

Asperger Syndrome

FACT SHEET

What is Asperger syndrome?

Asperger syndrome is one of the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Although symptoms are present early in life, Asperger syndrome is usually diagnosed when a child is school aged. As with other ASDs, scientists do not know exactly what causes Asperger syndrome, but it is known that the brain of someone with this condition functions differently than that of someone without Asperger syndrome.

What are the signs of Asperger syndrome?

People with Asperger syndrome have problems with social, emotional, and communication skills, as well as unusual behaviors and interests.

Children and adults with Asperger syndrome might:

- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings.
- Have a hard time understanding body language.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Want to be alone; or want to interact, but not know how.
- Have narrow, sometimes obsessive, interests.
- Talk only about themselves and their interests.
- Speak in unusual ways or with an odd tone of voice.
- Have a hard time making friends.
- Seem nervous in large social groups.
- Be clumsy or awkward.
- Have rituals that they refuse to change, such as a very rigid bedtime routine.
- Develop odd or repetitive movements.
- Have unusual sensory reactions.

With appropriate services and support, people with Asperger syndrome can make progress in managing or overcoming these challenges and can learn to emphasize their strengths.

How is Asperger syndrome different from other autism spectrum disorders?

Children with Asperger syndrome do not have a language delay and, by definition, must have an average or above average IQ (measure of intelligence). Children with other autism spectrum disorders may have a language delay and can have an IQ at any level.

What can I do if I think my child has Asperger syndrome?

Talk with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your doctor thinks there could be a problem, ask for a referral to see a specialist such as a developmental pediatrician or psychologist. Talk with your child's teacher or school counselor, too.

Your child might benefit from intensive social skills training at school or in the community. Your child also might need speech therapy to learn how to talk with other people, or medicine to help with anxiety and attention problems. Other therapies including physical and occupational therapy also might be helpful depending on your child's needs. To find out whom to call in your area about these services, contact the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities at www.nichcy.org/states.htm or call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at **1-800-232-4636**. CDC also has links to resources for families at www.cdc.gov/autism.

It is **very** important to begin this intervention as early as possible in order to help your child reach his or her full potential. Acting early can make a real difference!

www.cdc.gov/actearly



Learn the Signs. Act Early.