

BURST THE BUBBLE ON AUTISM!

AUTISM
ASPERGER ACT



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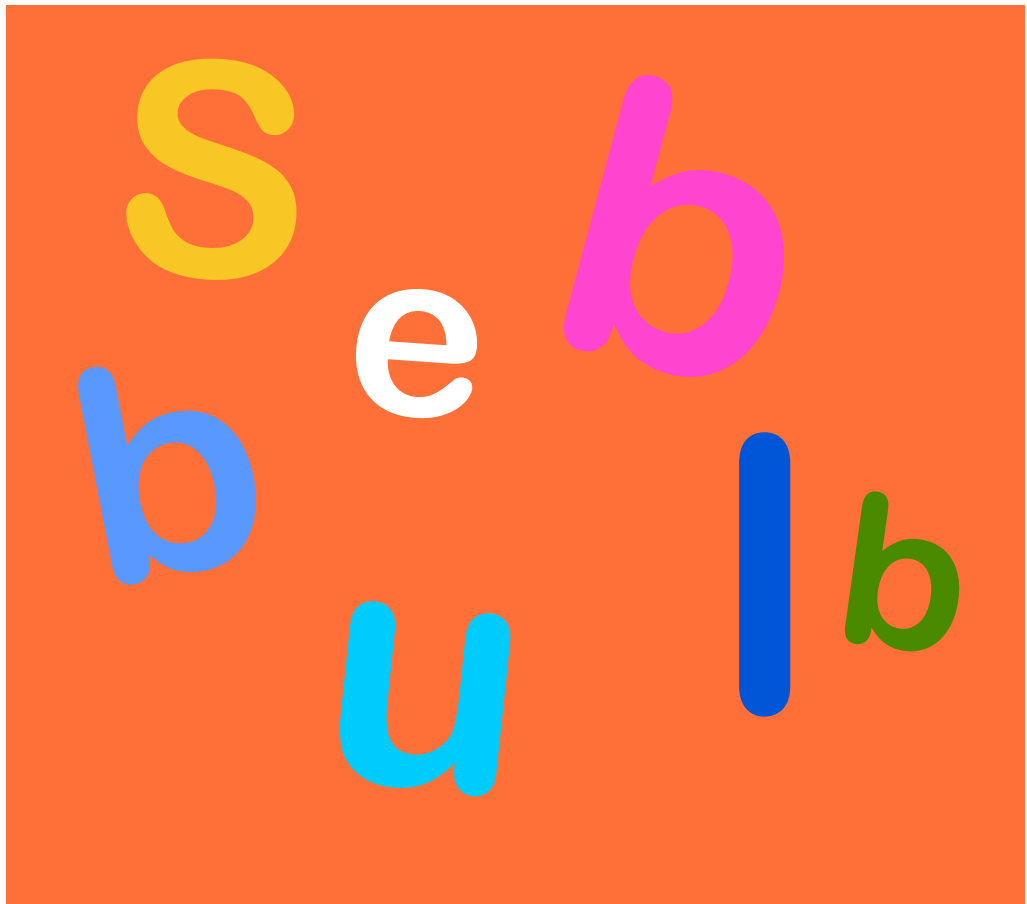
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BURST THE BUBBLE ON AUTISM!

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

Thank you for taking part in Canberra's first Bubble Day!

We hope you enjoy the activities you choose and that you are able to help us to raise awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders in your school community.



THE PURPOSE OF BUBBLE DAY IS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD) BURST OUT OF THEIR BUBBLE OF ISOLATION

We aim to do that by:

- developing an understanding of autism in the school community of teachers, parents and children
- developing an understanding of autism from the perspective of children with ASD and what their needs are – how they would like others to treat them
- developing an understanding of the needs of families with a child with ASD
- creating a safe and supportive environment in the playground
- helping children with autism to develop social skills and friendships within the school community
- creating a fun day in which all the children enjoy bubble blowing activities together!

Let's have fun and make a **difference!**

BURST THE BUBBLE ON AUTISM!

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

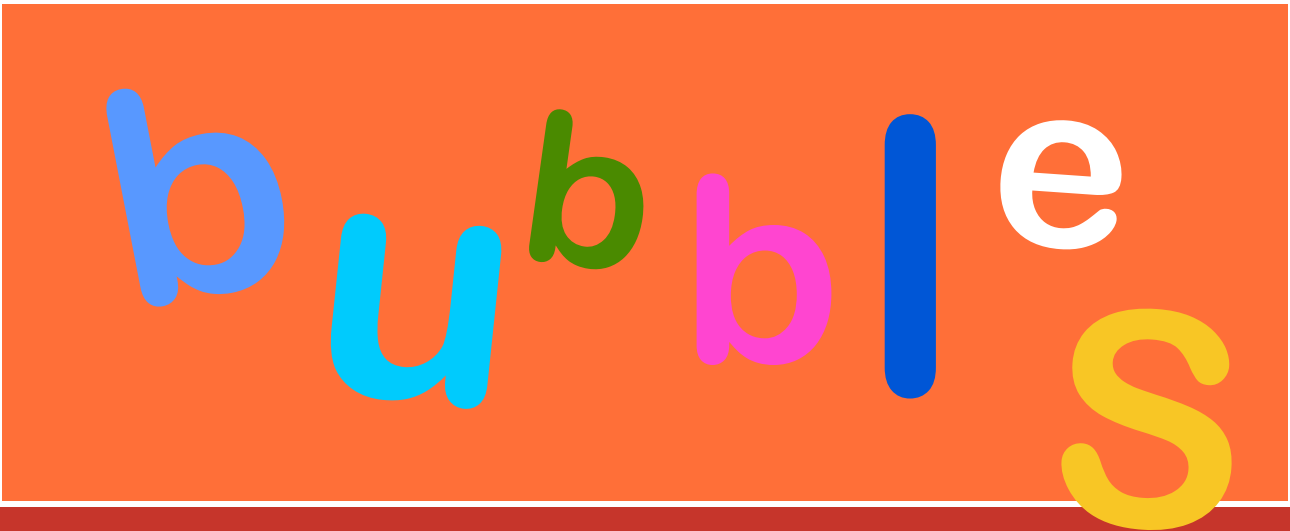


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Let's have fun and make a difference!

Today we know a lot about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), but we still need to get the message out to the community.

You, as teachers, play a significant role in helping us achieve this through developing strategies and programs for children with ASD in the classroom, helping others understand, and integrating children with ASD into the classroom and playground.

We hope that having a great day at school will help you develop a program that is not only fun but delivers on those fundamental questions about ASD.

For parents and children with ASD life can be lonely and the feelings of isolation are very real. We ask you to help create an environment of acceptance and understanding.

Contact: Autism Asperger ACT if you'd like to learn more.

