



Supporting ASD Students Within The Classroom

Asperger Syndrome

- Asperger Syndrome is a condition which is thought to fall within the spectrum of autism – with enough distinct features to warrant its own label
- First described by Hans Aspeger in 1944, whose work was published in English in 1981
- The incidence is thought to be 30 / 10, 000
- Boys are more likely to be affected than girls, with a probable ratio of 10:1
- It affects people in the average to above average ability range

Asperger Syndrome

- Diagnostic criteria (Wing 1981) based on the work by Hans Asperger (1944):
 - ❖ Speech – no delay, but content odd, pedantic, stereotyped
 - ❖ Non-verbal communication – little facial expression, monotone voice, inappropriate gesture(s)
 - ❖ Social interactions – not reciprocal, lacking in empathy
 - ❖ Resistance to change – enjoys repetitive activities
 - ❖ Motor co-ordination – gait and posture odd, gross movements clumsy, sometimes stereotypies
 - ❖ Skills and interests – good rote memory, circumscribed special interests

Social Interaction

The child with Asperger Syndrome:

- Will be socially isolated, but may not be worried about it
- May become tense and distressed trying to cope with the approaches and social demands of others
- Begins to realise that his/her peers have friendships, particularly when he/she reaches adolescence. They may want friends of their own, but lack the strategies for developing and sustaining friendships
- May find it difficult to pick up on social cues
- May behave in a socially inappropriate way

Social Communication

The child with Asperger Syndrome:

- May have superficially perfect spoken language, but it tends to be formal and pedantic
- Often has a voice which lacks expression. He/she may also have difficulty in interpreting the different tones of voices of others
- May also have difficulty using and interpreting non-verbal communication such as body language, gesture and facial expression
- May understand others in a very literal way
- Fails to grasp the implied meanings of language

Social Imagination & Flexibility Of Thought

The child with Asperger Syndrome:

- Often has an all absorbing interest which his/her peers find unusual
- May insist that certain routines are adhered to
- Is limited in his/her ability to think and play creatively
- Often has problems transferring skills from one setting to another

Motor Clumsiness

The child with Asperger Syndrome:

- May be awkward and gauche in their movements
- Often have organisational problems – unable to find their way around or collect together equipment they need
- Find it hard to write and draw neatly and tasks are often unfinished

Effective Intervention

Key words for intervention are routine, clarity and consistency

- Areas to consider for intervention are physical environment, language and communication environment, social environment, curricular environment
- In addition, specific interventions can be built in to develop skills in the areas of social interaction, social communication and social imagination. Students may also need focussed support and intervention to develop self-help skills and address aspects of behaviour