

Amaze &amp; Reaching Families FACT SHEET Updated Sept 2019

# ASPERGER SYNDROME

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



## What is Asperger syndrome?

Autism is a spectrum condition, which means that it affects people to varying degrees and in different ways. People who are less obviously affected by the condition are sometimes referred to as having 'high-functioning autism' (HFA) or alternatively, you may hear the term 'Asperger syndrome' used. People who have Asperger syndrome are mostly of average or above average intelligence, although they may have some learning difficulties.

## Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism?

There is ongoing debate about whether two terms are needed for people at the higher end of the autism spectrum. Asperger syndrome has been removed from the DSM-V classification system, but not others. Some practitioners still use the term Asperger syndrome, while others do not. It's quite common to hear it used interchangeably with high-functioning autism, which can be confusing. To clarify, Asperger syndrome is typically used as a diagnosis if a child does not have a delay in language development and also has issues with co-ordination and fine motor-skills.

## Characteristics of Asperger syndrome

People with Asperger syndrome share difficulties in three areas concerning social communication; social interaction, including reading emotions and facial expressions; and social imagination. These are known as the 'triad of impairments'.

In addition, a person may have sensory issues and develop repetitive behaviour or obsessive interests. They may also have other conditions such as: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); dyslexia; dyspraxia; hypermobility syndrome; obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD); or epilepsy, as well as difficulties with impulse control and anger management. It is important to remember however that, as with any disability, the degree to which an individual will be affected will vary from person to person.

## Causes of Asperger syndrome

At the moment, the causes of Asperger syndrome are still unknown, although many experts believe that it may be a result of a number of different genetic and environmental factors.

## Types of therapy

There is no 'cure' for Asperger syndrome but the following therapies that may help your child:

- **Social Stories** – short stories that teach children and adults with Asperger syndrome what to expect in social situations or activities.
- **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)** – specialist support to build communication skills.
- **TEACCH** – a highly structured system of learning based on using visual prompts, which have found to be beneficial in teaching people with autism.



## ASPERGER SYNDROME



### Ask about

- **Actable** - social skills development for children aged 6 plus with ASC using play and drama. They run an inclusive group in Brighton on Tuesdays, as well as periodic workshops and courses specifically for children with ASC. Call: **07891670114**, email: **actable@live.com** or visit **www.actable.co.uk**
- **Amaze** - the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)** offers impartial, confidential advice on anything to do with special educational needs and disabilities for 0 to 25 year olds. Parents, carers, children and young people under 25 with SEND living in Brighton & Hove or East Sussex can use the service. Email **sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk**, call **01273 772289** or visit our website at **https://amazesussex.org.uk**
- **Assert** - offers advice and support to adults with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism, including help with benefits. Go to: **www.assertbh.org.uk** or call **01273 234850**
- **Face 2 Face club for under 7s with autism** - Meets second Saturday of every month at Turner Children's Centre, Ivory Place, BN2 9QE. For more information, call Amanda on: **07983 598711** or email: **amandam@amazesussex.org.uk**.
- **mASCot** - parent-led support group for Brighton & Hove families with a child or young person with an autism spectrum condition. It has a private online forum and holds regular meet-ups for a wide range of activities including a regular fortnightly Lego club for children with ASC over five. Email: **info@asc-mascot.com** or go to: **www.asc-mascot.com**.
- **Seaside View Child Development Centre** - this is where many children are diagnosed and where health professionals such as paediatricians and therapists work together to support and treat your child. Assessments will usually be via a health or education professional but you can contact Seaside View directly on: **01273 265780**.

### Further reading and useful links

- **Amaze's fact sheet on Autism**. Download from our website at **https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets**
- **Ambitious about autism** - national charity for children and young people with autism spectrum conditions. Visit: **www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk**.
- **Asperger's Syndrome Foundation: [www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk](http://www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk)**
- **Autism Education Trust** - resources and training geared towards getting the best education for children and young people on the autistic spectrum. Go to: **www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/for-parents/**
- **Local Offer** - the local authority's online listing of all the services and support that are available to families with children with SEND in the area. Visit **new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities**
- **National Autistic Society** - **www.autism.org.uk/about/diagnosis.aspx**. Helpline tel: **0808 800 4104**.

