

## **There is hope!**

This does not mean it's all bad. Those with Asperger's are usually very honest and are hard working when it is something they are interested in. They are loving and intelligent. They have excellent memories and are not afraid to think for themselves. Most do very well in school. They are especially good in math and science. If channeled correctly, the obsession with a particular subject could result in a highly valued employee to the right employer.

## **What resources are needed?**

No single professional group should have a monopoly on the diagnosis, treatment and support of your child. They may need access to multi-disciplinary range of professionals from therapist, psychiatrist, speech therapists all working together to support your son/daughters as well as your own needs. Organized workshops and networking with schools to bring attention and support from other Aspie families. As knowledge grows about Asperger's, so will the support for you and your child

**Be Positive    Be Flexible    Be Supportive**

## **About James**

James received his masters in education Community/Counseling/Human Services from DePaul University. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor and has a private practice in the Gurnee Illinois. James host seminars for teacher's about Asperser's Syndrome as well as parents with children that have special needs. He also runs an 8 week program called "Creative Parenting using Smart Discipline". He also conducts private therapy for parents as well as students dealing with the many challenges of life.



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# **Asperger's Syndrome Survival Guide**

People with Asperger's Syndrome perceive the world differently than you or me. They find us to be strange. You don't say what you mean? Why do we make trivial remarks that mean nothing at all? As parents, you may get bored and impatient when someone with Asperger's talks for hours on trains, planes or automobiles. The truth is people with Asperger's Syndrome are in a small minority. They perceive the world that makes sense to them, this often causes them conflict with the more conventional thinking adult (the majority). The "Aspie" (a term used by those with Asperger's Syndrome) cannot change and many don't want to. However, they do need help finding ways to adapt to the world in which they live. As parents, therapist and teachers we have to understand the point of view of the Aspie in order to work with them. This guide is only a start. It will allow you to understand what your child is seeing, hearing and feeling.

## **Diagnosis:**

The main clinical features of Asperger's Syndrome are:

- Lack of empathy
- Naive, inappropriate, one-sided interaction
- Little or no ability to form friendships
- Pedantic, repetitive speech
- Poor non-verbal communication
- Intense absorption in certain subjects
- Clumsy, ill-coordinated movements, and odd postures
- Age for diagnosis is (mean) eight years old

## **What is Asperger's Syndrome?**

Asperger's Syndrome is a developmental disability. Which means you are born with it. It affects the way you develop and the way you understand.

Every person with Asperger's has a unique personality and individual issues. Asperger children have similar symptoms and challenges in the following areas:

1. Social Functioning
2. Sensory issues
3. Obsessive interests
4. Routine

## **Social Functioning:**

An individual with Asperger's will often have difficulties with social functioning: they may have difficulty getting along with kids on the playground or making friends, or as an adult not understanding office politics.

Your child may prefer to play by himself instead of with others. He won't understand social cues.

Social graces and "hidden social messages" we take for granted will be a foreign language to someone with Asperger's.

## **Sensory Issues:**

- Too loud
- Too rough
- Moves too fast
- Smells bad

All these things can cause an Aspie to become overwhelmed and cause a meltdown. An Aspie may find it difficult to work in a chaotic office. Papers rustling, phones ringing and even the smell of a co-worker's perfume can cause an Aspie to run from the room. Many Aspie's may have adverse feelings to suits and ties or the feeling of certain clothes on their skin.

## **Obsessive Interest:**

Obsessive interests are typical. The focus on one subject may cause an Aspie to become isolated from others in some social situations.

Most children with Asperger's have special interest that they talk about all the time. A child might be obsessed about cars, planes, or World War II History. The list is endless.

The inability to be interested in a wide range of subjects contributes to a child's social isolation especially when the child starts school. While other children talk about sports, parties, etc. The Aspie child may exclusively talk about trains. It doesn't take long before school mates lose interest in both trains as well as the Aspie child.

## **Routine:**

Aspie's are often fixated on routines. Any change has the potential to cause a meltdown. Sticking to a routine helps the Aspie feel grounded. Many parents feel that this fixation routine can be extreme. Tell the Aspie in advance if a change in routine is coming (vacation). Write down everything you will do and change. The more the Aspie understands, the easier they will accept changes in their lives.