

The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

The objective of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome is to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorders to attain their basic rights through promotion of change in society.

The primary tasks of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome are:

- Promotion of interests
- Supporting regional associations
- Provision of information
- Guidance and advice
- Library service
- Training

Member associations of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

For contact information for member associations, visit www.autismiliitto.fi



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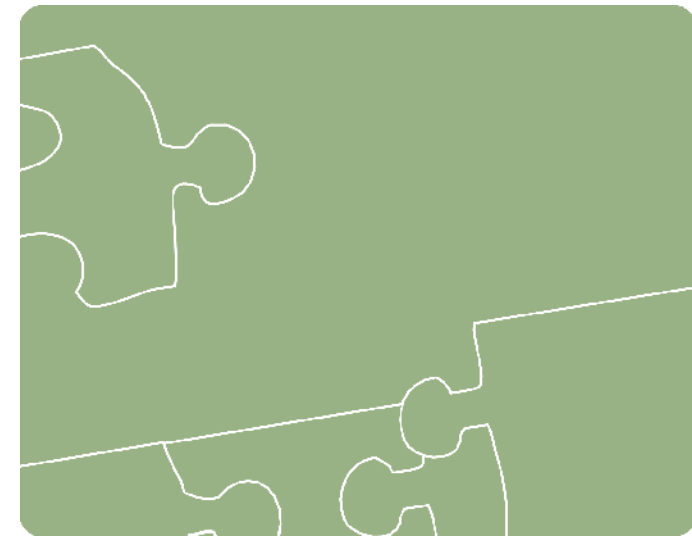
Regional Office for Northern Finland

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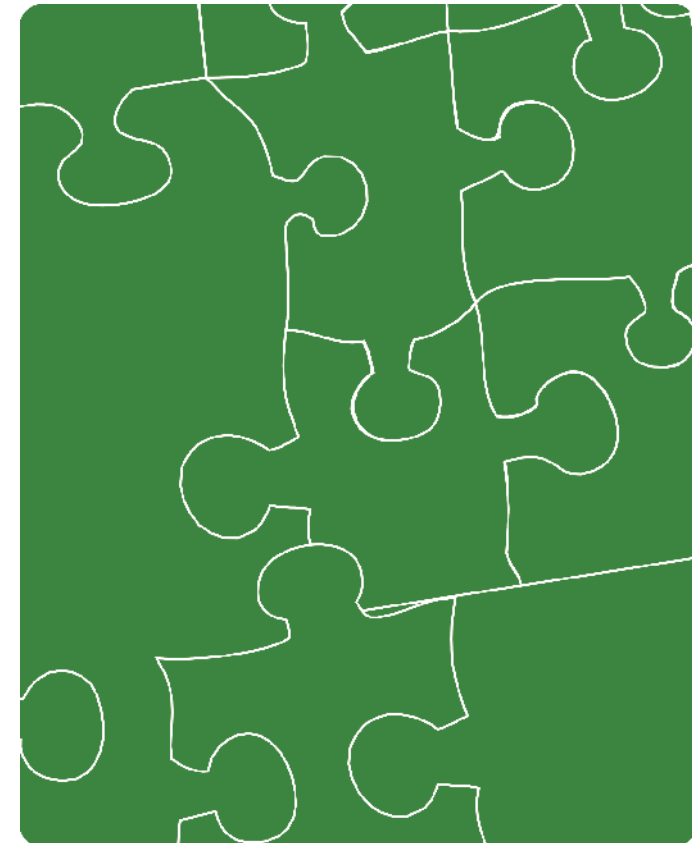
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The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome



THE FINNISH ASSOCIATION FOR AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Founded in 1997, The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome is an umbrella organisation that promotes the interests of people with autism spectrum disorders and their families. The objective of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome is to assist people with autism spectrum disorders to attain their basic rights through promotion of change in society.

The Association promotes the interests of people with autism spectrum disorders by influencing legislative work and economic decisions through local and national decision-makers. The Association provides information and a connection to work on autism spectrum disorders, it provides training and support for member associations in their work to improve the lives of people with autism spectrum disorders and their close family.

