance and information by phone and email. Service helpline: Mon to Thu from 12 a.m. to 3 p.m., phone number 050 467 3130. Email: palveluneuvonta@autismiliitto.fi.

The Association organizes monthly live chats in the Tukinet online service at www.tukinet.net.

TRAINING AND EVENTS

The Association compiles and maintains the national training and events calendar for the field of autism. The Autism Winter Days (Autismin talvipäivät) is an event annually held in different parts of the country. The Association engages in cooperation and organizes small-scale training for its members and interest groups. For example, the training events for the lecture series on the autism spectrum (“Autismin kirjo tutuksi”) provide a networking opportunity for members, professionals, and other people with an interest in the matter. The Association participates in different events with material presentations, bulletins, and lectures. Student groups and international guests are welcome in the Association.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

The Association develops methods and tools required in the field of autism through projects and initiatives.