Phone: 6290 1984
www.autismaspergeract.com.au/

Overview of Bubble Day

goals and resources

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

Goals	Suggested audience	Resources	Action/activities
Developing an understanding autism	Teachers	<i>Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> taken from Positive Partnerships Participants' Guide <i>The Discovery Of Aspie Criteria</i> by Carol Gray and Tony Attwood Myths and Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorders	Distribute to staff
Developing an understanding of autism from the perspective of a child with autism	Teachers and parents	<i>Ten Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew</i> by Ellen Notbohm	Distribute to staff Include in your school newsletter
Developing an understanding of autism from the perspective of a child with autism	Other students – probably from grade 3-4 up	DVD Intricate Minds 2 (a copy of this was sent to all primary schools in 2008) <i>For Kids' Eyes Only</i> by Gay von Ess Daniel's Story	Viewing and discussion of DVD. Discussion of pamphlet and Daniel's story.
Creating a supportive environment in the playground	Teachers	Playground Tips from Sue Larkey	Distribute to staff
Assisting children with autism develop social skills and friendships within the school community	Teachers and parents	Friendship and the child with autism	Peer Support activities, clubs such as chess, science etc
Developing an understanding of the needs of families coping with autism	Teachers and parents	Welcome to Holland by Emily Perl Kingsley A Mother's Ponderings by M Blakemore	Distribute to staff Include in your school newsletter.
Having a fun activity blowing bubbles	Teachers and parents	Suggested Bubble Day Activities. Recipe for Bubble Mix	See Suggested Bubble Day Activities in this pack.
Developing an understanding of the benefits of bubble blowing	Teachers and parents	Bubbles and Autism Spectrum Disorder	Distribute to staff Include in your school newsletter.

Help us to "Burst the Bubble" of **autism** and help children and adults to understand and accept.

Bubbles and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Bubble Day's aim is to encourage children to accept and value diversity

For an ASD person, bubbles have significance in the early childhood years through to adulthood. They are used in activities for skill development and the figurative expression of feelings of isolation as well as in a technique for developing communication skills. Through understanding bubbles and their many forms for an ASD person, it is hoped that we can “Burst the Bubble” of autism and help the community to understand and accept a person with autism.

Early childhood years

Blowing bubbles can be lots of fun and is a very therapeutic activity for children with ASD and others with speech impairments. Some of the developmental benefits include:

- improving oral motor skills and control of breath by blowing bubbles
- strengthening eye muscles when watching bubbles as they float to the ground or the sky
- building attention skills as children concentrate on blowing bubbles
- strengthening motor skills and improving hand eye coordination by reaching for and popping bubbles
- relaxing with the rhythm of blowing bubbles as they watch them float

“I live within a bubble” is how many autistic adults describe their sense of emotional isolation.

Feelings of isolation

“I live within a bubble” is how many adults with autism describe the sense of emotional isolation they experience. Living within society but confused and baffled by the behaviours of other people creates a feeling of living within the community but somehow apart from it. The inability to read faces and body language, and understand emotions and communication challenges, can mean many attempts at friendship are unsuccessful. They may then retreat into solitary pleasures to avoid negative experiences of attempting to make friends.

Communication

Conversation and thought bubbles are used in “comic strip conversations” — a visual method of breaking down, analysing and dealing with problem behaviour of children with ASD devised by Carol Gray. This technique can be used to understand situations from the child's perspective and gain valuable insight into their unique way of thinking. Comic strip conversations can also be used to help a student with ASD gain insight into another person's perspective.



The sequence of a problem situation is broken down into the main steps and a different picture is drawn for each, using stick figures. In each picture, the child is asked to say what s/he was thinking and feeling and what s/he thought the other person was thinking and feeling. These are written in thought bubbles, using different coloured pens for different emotions. The child chooses the colours for the different emotions.

Initially in this activity, you are listening and asking for information and later, begin building towards corrective information and problem solving.

We can “Burst the Bubble” of **autism**

Suggested Bubble Day Activities

For younger children

Make bubble mix:

Get the students involved in making their own bubble mix. See recipe below.

Bubble Blowing competitions:

See who can make the biggest, smallest or most bubbles.

Create Bubble Blowers:

Create bubble blowers out of household items, eg coat hangers, pipe cleaners, pieces of bent wire, a tin can with both ends cut off, cookie cutters and straws.

Read Stories:

Read and discuss books that value differences, eg Round Fish Square Bowl, by Tom Skinner.

Bubble Prints 1:

Mix 1 tbl spoon of powder paint and 3 tbl spoons of water in a shallow dish or cup. Blow gently into this mix with straws and place paper over the top. This will create a beautiful bubble print. Paper created makes lovely wrapping paper or background for a collage.

Bubble Prints 2:

Give each child a piece of white posterboard or a sheet of heavy paper. Have other children gently blow different coloured bubbles into the air, and invite the children to catch the bubbles on their papers.

Water Trolley:

Make a massive bubble bath and see how high you can make it. Encourage the students to take a handful of bubbles for fun play.

Bubble Circles:

Students stand in a circle blowing bubbles. Say "Ready, set, go!" and see how many bubbles they can make. Children in the centre of the circle can pop them.

Activity Books:

Create a Bubble Activity Book.

For older children

Intricate Minds 2:

In this DVD children with Asperger Syndrome explain how it affects them and how they would like other children to treat them. It is aimed at the middle to upper primary school children age group.

(A FAHCSIA grant enabled Autism Asperger ACT to distribute this DVD to all ACT government primary schools in 2008. Autism Asperger ACT has two copies available for use in its library at its SHOUT office in Pearce .ph: 6290 1984).

Science of bubble blowing: shapes and sizes:

Make different shapes with different materials such as pipe cleaners and straws. The straws can then be joined with connectors from a straw construction kit. This can be done in pairs and small groups.

Child in a bubble:

Prepare a bucketful of bubble solution and after it sets for at least a day (the longer the better), pour it into a small toddler pool. Place a hula hoop into the pool and a small step stool in the middle of the hula hoop. Set a child on the stool and then lift the hula hoop up over the child. As you do this a giant bubble should form around the child.

Mathematical bubbles:

Pop a bubble on paper and measure its diameter. Then grade according to size.

Passing bubbles:

Use a funnel dipped in bubble mix to pick up a bubble and pass it onto another student.

Bubble High Jump: Stretch out a piece of rope and get students to blow bubbles over the rope using a hoop. See how long they can do this as the height of the rope is raised.

Sticky bubble mix:

Bubble mix that sticks together and can be held is available for purchase from the Australian Geographic Shop. Students could see how far they can walk with a bubble on their finger or head.

Recipe for Bubble Mix

3 parts dishwashing liquid 7 parts hot water 1 part glycerol (or sugar)

The glycerol helps the bubble to last longer by slowing thinning at the top of the bubble and is available from chemists and some supermarkets. If you cannot get any glycerol, use sugar instead. Mix thoroughly.

Tips: If possible leave overnight or longer. This tends to make bubbles of a better quality. For something different add some scented oil or powdered tempera paint to the mix.

