

One in every 100 children is autistic, say experts

Kids and parents come together to spread awareness

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A KID tentatively steps out of the shade of the wings of the stage as if to gauge the audience's reaction. The narrator introduces him as "chotu", a baby bird whose gaze is always towards the sky as he is fascinated by other birds soaring high and wants to fly just as high one day. Thus begins a performance with the theme, 'You Can Do It!' that highlights information about autism.

The event, hosted yesterday by Khushi, an organisation dedicated to the improvement and development of the autistic child, was held in the wake of World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD), April 2.

Sachin Tendulkar, chief guest for the event, spoke about supporting the cause and appealed to people to not allow it to be a taboo that could break children but to help them enhance their abilities.

The children sang, danced and played various instruments and guest lecturers focused on how to spot autism in a child: One in every 100 kids is born autistic.

Autism is often misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), as both share similar symptoms. Misconceptions



Sachin Tendulkar and his family attend the Khushi Foundation function to spread awareness about autism at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hall, Vile Parle on Saturday

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"won't go away".

On stage, amidst a crowd of floating clouds, a walking sun and running trees, the message was conveyed. The event ended with parents of autism afflicted kids singing, "I Have A Dream".

Dr Reena Singh, director of Khushi, said, "Autism is looked upon with a lot of negativity. It is difficult to admit autistic children in mainstream schools, so parents sometimes hide it from school authorities as admissions are at stake. We wanted a positive approach towards it and the show has provided a platform to do just that."