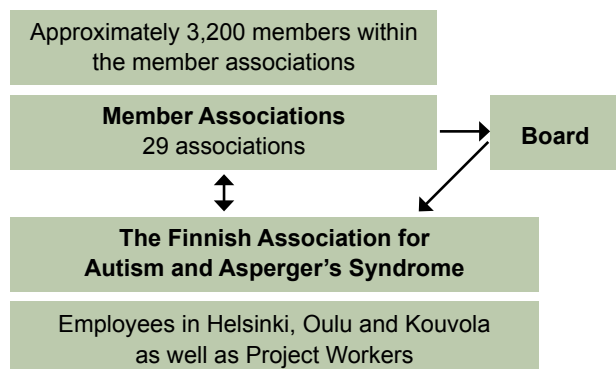
The Association co-operates with Nordic associations for autism, with Autism-Europe and with the World Autism Organisation.

The 29 regional associations are the actual members of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Individuals and organisations belong to the member associations – the umbrella organisation does not have individual members. The regional associations have a total of approximately 3,200 members.

The member associations appoint board members at the annual meeting of the Association.

The Association has employees at its Central Office in Helsinki, at the Regional Office for South-Eastern Finland in Kouvola and at the Regional Office for Northern Finland

Organisation of The Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome



in Oulu. In addition, the Association employs Project Workers in Helsinki and in Oulu.

Finland's Slot Machine Association RAY supports the work of the Association.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Provision of information

The Association publishes the Autismi magazine (five issues per year) and provides information on the www.autismiliitto.fi website. The Association produces informative contents, guides, brochures and reports and publishes an Autism Training Calendar and an Event Calendar with details of events arranged by member associations.

Library

The Association's Library includes approximately 400 books, 90 videos, final projects and theses as well as copies of topical articles that can be borrowed. Books are available for distance loans as well.

Guidance and advice

The Association provides information on autism spectrum disorders and gives guidance and advice for those seeking habilitation and consultancy services. The Helsinki office is open on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. while the Regional Secretaries of the Northern and South-Eastern Offices provide regional guidance services.

Training and events

The Association coordinates training in the field, provides information on and organises training events. The Association organises events together with member organisations, other associations as well as other interested parties.

The annual Autismin talvipäivät (Autism Winter Meeting) is organised with a different co-operation partner each year in different locations around Finland. The municipal Näkymätön näkyväksi (From Invisible to Visible) campaign is organised every year in co-operation with the Finnish Stroke and Dysphasia Association and the ADHD-association in Finland.

The objective of the campaign is to inform municipalities about neurological damage and syndromes that are not fully covered by the Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act. The Association distributes information at fairs together with associations for neurological disorders and organises events to promote networking.

Projects

The Association carries out several projects every year. Current projects include the AUNE networking project, the Empowerment project and the Bangladesh project, which is funded by the Foreign Ministry. The Empowerment project promotes empowering people with autism spectrum disorders and develops peer support. The Bangladesh project advances education and habilitation for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders in Bangladesh.

Adaptation training

The Association participates in planning, supporting and developing adaptation training. Further information is available from member associations and Kela – The Social Insurance Institution of Finland.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Autism and Asperger's syndrome are neurobiological developmental disorders of the central nervous system with behavioural symptoms, such as defective or anomalous communication and social interaction, limited or stereotypical behaviour and/or abnormal reactions to sensory stimuli.

In addition to autism and Asperger's syndrome, autism spectrum disorders include Rett syndrome and disintegrative disorder, among others. Autism spectrum disorders comprise diverse individual behavioural patterns. Severe forms of autism spectrum disorders involve severe functional deficits. Asperger's syndrome causes particular problems in terms of social interaction.

In Finland, there are approximately 50,000 people with autism spectrum disorders.

HABILITATION OF AUTISM

The earlier the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders, the better the habilitation results.

The ability of people with autism spectrum disorders to function can be significantly improved through habilitation. Habilitation of autism spectrum disorders is carried out as multi-professional co-operation between the person with an autism spectrum disorder, his or her family, day-care centre or school employees, social services professionals, health care professionals and special needs assistants.

Diagnosis, habilitation and welfare services for people with autism spectrum disorders vary considerably in different parts of Finland.