Playground tips

by Sue Larkey

Some ideas to try and thoughts on play

Most children go out in the playground to relax, socialise, eat, drink, go to the toilet, run around and come back to class refreshed. Unfortunately for many children with ASD, the playground is the most stressful part of their school day. For some students we may need to put in structures to help reduce the anxiety of the playground. (This also includes “outside play” in the early years while at Pre-school, Daycare etc)

Clubs:

Chess Club, Music etc.

Using visuals:

Circuit/ Schedule of Activities using visuals. This should also include drink, toilet, line up etc.

Safe area:

If children have a repetitive action, or ASD behaviour they do to calm themselves during the break, you may need to designate a safe area for this activity. I recommend within view of a teacher.

Smaller areas:

Many playgrounds are big areas where the rules change depending on the area. For example the oval may have different rules to the asphalt. You may need to start with just one area and teach children with ASD how to play in that area, teaching them games suitable for that area as well appropriate and allowed interactions. Then add a new area etc.

Shorter breaks:

The break may be too long. Some children are okay in the first short break, but find lunch too long. These children may benefit from a shorter time in the playground. (An indicator of this is an increase of undesirable behaviours in last part of play. See list below for examples of what “form” these undesirable behaviours may take).

Activity Box:

Many schools give out physical education equipment (balls, hoops etc) but not all students find these easy activities, as most require good gross motor skills. Put out a box of books, lego, a mat with cars/blocks, dinosaurs, pokeman cards and a drawing table.

More Ideas:

The Early Years pages: 59-66

Making it a Success pages: 99-101;

Essential Guide to Secondary page: 68

I find it particularly wonderful when children say, “I do not have anyone to play with!” You can say, “Read a book from the book box.”

Often it is not just ASD children who are lost/confused at breaks.

Having a range of activities ensures a “meeting point” for these children. It always warms my heart to see two children reading a book together or sitting drawing together who five minutes earlier were upset because they had no one to play with.

It is much easier to direct to an activity than trying to find a “child to play with.”

We can “Burst the Bubble” of **autism**

Playground tips

CONTINUED

Undesirable Behaviours

(Excerpt taken from: Teacher Assistants BIG RED Book of Ideas page 32)

These often take the form of:

- Dobbing
- Following other students around but not engaging
- Escaping and running away
- Irrelevant and rude comments
- Want to be inside
- Constantly sit outside staff rooms, office etc
- Hitting other students
- Walking around periphery of playground
- Walking and talking to teachers regarding special interest
- Sitting and reading books (for girls)

Why do students exhibit these behaviours?

The following are some possible explanations:

- They want friends, but don't know how to join in with other children
- They want to be good
- They feel high anxiety in the playground and during unstructured time
- High anxiety causes them to lose the basic social skills they have already learnt. They are unable to generalise play skills learnt in various settings (eg, they may cope with losing in a game played in the classroom, but struggle with losing in playground activities)

The information on pages 7 and 8 comes from Sue Larkey's "Success E-Zine", which anyone can subscribe to free by going to Sue Larkey's website: www.suelarkey.com

When you sign up you get smart strategies, information articles and action steps to make teaching and living with Autism Spectrum Disorder a success.

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Friendship and the child with autism

Forming meaningful relationships

Children with ASD have tremendous difficulty understanding other people, hindering their ability to form meaningful peer relationships. The difficulties are not insurmountable, but can be ameliorated with careful peer mentoring, training and incidental learning overseen by supportive adults.

A child with ASD can experience difficulty processing verbal language, reading and understanding other emotions (theory of mind) and understanding non-verbal gestures. Often referred to as “egocentric”, children with ASD follow their own agendas and areas of interest.

Social understanding

Lack of social understanding colours every experience in their lives. Often young children with ASD show little interest in other children and forming friendships. Like all children, there is great variation and some are very talkative, seeking attention, while others are more withdrawn. However, children with ASD desperately need to learn social skills to enable them to function and progress independently as adults.

“[In adolescence they] begin to crave friendships but at the same time they become more aware of how they come across to others in social interactions and feel that they do not quite fit in.”

Growing up

As these children progress through childhood toward adolescence, they begin to crave friendships; but at the same time, they become more aware of how they come across to others in social interactions and feel that they do not quite ‘fit in’. This unfulfilled desire for friendship on top of school pressure to conform, constant rejection and harassment can often cause clinical depression in teens with ASD. They grow more isolated even as they crave more interaction with others.

Socialising

Research has shown that the more time a person with ASD spends socialising, the happier they are. People with ASD can and do form friendships. When they do, research shows that even one friendship will speed up their entire social development. Enlisting the assistance of caring and nurturing children in the classroom to mentor the child with ASD may help develop social skills.

Children with ASD benefit from assistance in the following areas:

- reading non-verbal clues
- learning how to take another’s perspective
- overcoming difficulties encountered
- learning about kindness and ways to be kind
- turn-taking in activities and conversation
- learning what to say and what not to say
- achieving empathy and ways to display empathy for others.

“Even one friendship will speed up their entire social development.”

Unfortunately researchers estimate that almost 100% of children with ASD experience bullying during their school years. Unless specifically asked if they are being bullied, the child may not be forthcoming and the offence will remain unreported. It is important for teachers to be vigilant and aware of potential issues and intervene where necessary.

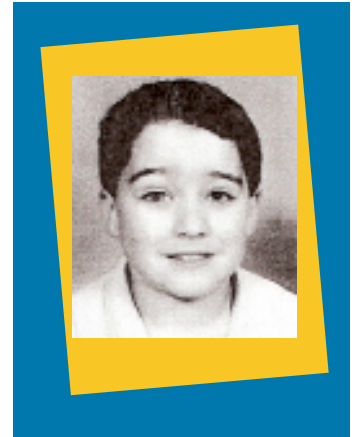
Hello! I'm Daniel – this is my story

My name is Daniel and I go to a Canberra primary school.
I am in 2-5 S.

Let me tell you a little bit about me!

I like going to school but sometimes it can be a bit difficult for me. This is because I have autism. Autism is a disability. This means that sometimes I have difficulty doing things which other people may find easy or just do without having to think about it. You are unable see autism like you can with some physical disabilities. I think, learn and understand differently and sometimes I act differently because of this.

There are many people in the world who have a disability and it is okay to have a disability. I know I have autism and it just means that I do some things differently to other people and it is okay to be different.



Let me tell you a little bit about my autism

My autism affects the way I see and hear the world.

Sometimes I see things differently to other people for example sometimes I walk around in my own world and do not see other people, I might bump into them because

I did not see them, I may put myself in danger because I walk through the school car park and forget to look for cars, I might walk out of bounds in the playground or I might walk through some other student's game that they are playing because I did not see them. I do not do these things on purpose I just do not notice them.

My autism also affects the way I hear things. Sometimes when I am walking around in my own thoughts I do not hear things. It may look like I am ignoring people or that I am deaf. I can hear very well, actually sometimes I hear too many things and this may cause me to get a bit distressed or upset. When the noise stops I feel okay again.

