

Dear Reader,

First of all, let me say thank you for subscribing to the Asperger's Syndrome Newsletter. Issues will be emailed to you. Please be sure to check that your SPAM filter is not accidentally blocking these valuable newsletters.

In this document you will find...

- An abridged version of my best-selling book, *The Asperger's Syndrome Survival Guide*. I have included the full table of contents for the book so that you know what the book has to offer.
- In addition, I have included all of *Chapter 2, Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome*. This chapter covers the signs and symptoms of Asperger's syndrome in detail.
- A short section of each of the remaining chapters as well as a short section of each of the four bonus reports that are included in *The Asperger's Syndrome Survival Guide*.

Please encourage your friends, family, teachers and professionals in the autism community to sign up for their own free copy of my newsletter, at www.AspergersSociety.org

Have a wonderful day.

Craig Kendall

The Asperger's Syndrome Survival Guide

Plus the following bonus guides:

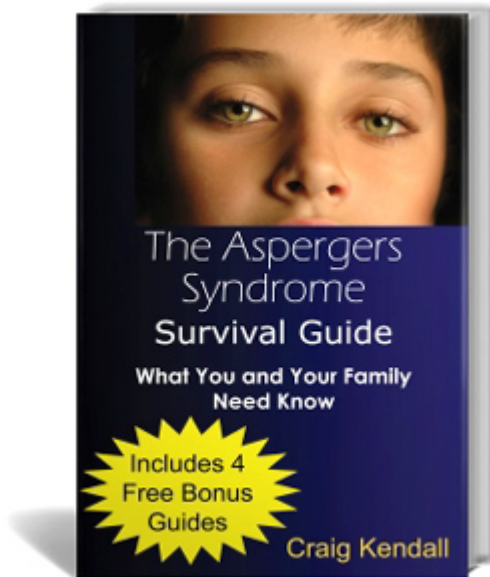
How To Be Your Child's Best Advocate

Making the Transition to Adulthood

Helping Your Aspergers Child Cope with the Holiday Season

The Aspergers Survey of Parents and Professionals

by Craig Kendall



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Dedicated to my
wonderful family
and to all who
desire longer life so
they can serve more

The Asperger's Syndrome Survival Guide

By Craig Kendall

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Asperger's is not a curse -
it is just a difference,
and a difference that can
be worked around.

Chapter 1

What is Asperger's Syndrome?

ASPERGER'S: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING

Welcome, and congratulations for taking your first step to understanding what Asperger's Syndrome is all about. Learning about Asperger's will help you understand how to help the loved ones in your life who have this. It is my hope that both you and your son or daughter will benefit from this knowledge of how to relate to each other.

Let's start

Chapter 2

Symptoms

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

What are the symptoms of Aspergers?

Children with Aspergers will have challenges in many areas of their lives. Your child may have serious difficulties in the following areas:

➤ Physical

Kids with AS may have trouble holding a pencil, using utensils, tying shoes, running, kicking a ball, and riding a bike. It is not uncommon for them to be disinterested in doing a physically demanding activity for extended periods of time. Your child may have trouble in these areas, developing movements sometimes described as lazy or clumsy.

➤ Sensitivities

Kids with AS can be overly sensitive to sounds and textures. Your son may hate something like corduroy because of the way it feels. Or your daughter might go running every time you vacuum, hold her ears when a train passes several blocks away, or cringe when another kid screeches at the playground. Less common are sensitivities to smell, taste, and light. If your child becomes over stimulated by any of his senses, your child may become irritated and even develop headaches from the over stimulation.

