

Moscow Opens Russia's First State-run Autism Care Center

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The first ever state-run center providing care for children on the autistic spectrum opened at the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education on Friday, the university's press service announced.

The initiative — managed by Russia's Education and Science Ministry — provides psychological, educational and social help to children and teenagers from the ages of three to 18. It currently provides education for 547 children on the autistic spectrum.

The center will also conduct consultations for families who have children with autism, develop training and prepare specialists for work with autistic children.

During Russian President Vladimir Putin's annual marathon phone-in on Thursday, campaigner Anna Smirnova told the Russian leader that provincial schools in the country were not admitting children on the autistic spectrum.

Putin told the audience that while the government should promote integrated schools and support families with autistic children, Russia simply “was not ready for inclusive education.”

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