There is a lot to learn about me and my autism. If you have any questions please ask your teacher or my mum – they will be happy to help!



Daniel's story

continued

What I like!

I like to play Nintendo 64 games, especially Pokemon, Playstations, Gameboys and computer games. I am very good at all of these.

I like watching videos ... my favourite videos are Pokemon, Shrek, Harry Potter, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and many more.

I like to eat chicken nuggets and chips... my favourite takeaway place is KFC. I also like to go to Sizzlers for tea because I can get my own drink and ice cream.

I like to giggle and repeat stories that I have heard. I do this as I am walking around and some people think this is a bit weird but it is not as I think this is fun.

I can repeat many stories word for word. .. I have a very good memory.

I like to run... sometimes nowhere in particular... and I like to make funny noises when I do this. I am okay and you do not need to worry as I am having fun.

I like skateboards. I like to play Tony Hawk's CD Rom at home on my computer. I like to do The Ollie, Grinds, Flip Tricks and Lip Tricks.

I like to watch other children play, especially when they are playing ball games. Sometimes I find it hard to join in but I like to watch and you can say hello to me and tell me your name. If I do not talk this means that I am in my own thoughts but I am okay so maybe try talking to me another time.



What I do not like!

I do not like really loud noises as this distresses me. I do not like loud whistles or screams. Sometimes I scream when I hear these noises and I will stop when the noise stops.

I do not like crowds. I like to see a few people at a time but I do not like to be surrounded by people.

I do not like people holding me still. I do not like people pulling me along by my arm or holding my arm or hand tightly.

I do not like people yelling at me. If you want to tell me something please tell me quietly. If I do not seem to be listening and it is not important please try again later.

Can you help me please?

Sometimes when I am distressed I forget to ask the teacher for help. If you see that I may need help can you please tell the teacher?

Can you please keep an eye on me in the playground to make sure that I am safe? I may need someone to tell the teacher if I am doing something that may be dangerous or if I walk towards the road or I just need help.

If I look distressed because of loud noises can you please take me to a teacher or ask the teacher for help?

Do not forget to give me space to play... I just need you to be aware that I am in the playground and keep an eye on me.

Thank you for helping me and being a friend.

10 things your student with autism wishes you knew

Children's Voice Article, May/June, 2005
By Ellen Notbohm

When my article, "What Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew," appeared in the November--December 2004 issue of Children's Voice, I couldn't have imagined the response. Reader after reader wrote to tell me the piece should be required reading for all social service workers, teachers, and relatives of children with autism.

"Just what my daughter would say if she could," said one mother. "Screams wisdom throughout every word and sentence," said another. As the article travelled from website to website, I pondered what was happening and decided the resonance was coming from the fact that the piece spoke with a child's voice, just like the name of the magazine in which it first appeared.

Behaviour is communication

All behaviour occurs for a reason. It tells you, even when my words can't, how I perceive what is happening around me. Negative behaviour interferes with my learning process. But merely interrupting these behaviours is not enough--teach me to exchange these behaviours with proper alternatives so real learning can flow.

Start by believing this

I truly do want to learn to interact appropriately. No child wants the negative feedback we get from "bad" behaviour. Negative behaviour usually means I am overwhelmed by disordered sensory systems, cannot communicate my wants or needs, or don't understand what's expected of me. Look beyond the behaviour to find the source of my resistance. Keep notes as to what happened immediately before the

There is a great need and, I hope, a great willingness — to understand the world as special-needs children experience it.

behaviour--people involved, time of day, activities, and settings. Over time, a pattern may emerge.

Never assume anything

Without facts to back it up, an assumption is only a guess. I may not know or understand the rules. I may have heard the instructions but not understood them. Maybe I knew it yesterday, but can't retrieve it today. Ask yourself:

- Are you sure I really know how to do what you're asking of me? If I suddenly need to run to the bathroom every time I'm asked to do a math sheet, maybe I don't know how, or I'm afraid my effort won't be good enough. Stick with me through enough repetitions of the task to where I feel competent. I may need more practice to master tasks than other kids do
- Are you sure I actually know the rules? Do I understand the reason for the rule (safety, economy, health)? Am I breaking the rule because of an underlying cause? Maybe I pinched a snack out of my lunch bag early because I was worried about finishing my science project, I didn't eat breakfast, and now I'm famished

Look for sensory issues first

A lot of my resistant behaviours come from sensory discomfort. One example is fluorescent lighting, which has been shown over and over to be a major problem for children like me. The hum it produces is very disturbing to my hypersensitive hearing, and the pulsing nature of the light can distort my visual perception, making objects in the room appear to be in constant movement. An incandescent lamp on my desk will reduce the flickering, as will the new, natural light tubes.

10 things your student with autism wishes you knew

CONTINUED

Or maybe I need to sit closer to you; I don't understand what you're saying because there are too many noises in between — that lawnmower outside the window, Jasmine whispering to Tanya, chairs scraping, the pencil sharpener grinding. Ask the school occupational therapist for sensory-friendly ideas for the classroom. It's actually good for all kids, not just me.

Provide me a break to allow for self-regulation before I need it

A quiet, carpeted corner of the room with some pillows, books, and headphones allows me a place to go to regroup when I feel overwhelmed, but isn't so far physically removed that I won't be able to rejoin the activity flow of the classroom smoothly.

Tell me what you want me to do in the positive rather than the imperative

"You left a mess by the sink!" is just a statement of fact to me. I'm not able to infer that what you really mean is, "Please rinse out your paint cup and put the paper towels in the trash." Don't make me guess or have figure out what I should do.

Keep your expectations reasonable

That all-school assembly with hundreds of kids packed into bleachers, and some guy droning on about the candy sale, is uncomfortable and meaningless to me. Maybe I'd be better off helping the school secretary put together the newsletter.

Help me transition between activities

It takes me a little longer to move from one activity to the next. Give me a five-minute warning and a two-minute warning before an activity changes, and build in a few extra minutes on your end to compensate. A simple clock face or timer on my desk gives me a visual cue as to the time of the next transition and helps me handle it more independently.

Don't make a bad situation worse

I know that even though you are a mature adult, you can sometimes make bad decisions in the heat of the moment. I truly don't mean to melt down, show anger, or otherwise disrupt your classroom. You can help me get over it more quickly by not responding with inflammatory behaviour of your own. Beware of these responses that prolong rather than resolve a crisis:

- raising the pitch or volume of your voice (I hear the yelling and shrieking, but not the words)
- mocking or mimicking me (sarcasm, insults, name-calling, or humiliating remarks will not embarrass me out of the behaviour)
- making unsubstantiated accusations
- invoking a double standard
- comparing me to a sibling or another student
- bringing up previous or unrelated events or
- lumping me into a general category ("Kids like you are all the same.").

Criticize gently

Be honest--how good are you at accepting "constructive" criticism? The maturity and self-confidence to be able to do that may be light years beyond my abilities right now. Should you never correct me? Of course not. But do it kindly, so that I actually hear you.