➤ Thinking

AS children seem to think in an entirely different way. They may remember talking about something by being reminded of which shirt you were wearing and where you were standing. Your daughter may seem to

pick up different facts that seem to have nothing to do with the situation. She may seem very logical and rigid. Abstract concepts may be hard for her to grasp. For example, she may not find it easy to comprehend that others are thinking different thoughts than she is at any given time. Once she has done something one way, doing it another way or figuring out another way can also be difficult. For many AS children, changes in routines or schedule are a big deal. The unexpected is not always welcomed. This is often a major problem that parents have to face. You might see this when you were planning to do one thing and you have to do something else instead and Sally gets really upset. Another issue that you may see is when you ask your son about a person and they describe everything but the person, what kind of pet they had, what color their shoes were or that they liked strawberries, instead of noticing that his name was Mr. Jones and he would be the new math teacher.

➤ **Emotional Awareness**

AS kids can seem unemotional at times. They may seem more concerned with what will happen to them for hurting their sister than whether or not that person is injured. Looking at a situation from another's perspective can be a challenge. Sometimes it may seem like they just don't care. Noticing other people's feelings will be a skill that varies from child to child but it is very normal for them to struggle with it. It may seem to you that they are being selfish. Often learning to think about others feelings needs to be taught to AS kids.

➤ **Repetitive/ Obsessive Actions**

Patterns like stripes or checks might seem overly interesting to your child. Obsessions with groups of things are common. Some common themes are space, trains, electronics and working parts. Your child may favor a certain toy for awhile naturally even having favorites. But this is a bit different. Johnny is now 13 and has 25 Buzz Lightyear toys. He knows all of the facts, has all of the books memorized and can rattle off hours of information off of the top of his head. Or Sally could have all of her Barbies lined up in a specific order, and any movement could cause her to get upset and have to fix the whole arrangement to make sure they are spaced properly. Habits like picking at skin, rocking, nail biting and scratching also fall in with repetitive behaviors.

➤ Social Issues

A child with AS will often prefers to play by themselves. When they do play they have difficulty sharing and using imagination. Often they will become upset if another child does not play with things the way they believe they should. This way of thinking permeates all of their social interactions. They seem to want to micromanage their relationships and are comfortable with people who do what they expect them to do. They usually have trouble interacting with others due to their inability to decipher facial expressions and unfamiliar terms. Most Aspies would prefer to avoid interacting with new or animated people entirely. One of the more troublesome issues for them is the inability to read peoples faces and determine their emotions and intentions.

Does the syndrome always cause serious social problems?

The bulk of the problems associated with Aspergers are social. Eye contact is a big problem for Aspies. It is something that people use to gauge a person's interest. Eye contact can be uncomfortable so their level of interest will often be misunderstood. They also tend to have a limited use of facial expressions, body language and voice tone. Kids with Aspergers often identify with the Star Trek characters Spock and Data. Both were incapable of understanding humor and are confused by figures of speech.

Sometimes though, the problem is their lack of interest in conversing with people. Often they would prefer to be alone where they understand things. Away from the confusing people who want to talk about things that hold no meaning (in their minds). They will often engage in a conversation that interests them. The goal of the conversation seems to be to teach the other person all that they know about something. But when it is the turn for the other person to say something or for them to ask the persons opinion they "check out" mentally removing themselves from the person and possibly plotting what they will teach them next. The give and take of the conversation is completely lost.

The inability to "walk in another person's shoes" gives them a disadvantage as they do not understand what people are thinking, feeling or intending to do. They usually cannot imagine how their actions will affect another person. **Not being able to judge others intentions puts**

them at risk of being bullied, tricked, or abused.

They seem to have trouble understanding that their thoughts and experiences are unique. This is a key to why they “meltdown”. Sometimes they believe that you know what they need (or mean) and are withholding it from them purposefully. In play, they are not competitive but do want to control things so that they are done “the right way”. You see in their mind there is only one right way and they believe the other person knows what that way is. When other people don’t play by the right rules they are understood as being difficult or unfair. They also have a hard time imagining something they have not seen or experienced limiting child’s play.

What behaviors might indicate Aspergers?

It is not so much what Aspergers children do that make them look different. *It’s what they don’t do.* You may be seeing a child with Aspergers when you have a child who has certain patterns of behavior, especially in regard to social interaction. For example, they may seem to clam up when something overloads them like too much light or too many people talking.

