

RDA CENTRES:

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RDA Barossa & Light:	Barossa Pony Club Grounds, Angaston-Nuriootpa Road PO Box 212, GREENOCK SA 5360
RDA Blackwood:	Majors Road, O'HALLORAN HILL Phone: 0466 987 433 (Tues, Wed, Fri)
RDA Jennibrook Farm:	72 Pine Road, WOODCROFT SA 5162 Phone: 8322 4244 Email: rdajbf@tpg.com.au
RDA Mount Barker:	Cnr Daniels and Wellington Roads, WISTOW Phone: 0434 379 277
RDA Mount Gambier:	Sunnybrae Centre, Sunnybrae Road, MOUNT GAMBIER Phone: 8723 0123 Email: rda@hotmail.net.au
RDA Murray Bridge:	1 Coolibah Drive, MURRAY BRIDGE Phone: 8532 3408
RDA Northern Area:	Cnr Ryans & Whites Roads, GLOBE DERBY PARK Phone: 0403 862 438
RDA Port Lincoln:	Ravendale Pony Club, Proper Bay Road, PORT LINCOLN Phone: 8682 4544
RDA Port Pirie:	Anzac Road, PORT PIRIE Phone: 8633 1646
RDA Riverland:	Berri Racecourse, Moritz Road, BERRI Email: riverland@rdasa.org.au
RDA Victor Harbor:	Victor Harbor Riding Club Grounds, Bacchus Road PO Box 914 VICTOR HARBOR SA 5211
RDA Whyalla:	Racecourse Road, WHYALLA NORRIE Phone: 8644 1310 Email: rdawhyalla@hotmail.net.au
RDA Yorke Peninsula:	Kadina Equestrian Centre, Wallaroo Road, KADINA PO Box 589 KADINA SA 5554



AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Autism is a complex developmental disability.
- There is a delay or abnormal functioning in:
 - Social interaction
 - Language used in social communication
 - Symbolic or imaginative play
- People with Autism may demonstrate unusual responses to people or objects and show resistance to changes in their routine
- Individuals may experience sensitivities to sights, sounds, touch, smells and tastes and may:
 - Block ears
 - Smell everything
 - Self-injure through biting or hurting themselves
 - Demonstrate repetitive body movements such as rocking or hand flapping

RDA SA DISABILITY FACT SHEET

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SYMPTOM	RDA BENEFIT
Abnormal Sensory Reponses	Riding stimulates the tactile senses both through touch and environmental stimuli. The many sounds of the outdoor farm situation help to involve the auditory system. The rider learns to differentiate significant from less significant stimuli in the environment. An improvement in this area occurs as the rider learns to attend to their horse and those things that may influence the horse rather than attending to the environment in general.
Concentration	Programs include educational concepts, learning numbers, colours, shapes, patterns and sequencing. Memory and concentration can be improved through playing games.
Social isolation	Group lessons provide riders with the opportunity to join in with their peers and understand concepts of teamwork and participation in social rituals such as appropriate greetings and thanking helpers.
Psychological benefits	Adaptive equipment assists riders to participate in a sport to the best of their ability. This includes competition opportunities. Learning to control the horse and other skills provides riders with a sense of achievement.
Resistance to change. Obsessed with maintaining routine in their world	New horses, volunteers and activities are introduced one at a time where possible. New experiences teach riders to cope with changing environments.
Abnormal ways of relating to people, objects and events	Through regular routines and game playing, riders learn about appropriate behaviours, saying please and thank you, teamwork, and care for animals.
Speech and language difficulties	The excitement of riding encourages riders to speak and communicate about their activities.

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Caitlin's Story

Caitlin was diagnosed with autism just after her third birthday; life-changing news leading to a time of confusion. Caitlin started riding at RDA Jennibrook Farm soon afterwards and Andrea, Caitlin's mum said RDA Jennibrook Farm was the first place they had taken Caitlin which focussed on what she was capable of doing, rather than things she could not do. Caitlin was introduced to a pony named Casper and over the next four years a special bond developed between the two.

"Every day is a constant struggle to avoid triggers that might upset Caitlin," said Andrea. "Seeing Casper each week is one of the only things she seems to really enjoy doing. She always walks away from Jennibrook with a smile from ear to ear."

In 2009, Caitlin competed in the RDA SA Mounted Games.

"At the end of the day she walked away with ... a total of six ribbons.

"We drove home that day in awe of the experience RDA had given Caitlin and her family. And we were all so proud."

She said the day provided a fantastic experience for Caitlin. It was the first time she'd been in any kind of competition and to see her walk away with six ribbons was the proudest moment for her and all her family.