- Please, never try to impose discipline or correction when I'm angry, distraught, over-stimulated, shut down, anxious, or otherwise emotionally unable to interact with you.
- Remember that I will react as much, if not more, to the qualities of your voice than to the actual words. I will hear the shouting and the scorn, but I won't understand the words and therefore won't be able to figure out what I did wrong. Speak in low tones, and lower your body as well, so that you are

We can help children and adults to understand and accept.

10 things your student with autism wishes you knew

CONTINUED

- communicating on my level rather than towering over me.
- Help me understand the inappropriate behaviour in a supportive, problem-solving way rather than punishing or scolding me.
- Help me pin down the feelings that triggered the behaviour. I may say I was angry, but maybe I was afraid, frustrated, sad, or jealous. Probe beyond my first response.
- Practise or role-play--show me--a better way to handle the situation next time. A storyboard, photo essay, or social story helps. Expect to role-play a lot over time. There are no one-time fixes. And when I do get it right next time, tell me right away.
- It helps me if you yourself are modeling proper behaviour for responding to criticism.

Offer real choices — and only real choices.

Don't offer me a choice or ask a "Do you want . . .?" question unless you're willing to accept no for an answer. "No" may be my honest answer to "Do you want to read out loud now?" or "Would you like to share paints with William?" It's hard for me to trust you when choices aren't really choices at all.

You take for granted the amazing number of choices you have on a daily basis. You constantly choose one option over others, knowing that both having choices and being able to choose provides you control over your life and future. For me, choices are much more limited, which is why it can be harder to feel confident about myself. Providing me with frequent choices helps me become more actively engaged in everyday life.

Whenever possible, offer a choice within a "have-to." Rather than saying, "Write your name and the date on the top of the page," say, "Would you like to write

your name first, or would you like to write the date first?" or "Which would you like to write first, letters or numbers?" Follow by showing me: "See how Jason is writing his name on his paper?"

Giving me choices helps me learn appropriate behaviour, but I also need to understand there will be times when you can't. When this happens, I won't get as frustrated if I understand why:

- "I can't give you a choice in this situation because it is dangerous. You might get hurt."
- "I can't give you that choice because it would be bad for Danny."
- "I give you lots of choices, but this time it needs to be an adult choice."

The last word

Believe. That car guy Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you are usually right." Believe that you can make a difference for me. It requires accommodation and adaptation, but autism is an open-ended disability. There are no inherent limits on achievement. I can sense far more than I can communicate, and the number one thing I can sense is whether you think I can do it. Expect more, and you will get more. Encourage me to be everything I can be, so I can stay the course long after

I can sense far more than I can communicate

I've left your classroom.

Ellen Notbohm is a columnist for

Autism/Asperger's Digest; coauthor (with Veronica Zysk) of *1001 Great Ideas for Teaching and Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (2004, Future Horizons), from which this article was adapted; and parent of a child with autism.

Contact her at ellen@thirdvariation.com.

We can "Burst the Bubble" of autism and help children and adults to understand and accept.

Welcome to Holland

by Emily Perl Kingsley

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The coliseum, The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland".

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean "Holland ??? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy !?".

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around...and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills...Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrants.

But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things.....about Holland.

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away.... because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy....and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned".

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away.... because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.



But ... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

Help us to "Burst the Bubble" of autism

A Mother's Ponderings

by Monique Blakemore

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

You know those moments when you look at your child and the love feels like a bubble that wells up inside you? You take a moment and marvel at the perfect child lying in your arms. Autism doesn't enter the picture. Autism doesn't change who they are or how you feel for your child. The parental love you feel towards them is no different from that you feel towards a neurotypical (NT) child.

There is so much I don't know about my kids and what they need, how they think and how they feel. I have so much to learn about how to communicate with them effectively and how to help them manage and be whole. I have learned how valuable visuals are in conveying my message and how important it is to simplify my speech so

that it is clear and concise. **"Autism should not rob my kids of their childhoods and the right to play freely"**

My task is made more difficult by my children's sensory issues as well as by other people who have contact with my children not learning these special communication skills.

I have learnt that all behaviour is purposeful and that I need to look beyond my child's behaviour to see what is causing his distress which leads to his meltdowns. Only by drilling down to the *REASON* can I help my child.

I dream of society seeing my children for what they *CAN* do rather than what they *CAN'T*. Everyone has different traits and characteristics and I think the strengths of autism are often overlooked when people focus on the stereotypical behaviour of lining up toys, poor eye contact etc. Should those traits define who my boys are?

I know my autistic child will be very good at school but when he comes home will have a meltdown and refuse to go the following day. It takes a tremendous effort for him to conform and cope for those school hours and at home, his safe place, he can let that mask drop. It takes so much effort to remember all the rules: "how to ask to play", "personal space", "taking turns", "use your words".

There is no perfect manual to parenting ANY child, but when given a child to nurture on the spectrum there is an additional pressure placed on parents. So much depends on the support systems and what information families can access. The most successful families know that the whole extended family needs to learn new ways and that it is unreasonable to

expect great changes in behaviour from a child on the spectrum who is not given appropriate support. We wouldn't yell and get angry that a person in a wheelchair won't get up and walk when we ask them to. We also can't expect a child with autism to follow our rules and norms of behaviour without a very strong supportive frame. It wouldn't be fair to a person in a wheelchair person and it isn't fair to my kids to not make the allowances that they need.

When does an interest cease to be an interest and become a hobby, a passion, an obsession? I guess it is the interest level of the audience. If a group of people were all sitting around together and shared the same interest everybody would be happy talking for hours.

Aspies don't have closed minds, but are often 'set in their minds' and intensely focussed which can also be considered a strength in many circumstances in life. A person with a closed mind is obstinate in that they know there are other ways but choose to ignore them because of their own beliefs. Having a closed mind is a negative but being 'set in mind' is not. The challenge of the set mind is the difficulty of not knowing when to move on.

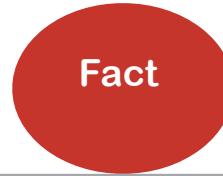
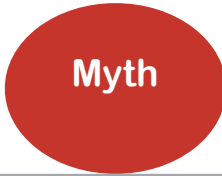
Certainly the world will be a better place for children with autism if NT's would take the time to learn about autism and try to understand their situation and put their preconceptions about how children should behave aside. But it is a steep learning curve and an evolutionary process for us all.

Autism should not rob my kids of their childhoods and the right to play freely. I have learned to accept that my children get pleasure playing in ways different from those I expected and what neurotypical children enjoy.

My son is like one great big roller coaster that takes everyone down on a dip but I do so love the highs with him! But the parenting is relentless in its intensity. The gift a NT parent gets when given an autistic child is a more thorough knowledge of the child and a more intense parenting experience ... good and bad. There are so many steps in the journey of understanding. Many many steps you take together. My child might think I am ill-informed; we might not see things through the same eyes or from the same perspective but it does not mean I do not care or want to learn.

