



## Safeguarding Children and Adolescents with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The abuse and maltreatment of children with ASD is 4 to 10 times more frequent than in the general population. Their social isolation and poor communication skills make these children particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Moreover, there might be circumstances in which children with ASD can be unintentional perpetrators of violent behaviours towards themselves and others.

Both these issues are still underestimated and not adequately addressed.

The current system of protection of children with ASD, as victims or involuntary perpetrators, is insufficient in many EU Member States. This is due to a lack of adequate prevention tools and understanding amongst professionals of children with ASD.

SPEAK UP intends to address this phenomenon at European level and proposes to develop operational tools of prevention and protection of children as victims or unintentional perpetrators of violence.

For more information and/or to obtain SPEAK UP tools visit the project website: [speakup.progettisociali.it](http://speakup.progettisociali.it)

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# SPEAK UP

System for Protection and Empowerment  
of Autistic Child as victim of abuse  
or Unintentional Perpetrator



SPEAK UP project's overall objective is to deepen, at European level, **the study and intervention procedures of the abuse and maltreatment of children and adolescents with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).**

As well as the concern that these children and adolescents are often unintentional perpetrators of violence. The study aims to develop some operational tools of prevention and protection of children victims or unintentional perpetrators of violence.

The **OBJECTIVES** of the project are:

## 1 RESEARCH

A research at European level, on the incidence of the phenomenon of abuse of children and adolescents with ASD, through the collection and comparison of existing data, interviews to families with children with ASD, highlighting their experiences in each single Member States involved in the project.

## 2 PILOT PROGRAM FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE RISK OF MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN WITH ASD

The development and piloting of a program for the prevention of the risk of maltreatment of children with ASD, for the most vulnerable families and children to be involved in participating countries; the program has an integrated structure and includes actions of training, personalised counseling and care-giving to strengthen parental resilience.

## 3 INFORMATION

Information and resources for the prevention and protection of children with ASD from abuse with the production of information materials and a multilingual dedicated website;

## 4 TWO EXPERIMENTAL INTERVENTION PROTOCOLS

The establishment of two experimental intervention protocols containing specific guidelines of action in the case of suspected violence: the first for the detection, reporting and protection of children with ASD as victims of abuse, the second for the prevention of violent behaviours by children with ASD as unintended perpetrators of violence.

## Partners' Involvement

**A Scientific Board** (CIRENEO, F. M.Regina Association, National Autistic Society, Autismo Burgos, Alpha Foundation) will coordinate the research and the experimentation.

The Autism Europe advisory activity will strengthen **the EU dimension and the validity of the deliverables. It will also support the sustainability of the project** by the involvement of its members.

The representation of EU states within the consortium is certainly a keystone of the project as members bring many years of experience of working in this field.