People with Aspergers have trouble understanding that people are separate emotional and thinking creatures and that they do not share the same feelings and knowledge because their experience is different.

Five Common Behaviors Aspergers Loved Ones May Exhibit:

1. Not looking people in the eye.
2. Throwing a fit when something changes unexpectedly.
3. Not wanting to move from one thing to another without warning.
4. Not approaching others to talk or play.
5. Not knowing when the appropriate times are for certain behaviors (i.e. acting like an animal).

How many different ways does it manifest itself?

Aspergers usually manifests itself through difficulties with language, lack of peer interactions, sensory sensitivities, lack of eye contact, delayed motor skills, communication difficulties, lack of imaginative play, negative reactions to change, and odd, repetitive habits and behaviors. Kids struggling with Aspergers may face challenges in some or all of these areas. Each area will need to be treated separately, tailored to each individual child. They have different strengths and weaknesses in each area.

Are all Aspergers children similar?

Just like no two children are alike, no two Aspergers children are alike. None. Not even twins. While they may share similar thinking patterns and affects they will be unique as a snowflake. Behaviors can range from severe to mild in every area. Some children will even seem to have no problems in certain areas. Each child will have his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Their outlook will affect how they can progress. The way they choose to think about life and the other people in it will change their future just like it does with any other child. If they take it in stride, have a good IQ, and remain teachable, the sky is the limit to their opportunities in life. That is why it is so important to help them while they are young. Their disability will be offset by their ability. The other factor is family support. Having someone to step in there and be the unintrusive comforter will make all of the difference in the world.

Nine Ways that Asperger's Syndrome Manifest Itself:

1. Difficulties with language.
2. Lack of peer interactions.
3. Sensory sensitivities.
4. Lack of eye contact.

5. Delayed motor skills.
6. Communication difficulties.
7. Lack of imaginative play.
8. Negative reactions to change.
9. Odd, repetitive habits and behaviors.

How would I know if I or someone I knew was developing it?

Aspergers is not developed so much as the difficulties become noticeable. Look over the symptoms described and ask yourself if many of those are problems for the person. Aspergers is believed to be under diagnosed. An early diagnosis is important as many habits and thinking patterns can be understood by the person and they can learn to interact with the rest of the world. One of the more noticeable cues will be paying attention to how the person sees themselves. Autistic people in general have a sort of mindblindness. They have a hard time seeing faults in themselves or understanding things from another person's point of view. They seem to assume that people know the same things they know.

Nine Signs that a Child in their Early Years May Have Aspergers:

1. Not using eye contact.
2. Not wanting to be held much.
3. Playing alone for long periods of time without seeking someone to engage.
4. Strong dislike of new people/places/situations.
5. Lack of interest in repeating or using words.
6. Not using pointing to communicate the location of something to another person.
7. Poor coordination.
8. Frequent unexplained temper tantrums.
9. Sensitivity to lights, smells or sounds.

Are symptoms in males and females the same?

The symptoms in boys and girls are not the same, resulting in the under-diagnosing of Aspergers girls. Being naturally social creatures, girls seem to be able to overcome their social problems. Also girls tend to emotionally support each other and other girls may support her, assist her, and teach her things she did not understand. Girls also tend to wish to please teachers and so are less disruptive in class so do not draw attention to themselves as readily.

They say that Aspergers is a mild form of autism. How does it differ?

Aspergers is understood as a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). Under the umbrella if you will of PDD fall autistic disorders. Autistic disorders on this continuum are usually referred to as Severe, Moderate,

Kanner's, and Aspergers. Kanner's and Aspergers got their own names from the medical doctors that first described symptoms that were not exactly like severe autism, but obviously caused dysfunction. Asperger's disorder was not even officially classified as a separate disorder until 1994. When most people say "Autism" they are often thinking of Severe to Moderate autism. The following table shows differences between Asperger's Syndrome behaviors and Autism.