Myths and Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorders

There are many different myths surrounding Autism Spectrum Disorders in the world. Here are some of the facts about ASDs.



Autism Spectrum Disorders are rare.	Autism Spectrum Disorders affect 1 in every 160 children in Australia.
Autism Spectrum Disorders are an emotional disturbance.	Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder.
Poor parenting causes Autism Spectrum Disorders.	Parents do not cause Autism Spectrum Disorders. Parents need support to manage difficult behaviours with structure and consistency.
There is a cure for Autism Spectrum Disorders, or people will grow out of the disorder.	People do not “grow out” of Autism Spectrum Disorders. With early intervention and good educational programs progress may be significantly better.
Everyone with an Autism Spectrum Disorder behaves in the same way.	People with Autism Spectrum Disorders are individuals with strengths and needs unique to each individual.
All people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder have special savant or genius like skills.	All children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder do not possess special genius-like abilities and memorization abilities.
All children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder should be taught the same way.	There isn't one single treatment that is appropriate for all children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder at all times.
People with Autism Spectrum Disorders have to be in special programs “for the autistic”.	Individually designed programs best meet the needs of a person affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder. They need to be learning, living and working in settings where there is ample opportunity to communicate and interact with others who have the skills they need.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

a brief outline

The following information has been taken from Module 1 of the Participants Guide of Positive Partnerships: supporting school aged students on the autism spectrum initiative. This project was federally funded through the Helping Children With Autism package.

BEFORE READING the following, it is of critical importance to realise that we are not talking about a continuum, but a spectrum which means that there are different areas or dimensions in which a person may experience difficulty and that no two people with ASD are the same.

There are enormous variations in how people are affected. Many people without an ASD diagnosis, may be on the spectrum to some degree.

The importance of early intervention

With appropriate support, children with ASD may learn the appropriate behaviour, which neuro-typical children pick up intuitively.

Thus it is essential that parents, teachers and staff living and working with children with ASD understand how it is for these children and give them the most informed support available.




Definition of ASD


Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex, lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder beginning at birth or shortly after. It affects a person's ability to communicate, form relationships with others and respond appropriately to the environment, each in varying degrees. Those affected by ASD fall along a spectrum of "high functioning" individuals to individuals who lack any means to communicate with others.

Autism Spectrum

The term 'autism' is used interchangeably with the term Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) to describe the autism spectrum. The term 'spectrum' is used because, while all individuals with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in varying ways.

The spectrum in autism:

-  varies across and even within individuals
-  varies according to intellectual ability and age
-  includes behaviour that is affected by context and setting

-  includes impairments in social understanding, communication and imagination




Van Krevelen observed that the low functioning child with autism 'lives in a world of his own' whereas the higher functioning child with autism 'lives in our world but in his own way.'

Triad of impairments

Individuals with Autistic disorder characteristically share three main areas of difficulty. These are collectively known as the 'triad of impairments', a term first used by Lorna Wing. They are:

-  difficulty with social communication
-  difficulty with social interaction
-  difficulty with social imagination, evident in rigid and repetitive behaviour

Beyond the triad there are more characteristics to consider:

-  cognitive functioning (including theory of mind, executive functioning and central coherence)
-  intellectual ability and
-  sensory processing.

Difficulty with social communication

The communication deficit in autism is more fundamental than a language deficit. The person with autism often appears not to understand their own life experiences and the connection between their own experience and that of others. As a result, people with autism may fail to read meaning into communication, may lack interest in communicating, and generally fail to understand the significance of communication.

Please visit the following website for a fuller explanation of the topic as well as Implications for Teaching and Learning. www.autismtraining.com.au

Autism Spectrum Disorders

CONTINUED

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

Children with autism may have speech but:

- have difficulty understanding the verbal input of others
- interpret questions and comments in a very concrete manner
- experience particular problems with metaphors or words with multiple meanings
- have difficulty initiating and maintaining conversation
- are unable to converse in the language of their peers (eg using slang)
- may not communicate for conventional reasons (such as sharing an experience)

Difficulty with social interaction

Deficits in social interaction and difficulties in developing reciprocal social understanding are seen as the most significant features of autism.

Children with autism in varying degrees:

- lack social intuition
- have difficulty engaging in and maintaining normal social contact
- usually have a different demeanor from that seen in typically developing students
- have little awareness of personal space or ability to interpret the body language of others
- find it difficult to make eye contact with other people

This may make them vulnerable to teasing or bullying because being different at school is often neither valued or approved.

Restricted interests and repetitive behaviours

People with autism often display ritualistic and repetitive behaviours. These behaviours serve as an attempt to impose order in their world. Behaviours of students with autism may be repetitive and stereotyped. Other behaviours may reflect restricted, intense interests.

Behavioural markers may:

- include atypical behaviour reflecting difficulties with flexible thinking

- take the form of repetitive motor movements
- take the form of an all-encompassing interest or obsession
- reflect the need to maintain an interest or routine.

Therefore children with autism experience difficulty with change – whether it is a change in routine, personnel or classroom rearrangement. On the other hand a clearly structured classroom with predictable routines provides the child with autism with a sense of security and thus reduces anxiety. Students with autism need to be prepared for change with appropriate visual and other supports.

Beyond the triad

Information about cognitive functioning is quite complex and is best studied on the Positive Partnerships website. It begins on page 23 of Module 1. However, a note about Theory of Mind is included here.

Theory of mind

It has been suggested that people with autism lack a Theory of Mind, which means that they are unable to attribute a mental state (eg a belief, desire, intention or emotion) to another in order to predict or understand that person's behaviour and this is often the cause of many of their inappropriate behaviours. They tend to logically work out others' mental states without reference to empathic or affective reactions and they use atypical strategies to decode others' behaviour.

This means that they are less able to:

- appreciate the mental state, intentions, needs, desires and perspectives of others
- monitor their own emotions and repair interpersonal situations
- read body language
- predict behaviour
- explain their own behaviour to others
- understand the effects of their behaviour
- use their imagination in fiction, role play and other activities

Autism Spectrum Disorders

CONTINUED

Sensory processing

Many people on the autism spectrum have difficulty managing sensory input. They may over or under react to:

- visual input
- tactile input
- auditory input
- olfactory (smell) input
- gustatory (taste) input
- vestibular (equilibrium) input
- proprioceptive (knowing where one's body is in space) input

Sometimes these sensitivities may be so severe to reduce their ability to participate in typical life activities (such as hair cutting and in some extreme cases, even teeth cleaning). Some students experiencing distress or anxiety in some sensory environments (such as fluorescent lights) may display difficult or non-compliant behaviours. Distraction is an issue for some students who find it difficult to distinguish which sensory information to focus on and which to ignore.

Motor functioning

Children with autism may have problems of coordination and balance in both fine and gross motor activities. Some children have a history of gross motor delay and display several motor difficulties such as hypotonia (low muscle tone) and toe walking. They may also exhibit motor apraxia, which means they find it difficult to plan movements or use objects for their intended purpose. Some children with autism find it difficult to perform actions such as dressing, riding a bike, catching or throwing. As a rule, these characteristics improve with age.

