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## ASPERGER'S DISORDER



### DEFINITION:

Asperger's Disorder, also known as Asperger's Syndrome or high-functioning autism, is a condition characterized by severe and sustained impairment in social interaction along with repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities, that seriously impacts daily function. The condition is estimated to occur in 3 in 10,000 births. Males are estimated to be affected 10 times more frequently than females.

### DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA:

Severe and sustained impairment in social interaction, as manifested by at least two of the following:

- Use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction
- Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
- Lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with others
- Lack of social or emotional reciprocity

Repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following:

- Preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interests that is abnormal in intensity or focus
- Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines
- Stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

Clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

No clinically significant delay in language.

No clinically significant delays in cognitive development or function, self-help skills, adaptive behaviors (other than social interaction), and curiosity about the environment.

Criteria are not met for another specific Pervasive Developmental Disorder or Schizophrenia.

### TEACHING TIPS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Create a highly structured environment.
- Use the same organization and equipment each day.
- Use proper safety equipment at all times.
- Teach safety often and be very specific.
- Get full attention.
- Eliminate unnecessary external stimuli.
- Limit the amount of relevant stimuli presented at one time.
- Utilize sensory stimulation to increase attention span and decrease self-stimulation.
- Use vigorous aerobic exercise to reduce self-stimulatory and off task behaviors.
- Parents and professionals should use the same rules, expectations, and behavior management systems including positive reinforcement of desired behaviors.
- Utilize the Premack principle (pairing something liked with something disliked).
- Teach in a game-like environment to facilitate generalization.
- Improve motor skill acquisition by using reinforcement, task analysis, and physical prompting.
- Describe, discuss, and/or role play difficult situations.
- Use transitions that depict activities between each activity.

\*\* Refer to the fact sheets on MENTAL RETARDATION and AUTISM for possible signs, symptoms, and characteristics and more helpful hints and suggested activities.

*Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.*