Six Differences between Asperger's Syndrome Behaviors and Autism:

1. Taking no notice of people vs. being uninterested in them at times.
2. No eye contact vs. inconsistent eye contact.
3. Retardation vs. normal-high IQ.
4. Repetitive meaningless movements vs. repetitive patterns and habits.
5. Little to no language vs. less expressive, odd language.
6. Severe sensory sensitivities vs. mild sensory sensitivities.

WHEN SYMPTOMS START SHOWING

When do the symptoms start showing?

Symptoms often start showing when a child reaches a social environment. That is often daycare, preschool or elementary school. When your child was at home they understood their environment and knew the rules. When they are sent to be with others their social inabilities begin to stand out. For children with milder symptoms it can go undetected into the middle of their elementary school years when good language, writing, motor skills and complex relationships are the expectations.

At what age does Aspergers first appear?

Aspergers symptoms are believed to appear but are often not noticed at birth. Some parents have said that their child developed fine and suddenly developed symptoms. This is not true of most cases. Some parents will notice that their baby is calmed by long periods of white noise, happy to play by themselves for long periods of time. Some do not use words as much or do not look into eyes or study faces. First children are the least likely to get suspected as babies because the mothers have nothing to compare the development to.

How would I know if my one-year old child had Aspergers?

It is very uncommon for children under the age of 5 to be diagnosed with Aspergers. Odd behaviors are often seen as quirks and a strong will. At the age of one there are limited social interactions. The following are signs that something may be amiss.

Eight Signs that a One-Year-Old May Have Aspergers:

1. Not using eye contact
2. Not wanting to be held much
3. Not watching peoples faces while they talk
4. Playing alone for long periods of time without seeking someone to engage
5. Strong dislike of new people/places/situations
6. Lack of interest in repeating or using words
7. Not using pointing to communicate the location of something to another person
8. Not using gestures

How degenerative is it, and how fast does it progress?

Aspergers is not degenerative nor does it progress. The mind works differently to begin with. They do not lose skills they already had. Situations, however, become more complex as they get older and they will need new skills to help them cope with new levels of expectation. Because they can seem to fall behind each time a new skill is expected it may seem that they are going backwards. In reality they just need to learn how one skill relates to another.

Chapter 3

Aspergers versus Autism

What is the Difference Between Asperger's and Autism?

A lot of people will ask the question, "but what is the difference, between Asperger's and autism?" Well, that is a really tricky question to answer for reasons that we will see. Is Asperger's the same as autism? If you have Asperger's, are you autistic? Well, yes and no.

Let's start by exploring the idea that Asperger's is part of what is called an autism spectrum disorder. Asperger's is a kind of autism. It has some of the same symptoms of what we might call "classic autism" and some different ones. The severity level is generally much lower. Spectrum means that there is a collection of symptoms often seen in people who have any of these disorders and some of them have them very mildly, and some of them have them very severely. There are several disorders...

Chapter 4

The Causes of Aspergers

CAUSES OF ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

What causes Asperger's syndrome?

Simply put, doctors do not yet know what causes Aspergers. Evidence suggests that the cause of Aspergers will be found in the brain. When doctors have done scans of the brain of someone with Aspergers, they have found that it does look different. The front part of the brain does not develop the same as it does in "normal" people. Several other possible causes that are being researched are: Vaccines, the Y chromosome, diet, food allergies, chemicals in products we use, over the counter and prescription drugs used by the mother while she was pregnant, and medicines used in the child's early years.

Why does it occur?

The reason for the occurrence of Asperger's is similarly unknown. Although it is believed to start in the brain, it is unknown how the brain gets affected. Various theories...

Chapter 5

Diagnosis

How do I get a diagnosis of Asperger's?

Now that you have learned a lot about Asperger's, you are probably wondering, well, how do I figure out if I have it? If my child has it? What is the process of getting a diagnosis like? I want to know!

Well, this can be a complicated process. Not every doctor and pediatrician is familiar with the signs of Asperger's. Not everyone will agree on what they are. You may have one doctor tell you your child is too verbal to have Aspergers, and another tells you he is not verbal enough! It can unfortunately be a subjective thing.