Writing may be problematic for some students – many preferring to use a keyboard than writing by hand.

Strengths of students with autism

These include:

- rote memory
- visual-spatial abilities which can be used to aid understanding
- compartmentalised chunk learning
- preference for structured routine and rules which can be used to help students learn new skills
- intense interests which can be highly motivating for learning and enhance quality of life
- may be refreshingly frank and logical

This topic of the strengths of students with autism is developed in the article the discovery of aspie criteria by Carol Gray and Tony Attwood. This article is included in the bubble day information pack.

Asperger syndrome

While there are similarities with autistic disorder in that people with Asperger syndrome share the core features of the triad of impairments, Asperger is not associated with developmental delays in language or intellectual disability. People with Asperger are likely to develop a relatively large vocabulary but may have more subtle difficulties with prosody (eg rhythm, intonation and stress) and pragmatics (eg eye contact, turn taking and using appropriate words). Also, people with Asperger syndrome may display poor motor coordination.

Prevalence of Autism

The most recent review of prevalence in Australia in 2007 estimated a rate of occurrence of autism as being one case per 160 children aged between six and twelve years. The ratio of boys to girls ranged from 8:1 to 3.5:1, thus indicating autism is 4 to 8 times more prevalent in boys than girls.

We can “Burst the Bubble” of **autism** and help children and adults to understand and accept.

The Discovery of "Aspie" Criteria

by Carol Gray and Tony Attwood

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

Some of this century's best discoveries were creative and determined efforts to answer "What if...?" questions.

What if people could fly? What if electrical energy could be harnessed to produce light? What if there was an easily accessible, international communication and information network? The answers have resulted in permanent changes: air travel, light bulbs, the Internet. These discoveries have rendered their less effective counterparts to relative extinction from use: gone is the stagecoach, gas lighting, and multi-volume hardbound encyclopedias. These improvements remind us of our option and ability to experiment, re-mould, re-think, and imagine. In that spirit, this article submits a new question: What if Asperger's Syndrome was defined by its strengths? What changes might occur?

Making any diagnosis requires attention to weaknesses, the observation and interpretation of signs and symptoms that vary from typical development or health.

Certainly it would be a little disarming to visit a doctor

for a diagnosis, only to have her inquire, "So, what feels absolutely great?" The DSM IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) assists in the identification of a variety of disorders. It is used by psychiatrists and other mental health professionals to match observed weaknesses, symptoms and behaviors to text. In DSM IV Asperger's Syndrome is identified by specific diagnostic criteria, a constellation of observed social and communication delays and/or deviations. Once diagnosed, a child or adult with the diagnosis is referred to with politically correct "people first" terminology, i.e. a person with Asperger's Syndrome.

Unlike diagnosis, the term discovery often refers to the identification of a person's strengths or talents. Actors are discovered. Artists and musicians are discovered. A great friend is

discovered. These people are identified by an informal combination of evaluation and awe that ultimately concludes that this person – more than most others – possesses admirable qualities, abilities, and/or talents. It's an acknowledgment that, "...you know, he's better than me at...". In referring to people with respect to their talents or abilities, politically correct "people first" terminology is not required; labels like musician, artist, or poet are welcomed and considered complimentary.

If Asperger's Syndrome was identified by observation of strengths and talents, it would no longer be in the DSM IV, nor would it be referred to as a syndrome. After all, a reference to someone with special strengths or talents does not use terms with negative connotations (it's artist and poet, not Artistically Arrogant or Poetically Preoccupied), nor does it attach someone's proper name to the word syndrome (it's vocalist or soloist, not Sinatra's Syndrome). Focusing on

strengths requires shedding the former diagnostic term, Asperger's Syndrome, for a new term. The authors feel that Aspie, used in self-

What if Asperger's Syndrome was defined by its strengths? What changes might occur?

reference by Liane Holliday Wiley in her new book, *Pretending to be Normal* (1999), is a term that seems right at home among its talent-based counterparts: soloist, genius, aspie, dancer. With fading DSM potential, the authors submit a description of "aspie" for placement in a much needed but currently non-existent Manual of Discoveries about People (MDP I) (Figure 1).

New ways of thinking often lead to discoveries that consequently discard their outdated predecessors. Similarly, the change from Asperger's Syndrome to aspie holds interesting implications and opportunities. It could result in typical people rethinking their responses and rescuing a missed opportunity to take advantage of the contribution of aspies to culture and knowledge.

The Discovery of "Aspie" Criteria

CONTINUED

The diagnostic criteria for Asperger's Syndrome and the defining characteristics of aspie are markedly different, although they describe the same group of people. Ultimately, what distinguishes people with Asperger's Syndrome from aspie individuals is how others respond.

Three helpful re-thought responses are:

1. a focus on potential,
2. meaningful affirmation, and
3. a discarding of social arrogance for accommodation and acceptance.

A focus on potential

There is no argument or doubt that aspie children and adults need support and assistance, just as those diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome do. They need to be informed and learn the secrets of typical social understanding, and require help negotiating through the social world that surrounds them. The challenge may be more comfortable for aspies than for those with Asperger's Syndrome as a direct result of the people who surround them. Consider this example:

Those who genuinely understand aspies see their strengths clearly and regard their struggles with patience and support. Describing her closest friends, Liane Holliday Willey writes: "...They simply illuminate that which is made better by my AS, my straight forwardness and assertiveness and creativity and tenacity and loyalty. Because they see me first as someone who possesses many good qualities and only then as someone who is just a tiny bit different, they give me the notion to begin to see myself in that light as well." (p. 73)

Meaningful affirmation

Affirmation is an important social process. A child is praised as valued traits are recognized and acknowledged by others, "Sam, what a great helper you are!" or "Angie, what you did is very

thoughtful!" Children have the ability to perceive even the most indirect "plus" or praise. For example, John helps a classmate find the correct page, and notices an approving glance from his teacher. In an instant, her approval is noticed and may encourage John to assist others in the future. John receives several similarly subtle but important "pluses" throughout the day, enough to help him weather correction from the lunch assistant for failing to toss his trash. A child readily understands the meaning of verbal and non-verbal praise, important messages that influence self esteem. If self esteem is the personal belief that it's "a.o.k. to be who you are", affirmation is the demonstration, and understanding, that others agree.

In contrast, missed opportunities and misunderstanding can derail the efforts of parents and professionals to affirm aspie children. The traits an aspie child values in himself (logic, memory, intelligence, accuracy and honesty) may be different from the traits typically valued by parents and professionals (sensitivity, generosity, helpfulness). This can make others amiss in responding positively to qualities the aspie child views as very important. From the child's point of

A child readily understands the meaning of verbal and non-verbal praise, important messages that influence self esteem

view, "No one ever notices or appreciates me." Supportive, caring parents and professionals may praise an aspie child as they would a child who is typical, using

phrases like "Good job!" or "How nice of you to share...". These statements may hold little meaning to an aspie child who thinks in visual, tangible terms. The child's lack of interest in such praise can be misinterpreted, with typical people assuming, "He just doesn't respond to praise". By the end of the day, an aspie child may feel overwhelmed and unsupported; his parents and teachers may feel equally at a loss to discover something to motivate him. Even though affirming "blocks to the bridge" do exist on both

The Discovery of "Aspie" Criteria

CONTINUED

sides of the social equation, the blueprints are sometimes different.

