



Asperger's Syndrome (1)

Asperger's syndrome is a developmental disorder that falls within the autistic spectrum and affects reciprocal social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, a resistance to accepting change, inflexibility of thought as well as possessing narrow and absorbing fields of interest. Children with this syndrome are generally extremely good at memory skills (facts, figures, dates, times, etc.) and many excel in mathematics and science. There is a range in the severity of symptoms within the syndrome, the very mildly affected child often goes undiagnosed and may just seem odd or eccentric.

SENSITIVITY TO NOISE, TOUCH, SMELL OR TASTE

- Identify triggers by observing which specific stimuli (noises, textures, smells, tastes, flavours) cause them discomfort and thus try to avoid them.
- Introduce sensory stimuli in a gradual and controlled manner. For example, if loud noises are a problem, you can expose the child to soft sounds that slowly increase in volume over time.
- Listen to your child and validate their feelings when they feel uncomfortable. Explain that their sensitivity is valid and that together you will find ways to feel better.

LACK OF RESPECT FOR TURNS OF SPEECH

- Model interactions so that the child can see how turns are respected. Simulate conversations where your turn is expected and point out when it is appropriate to speak and listen.
- Using visual cues can be an effective way to remind the child when it is his or her turn to speak and when to wait. Use coloured cards (e.g. green for talking and red for waiting) or an object that the speaker should hold until it is the other person's turn.
- Immediate and gentle feedback, if the child interrupts or does not take turns, give immediate and calm feedback.

DIFFICULTY INTERPRETING FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND MAINTAINING EYE CONTACT

- Use emotion recognition games with pictures, images or mirrors where they can practice making different facial expressions and recognising them in others.
- Use of technology: There are apps and interactive programs that help children practice facial expression and emotion recognition (Emotionary or Autism iHelp).

EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES IN AREAS SUCH AS MEMORY, MATHEMATICS OR MUSIC

- If the child excels in a specific area (such as mathematics), adapt the curriculum in that subject to provide more complex and challenging tasks.
- After-school programmes that focus on their talents can also be an excellent complement to regular education.
- Encourage the child to explore beyond his or her area of expertise, for example, a child talented in mathematics may explore its use in other disciplines such as art or architecture.



Asperger's Syndrome (2)

ESTABLISHMENT OF REPETITIVE ROUTINES AND PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR

- Design a clear and predictable daily routine that includes the main activities (breakfast, school, play, homework, etc.). This gives them a sense of security and control.
- Reward and positively reinforce any signs of flexibility.
- Teach them relaxation techniques or breathing exercises that they can use when faced with an unexpected change in routine.

VERY SPECIFIC AND FOCUSED INTERESTS

- Encourage your child to set long-term goals related to his or her interests. If he is fascinated by astronomy, for example, help him plan how he can continue to learn about the subject.
- Help your child explore his or her interests in creative ways. For example, if their interest is music, encourage them to compose their own music.

DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS AND EXPRESSING THEIR OWN FEELINGS

- You can also use interactive applications that teach emotions through images.
- There are films and video games designed to teach empathy and emotions. You can watch movies together that have emotional stories and then talk about how the characters felt in different situations.

PROBLEMS RELATING TO PEERS AND POSSIBILITY OF EXPERIENCING DEPRESSIVE MOODS DUE TO SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

- Children with Asperger's often do not learn social skills naturally, so it is necessary to teach them in explicit and structured ways such as conversation, turn-taking, reading body language, etc.
- Role-play with the child to practice common social situations, such as making a new friend, participating in a group game, or responding when someone asks a question.



Annex for autistic spectrum disorders

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- Website Autism Europe: www.autismeurope.org
- Autism Cyprus: www.autismsociety.org.cy/en/
- Autism Czech Republic: www.aba-centrum.cz/en/autism/
- Autism Spain: <https://autismo.org.es>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Carol Stock Kranowitz.** *The Out-of-Sync Child.* 1998. A guide to recognizing and coping with sensory processing disorder, a common co-occurrence with autism.
- **Stanley I. Greenspan and Serena Wieder.** *Engaging Autism: Helping Children Relate, Communicate and Think with the DIR Floortime Approach.* 2009. A book that introduces the DIR Floortime method, which emphasizes emotional development through play.

WANT TO KNOW MORE SECTION

- Diagnostic Check List: <https://autism.org/diagnostics-checklist/>
- How to Teach a Child with Autism - Introduction (1/5) | Autism at Home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akDH-Wpi-iw>
- Educating Children with Autism: Visual Arts as Tools for Inclusion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uak4FDnlbZg>.
- European Union and Autism: <https://what-europe-does-for-me.europarl.europa.eu/en/social/C11>