



Aspergers Syndrome

What is Asperger's Syndrome?

Asperger's Syndrome is also known as Asperger's Disorder, Asperger's or simply AS and is a form of Autism. It is something you are born with and it affects the way you understand things and see the world around you, including people.

It is named after an Austrian doctor, Hans Asperger, who observed children who found it harder to communicate with others. This then led to high levels of anxiety and confusion.

Symptoms to look for in children

Asperger's is part of a group of problems where children find it hard to communicate and socialise with others. This often makes them feel alone and upset.

Some children with mild Asperger's can live life without any difficulty, whilst some children are unable to take part in normal life.

- **Socialising**

Children with AS often find it difficult to get on with other children, or to make and keep friends. They don't read other people's behaviour well: things like facial expression, eye contact and tone of voice.

They often withdraw into themselves as a result.

• Behaviour

They need routines and get upset if the routines are changed.
They often have very restricted interests.

• Speech and language issues

Some children with AS take longer to develop speech and others may speak quite fluently.

Metaphors, such as “raining cats and dogs” are hard for them to understand. They expect to see these cats and dogs falling from the sky. If they hear “that’s cool” - they might think it is cold.

How many Asperger’s Children are there?

Asperger’s affects 36 out of every 10,000 people within the UK, with more boys than girls.
1 in 5 children with Asperger’s grow out of it.

If your child has Asperger’s they are more likely to have ADHD, anxiety and depression.

Diagnosis

Parents often notice differences in a child with Asperger’s from an early age, possibly as early as 24 - 30 months.

If you are worried, having your child tested as early as age 2 is a good idea. The family GP should be your first point of call. He might then refer you on to other professionals.

Management and Treatment

There is no single package that works with every child. However, a typical set of treatments can include:

- Training in social skills
- Attempts to reduce the number of repetitive routines
- Helping them communicate better with their friends

A Rethink?

In times gone by, children with Asperger's were often thought of as strange. We now understand that they have different ways of dealing with things and of being in the world.

Children with Asperger's are often very successful in jobs which need an eye for detail, like maths, computing, cataloguing, music, engineering and science.

Educational Support and Placement

- Some children with AS have special educational needs which require attention.
- Many children with AS attend mainstream school although others will attend specialist schools.
- Education for the families of children with AS is also important. Parents are helped to cope which improves the development of the child.
- Schools which focus on conditions such as Asperger's often get better results because of specialised teachers, tailored resources and smaller class sizes.