To meaningfully affirm an aspie child, an understanding of his strengths and social perspective is helpful. Recognizing and praising the traits the child values in himself, in addition to those skills and achievements that demonstrate social growth, can build a child's self esteem while he tackles an often challenging social world.

Figure 2 describes five specific strategies to add meaning to praise, affirmation, and social gains.

Ultimately, the aspie criteria could return confidence to a deserving population of people. Knowing that others recognize and acknowledge personal strengths could provide needed confidence to build and explore personal talents and tackle challenges. In a description of her friends, Liane Holliday Willey indicates "...they are so loyal in their affirmations that I am fine just the way I am. Through their eyes I am perfectly fine. Each of them dismisses my idiosyncratic ways with a smile and a wave of the arm... They rein me in when I travel too far, they protect me from obvious blunders, and they applaud me when I stumble over some part of me that is particularly worthwhile." (p. 72)

Moving from arrogance to accommodation and acceptance. No fault or finger-pointing intended, typical people are socially arrogant. It seems to be their nature, something they really can't help. Proof in point: typical people are fascinated by – and concerned about - anyone who isn't totally thrilled or enamored by their invitations to converse or play. How could this be? Typical people regard themselves as golden social opportunities; of course anyone should be delighted to be their partner in interaction. That is, if they are "normal".

Figure 1: Discovery criteria for aspie by Attwood and Gray

A qualitative advantage in social interaction, as manifested by a majority of the following:

- peer relationships characterized by absolute loyalty and impeccable dependability
- free of sexist, "age-ist", or culturalist biases; ability to regard others at "face value"
- speaking one's mind irrespective of social context or adherence to personal beliefs
- ability to pursue personal theory or perspective despite conflicting evidence
- seeking an audience or friends capable of enthusiasm for unique interests and topics
- consideration of details; spending time discussing a topic that may not be of primary interest
- listening without continual judgement or assumption
- interested primarily in significant contributions to conversation; preferring to avoid "ritualistic small talk" or socially trivial statements and superficial conversation
- seeking sincere, positive, genuine friends with an unassuming sense of humor

Fluent in "Aspergerese", a social language characterized by at least three of the following:

- a determination to seek the truth
- conversation free of hidden meaning or agenda
- advanced vocabulary and interest in words
- fascination with word-based humour, such as puns
- advanced use of pictorial metaphor

Cognitive skills characterized by at least four of the following:

- strong preference for detail over gestalt
- original, often unique perspective in problem solving
- exceptional memory and/or recall of details often forgotten or disregarded by others, for example: names, dates, schedules, routines

The Discovery of "Aspie" Criteria

CONTINUED

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- avid perseverance in gathering and cataloging information on a topic of interest
- persistence of thought
- encyclopedic or "CD ROM" knowledge of one or more topics
- knowledge of routines and a focused desire to maintain order and accuracy
- clarity of values/decision making unaltered by political or financial factors

Additional possible features:

- acute sensitivity to specific sensory experiences and stimuli, for example: hearing, touch, vision, and/or smell
- strength in individual sports and games, particularly those involving endurance or visual accuracy, including rowing, swimming, bowling, chess
- "social unsung hero" with trusting optimism: frequent victim of social weaknesses of others, while steadfast in the belief of the possibility of genuine friendship
- increased probability over general population of attending university after high school
- often take care of others outside the range of typical development

Figure 2: Five strategies to add meaning to praise, affirmation, and social gains

Strategy 1: The best praise is when others notice a personally valued trait or strength. It's important for parents and professionals to take time to learn those traits that are the most important and/or valued by the aspie child or adult. In addition, discovering strengths via the new aspie criteria, parents and professionals may more readily identify and acknowledge them when they are demonstrated. Traits like loyalty, honesty, perseverance, logic, intelligence, and sincerity are worthy of frequent praise.

Strategy 2: Meaningful affirmation relies on accurate attribution. For example, a child may doggedly persevere because he's related to nine family members who also demonstrate that trait. While aspie may be associated with certain strengths, it does not replace the influence of other important factors, like age, personality, character, or inherited personality and talent. Looking to those factors first when giving credit increases the meaning and accuracy of praise. If other factors do not explain a trait or talent, or its intensity, the

The best praise is when others notice a personally valued trait or strength like logic, memory, intelligence, accuracy or honesty

aspie factor may deserve the credit, or at least "honorable mention" as one of a combination of factors.

Strategy 3: The meaning of praise can be enhanced with access to interests (books, music, computers); someone taking time to show interest in a topic important to the child, or the use of visual materials to clarify abstract achievements ("blue ribbon effort", or "gold medal helpfulness").

Strategy 4: Social Stories add meaning to social information, including praise. They are "right at home". Praising the traits an aspie person values in herself. A Social Story can describe a child's use of logic and intelligence, applaud an achievement, or celebrate a talent. Placing the information - and related photos or work samples - in a story creates a tangible, positive record that may help a child understand his strengths and value.

Strategy 5: Some consideration of the words and phrasing parents and professionals use to express praise -especially for social achievements - may yield big results. Mentioning a talent when applauding social gains ("What a logically friendly thing to do!" or "What an intelligent idea to invite Amber to play!" or "It's smart to let Beth to play with the toy for a while!") may recruit a child's attention and add meaning to the acknowledged social skill.

www.thegraycenter.org

Bubble Day

feedback form for May 2009

Autism Bubble Day 18-22 May 2009

Thank you for participating in Bubble Day.

We would appreciate your feedback about Bubble Day in your school.

Would you please comment on the usefulness or problems encountered in the following areas:

Bubble day website

.....

Information pack

Please comment if your school community found any articles especially useful or irrelevant

.....

Were our suggested activities useful. Why?.....

.....

.....

Administrative arrangements (invitation to participate, distribution of information etc)

.....

.....

About the day

Did your school community enjoy Bubble Day?

Do you consider that Bubble Day led to an increased awareness and understanding of ASD?

.....

Please give us some details about your Bubble Day activities so we can develop a fuller list for the future

.....

.....

Your advice

Any handy hints, useful learnings or notes about successful activities would be greatly appreciated.

Please add extra comments on the back of the page if you wish.

.....

.....

Please place your feedback form in the self addressed envelope included.

Contact: Robin Tobler phone/fax 6286 5555

Email: jetobler@pcug.org.au

Thank you for your participation and feedback.

We can “Burst the Bubble” of **autism** and help children and adults to **understand and accept.**