If you suspect something is wrong with your child, the first thing you should do is...

Chapter 6

Treating Asperger's Syndrome

What can be done to treat Asperger's?

So, you have come this far in learning about Asperger's, but you still have one (or more) burning questions on your mind. How do you treat this thing? Can you treat this thing? What are the current options in treating it? Well, have no fear, in this chapter we will explore all of the current options there now exist in treating every aspect of Asperger's Syndrome.

Can Asperger's Syndrome be cured?

First of all, you should know that while there is treatment to help some of the symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome, there is no cure for it. Asperger's is not curable. If you have it, you have it. There will likely never be a cure for it, because it has to do with the very genes you were born with.

As a side note, some scientists are working on...

Chapter 7

Changes As Children Get Older

Because Aspergers is caused by the way the brain works and not by a chemical imbalance that can be “fixed” with medication, your child will never “outgrow” it. What you want to think about are the issues they will face at each stage. You also have to keep in mind that it is going to look very different for each child. Each social skill or breakthrough they make will help them in the next stage. But, also keep in mind that any quirk or ongoing problem will provide specific challenges.

What age group does it affect?

It was once believed that Autism was something that happened to a kid sometime in their childhood because something terrible happened to them and they couldn't deal with it. It is now understood that...

Chapter 8

Education for Students with Asperger's

You might be thinking now, okay, I think my kid has Aspergers. But what happens when it is time for school? How do I educate him? Is he going to need special accommodations?

The answer, of course, varies depending on the child.

What should I expect from my child's school?

The most important thing for a child with Aspergers is a structured learning environment with clear expectations, and an environment that is free of sensory distractions, like shouting, whispering kids, or a ticking clock, or other things that might bother them. They might need extra time on tests, material presented in different ways, or aides to help explain social things to them.

The class size should be as small and distraction free as possible. Teachers should be patient and be willing to see things and potential problems from the point of view of the Aspergers child.

My son is very smart. Wouldn't a traditional school work just fine?

Usually, Asperger's is not a disorder that affects someone intellectually. Typically, it does not affect their academic ability. What it does affect is...

Chapter 9

Aspergers Support Groups

Think for a minute, if you will, about what gets you through each day. Is it knowing that you have someone who understands you that you can tell your troubles to when the day is over? Is it looking forward to that friend you can shoot the breeze with when your time at the office is up? Is it the connection you feel with your friends that gives you strength, energy and support to face one more day in this hectic, fast paced world we live in?

Our sense of community and our connections to other people are a very important factor in how we live. Just knowing that other people are going through similar things, and being able to laugh it off at the end of the day, is a very powerful motivating factor.

But stop and think about the way a person with Asperger's Syndrome (AS, or sometimes just "Aspies"), experiences community. Often times a person with Aspergers cannot read the nonverbal cues that tell them they are welcome somewhere, or the subtle body language that people use to tell each other they care about one another. Oftentimes an Aspie won't be able to come up with the appropriate language, conversation topics, body language or behavior that is taken by granted for NTs (neurotypicals, or those not on the autistic spectrum) to fit into a group of people.

More often than not, no matter how much an Aspie may long to be part of a group of people and feel connected to them, they...

An Asperger's Syndrome Guide

Bonus Report

How to be Your Aspergers Child's Best Advocate

By Craig Kendall

What does it mean to be an advocate for your son or daughter with Asperger's? Well, simply put, it means SOMEONE has to help them with all the things they need, and all the services they are going to need to assist them with their unique issues. That someone has got to be you. There is no one else that can do it for you.

Your child with Asperger's is going to need a lot of different things than your other children, if you have them. He will probably need things like speech therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills therapy. He is most likely going to need special education services from the school district. There will be the problem of how to get these services funded. It's a lot to handle at once, and unfortunately, in most cases, there won't be anyone handing you these services on a golden platter. You are going to have to fight for them. You are going to have to become your son or daughter's best advocate, by figuring out what kind of services your child needs, and how to best get them.

