

So you think your child might have Asperger's syndrome "Let's Talk"

Asperger's Syndrome is a disorder which is at the higher end of the autistic spectrum and a child with this condition is sometimes called a "higher functioning" autistic child.

Most children with Asperger's Syndrome have average to high intelligence, but find it difficult to work at this level because of problems with thinking and comprehension.

Many children have excellent memories and good vocabulary. However they often think very literally – when asked to look "high and low" they may stand on a chair to look high and then crawl to look low! Often they can give the impression of understanding what they are talking about but it can just be them "parroting" what they have already heard.

They often want friends, but find it very difficult to break into friendship groups and then to maintain the relationship. In particular, they seem to find it difficult to understand the rules of the "friendship game." One common problem is a tendency to talk at people, rather than to them and they often find it hard to start conversations

They often find change very hard to deal with and may need to take part in ritual behaviour when under pressure. Not knowing what to expect is a particular problem and this can cause major behaviour management issues, as can stress and fatigue.

Staying on task can be a major challenge, especially in group and class situations.

What can parents and teachers do to help?

Avoid surprises and prepare the child in advance for any changes in routine

Support the child to understand any changes in daily routine and to know what is going to happen next

As far as possible, ensure that the home and/or school environment is predictable and safe

Build on strengths, such as "special interests" and an often-exceptional memory, especially for visual material

Give "take up time" when giving instructions

For further information contact:

The National Autistic Society
393 City Road
London EC1V 1NG
Tel: 020 783 32299
Email: nas@nas.org.uk

Oasis
Brock House
Grigg Lane
Brockenhurst
Hants
SO42 7RE
Tel: 0891 633201
Email: oasis@dial.pipex.com