

What is an Autism Assistance Dog?

Guide Dogs WA's Autism Assistance Dog program focuses on improving the quality of life for families of children living with autism. Autism Assistance Dogs offer families a number of benefits, the most important being safety. This is achieved by providing a fully trained dog, along with training and support for parents and their child.



Access:

An Autism Assistance Dog has the same public access rights as a Guide Dog.

Eligibility:

- Aged between the ages of 3 and 8 years
- Have a confirmed diagnosis of Autism
- Have a severe deficit in verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Have a severe impairment in functioning
- Have limited to nil social interaction ability
- Have severely repetitive behaviours
- Have severe and frequent absconding tendencies

Dog Selection Process:

- Successfully completed six months of formal training as an Autism Assistance Dog.

Matching Process:

- The temperament of the dog suits the role
- Availability for dog to engage in play and rest periods
- Suitability of the dog to the family unit
- Resilience of dog to undertake the role of anchoring
- Ability of the parent to apply training techniques

Placement:

Weekend trial placement with full support.

Successful Placement:

- After 3 weeks of formal training
- Scheduled after care visits and follow-ups.

Note: If this placement is unsuccessful the dog will be considered for the next family on the waitlist.