NAVIGATING THE MAZE

It can be a daunting puzzle, to say the least. It can be a maze that some days you feel you will never find your way through. But this guide will give you some tips on how to find your way through this maze. You will learn the most common services kids with Asperger's need, how to find them, tips to pay for them, and ways to get what you want from your school district.

An Asperger's Syndrome Guide

Bonus Report

Making the Transition to Adulthood

By Craig Kendall

ADULTS AND ASPERGER'S

Well, now that you have come this far, you are probably wondering one thing. What happens in adulthood? What do I have to look forward to? What happens when my little Aspie kid gets to be college age, gets to be working age? How will they survive in the world?

This might be a topic that worries you quite a bit, and frankly, from conversations I have had with young Aspergers adults, it is sometimes a topic that worries them quite a bit, too. There are a lot of obstacles in place for someone with Asperger's to succeed in the world. But it can be done. There are some hints and shortcuts, ways to get around some of the problems that can arise in adulthood. In this report, you will learn about some of the most common obstacles for an adult with Asperger's, and ways to get around them.

Assimilating into an adult world

First, you might wonder, can my child with AS be assimilated into the adult world? Yes. You know how when they were younger, all they wanted to do was take apart toys and put them back together again? Fast forward ten years, and...

An Asperger's Syndrome Guide

Bonus Report

Helping Your Aspergers Child Cope with the Holiday Season

By Craig Kendall

The sparkling lights of the Christmas tree. The smell of fresh baked gingerbread cookies coming out of the oven. Christmas carols on the radio, family you haven't seen in ages bustling in and out of the house. What could be better than the holiday season?

A whole lot, it turns out, for those with Asperger's Syndrome. While we may find many things to enjoy about holidays like Christmas, Hanukkah, Thanksgiving, and birthdays, someone with Asperger's Syndrome (AS) can get very frazzled by the disruption of their routine. Your child with AS may have many meltdowns and behavior problems during the holidays that are hard for you and others to understand. What can you do to help minimize these problems? In this guide, I will show you how to recognize the problem areas that come from kids with AS and the holidays, and many steps you can take to prevent and resolve them.

An Asperger's Syndrome Guide

Bonus Report

The Aspergers Survey of Parents and Professionals

Methodology and Conclusions

METHODOLOGY

- A survey of parents who had children diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome was begun in August 2008.
 - Parents with children under the age of 21 qualified.
 - Respondents were recruited from various internet discussion groups about Asperger's syndrome.
- Below are results from 106 respondents who completed the entire survey.

CONCLUSIONS

Diagnosis

- The results identify a major concern about the difficulty and length of time that it takes to diagnose Asperger's syndrome in children.
 - While many children began showing symptoms by age 4, most were not diagnosed until years later (average age 11).
 - Nearly half of the parents indicated that they had originally either been given an incorrect diagnosis or

that the diagnosis was clouded by multiple diagnoses or a diagnosis that was a long time in coming.

- This shows the difficulty in getting your child correctly diagnosed and explains some of the reasons that it often takes many years before a correct diagnosis can be correctly made.
- The most common person to make the final diagnosis was psychiatrist (35%) and pediatrician (30%).
 - Others mentioned included: neurologist, psychologist, counselor, family practice doctor, and child behavioral specialist
- The most commonly mentioned early warning signs include social challenges (30%), focused on one subject / obsessions (30%), lack of eye contact (17%), sensitivity to noise/touch etc. (15%), and slow to begin talking (11%).

Causes of Aspergers

- The actual causes of Asperger's syndrome appear to be a mystery to many. Roughly half indicated "don't know/not sure" about two possible causes of Aspergers -- genetics and vaccines.
 - Roughly one in three believes that Aspergers tends to run in families, while another third said that the cause of Aspergers may be vaccines.
 - An issue making a correct diagnosis challenging is that many of those surveyed said their child had...