

The Southeast Scoop

ASD Scoop

December 2009
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Did you know...

- The latest research on autism reported a prevalence of 1 in 91 individuals.
- One half of individuals with Asperger's Syndrome are never diagnosed.

Inside this issue:

What Are You Talking About continued...	2
He's Just Rude and Non-Compliant	2
Tips for General Education Teachers	3
Question of the Month	3
Resources	3
Save the Date	4
Contact Info	4

Autism? PDD-NOS? Asperger Syndrome? HFA? - What Are You Talking About?

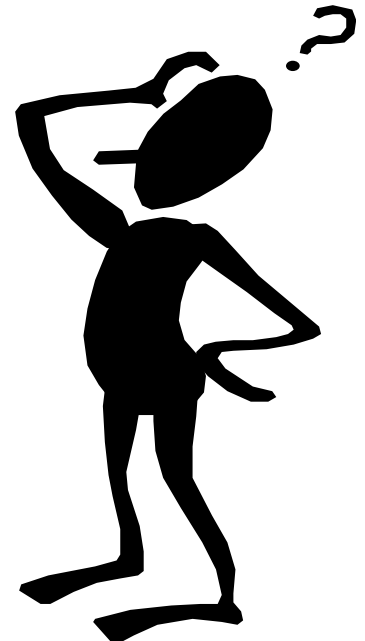
Autism is a developmental disorder that typically appears before age 3 in young children. It is a neurological disorder that affects communication, social interaction and behavior. It falls under the umbrella of "Pervasive Developmental Disorders" in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition Text Revision, commonly referred to as "DSM-IV-TR."

Asperger Syndrome also falls under the umbrella of Pervasive Developmental Disorders. In individuals with Asperger Syndrome, there is also an impairment in social interaction and restricted interests and behavior. How-

ever, individuals with Asperger Syndrome typically do not show a clinically significant delay in language or a delay in cognitive development.

Individuals with Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) have characteristics similar to individuals with Autism or Asperger Syndrome, but do not meet all of the diagnostic criteria.

There is not a specific diagnostic criteria for High Functioning Autism (HFA). Experts in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders continue to debate if HFA is just another name for Asperger Syndrome or if it is different. Most people in the field use



HFA and Asperger Syndrome interchangeably.

Continued on page 2

Why Are We Starting a Monthly Newsletter?

The Southeast ASD Region serves 33 school districts that vary from class A schools to class D schools.

It is important for me to make sure that all staff members working in our 33 school districts have information available to them on what autism is and how they can

help students in their building

My hope behind this newsletter is to help further the knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders in the school systems. When I go out to schools I hope that I see this newsletter in staff lounges, posted in mailrooms by teacher mail-

boxes or it being circulated around the school to all staff members.

If there are specific topics that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter, feel free to contact me at mtrautman@esu6.org.

Melissa Trautman

Autism? PDD-NOS? Asperger Syndrome? HFA? - What Are You Talking About?

Continued from page 1...

In Nebraska, to receive services in schools, students must have an “educational verification” of Autism. Students may come to school with a diagnosis that was given by a medical professional, however, it is up to each school district to evaluate students whose educational performance is affected.

Rule 51 defines autism as “Autism shall mean a developmental disability which significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three, that adversely affects educational performance.”

Below is a list of specific characteristics that you might see in a student with Autism.

- * Insistence on sameness; resistance to change
- * Difficulty in expressing needs; using gestures or

pointing instead of words

- * Repeating words or phrases in place of normal, responsive language
- * Tantrums
- * Difficulty in mixing with others
- * Little or no eye contact
- * Unresponsive to normal teaching methods
- * Sustained odd play
- * Spinning objects
- * Obsessive attachment to objects
- * Non-responsive to verbal cues; acts as if deaf, although hearing tests are in normal range
- * Uneven gross/fine motor

A student with Asperger Syndrome may exhibit the following behaviors...

- * Difficulties in social interactions
- * Rigidity, repetitious be-

haviors, and obsessions

- * Clumsy and poor coordinated movements. Fine and gross motors difficulties may also be present
- * Use language to share facts and information but are unable to share thoughts, feelings or emotions
- * Has difficulty with verbal and non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, facial expressions and conversation

For more information, go to www.autism-society.org or contact Melissa at mtrautman@esu6.org

There is a reason behind every behavior—you just have to make sure to look for the reason!

He’s Just Rude and Non-Compliant!

Behavior in students with an ASD can appear to be rude and non compliant. However, there are several reasons why the student is not trying to be rude and/or non-compliant.

1. Students with ASD have difficulties with perspective taking. They sometimes do not understand that other people have different thoughts and feelings than themselves.
2. They have “one way of viewing a

problem” and have a difficult time seeing that problems might have more than one solution.

3. Students with ASD are very literal—if you say one thing and mean another thing, they won’t understand what you are saying.
4. Cause and effect is difficult for students with ASD to predict.
5. They tend to focus on details and not see the big picture, which is called

Weak Central Coherence.

6. Self-regulation is difficult for students with ASD—something little might set them off because they aren’t able to calm themselves down in the appropriate amount of time.

Remember: There is a reason behind every behavior—you just have to make sure to look for the reason!

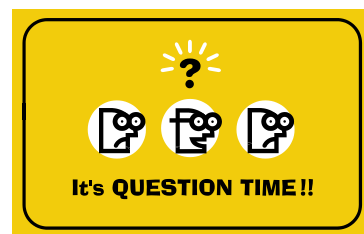
Twelve Tips for General Education Teachers

If you have a student with an ASD, here are some strategies to help them in the general education classroom.

1. Teach other students about Autism Spectrum Disorders.
2. Model tasks for students before asking them to complete a task.
3. Provide opportunities for breaks.
4. Teach to student's strengths and areas of expertise.
5. Provide a safe space within the room.
6. Provide nonverbal supports and cues.
7. Give options for written and verbal expression.
8. Give choices.
9. Help students with organizational skills.
10. Support transitions by giving 5 minute and 1 minute reminders.
11. Have a classroom routine and stick to it.
12. Use a visual schedule, and if possible, have a individual schedule available for those students that need it.

Taken from Chapter 11 in "You're Going to Love This Kid" by Paula Kluth, 2003, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

(available to check out from the ESU 6 Autism Library)



Question of the Month

I have a student in my classroom that can not for the life of him stay in his spot in circle time. What can I do to keep him at his spot?

From,

Almost Ready to Lose It

Dear Almost Ready to Lose It, Sitting in circle time is a common issue that teachers run

across, not only for students on the Autism Spectrum, but with students with other needs too.

A great resource in your building or district is your Occupational Therapist. In the meantime, here are some suggestions to try to help students stay in their spots during circle time...

- * Try a bean bag chair or soft chair that gives support
- * Use a carpet square to define the child's place
- * Have special fidgets only available during this time
- * Tickle the child on the back to maintain attention
- * Try a short walk around the circle and then try sitting again
- * If the child likes to chew items, have oral motor activities available

Taken from "Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration" by Ellen Yack, Paula Aquilla and Shirley Sutton, (2002)

Resources



NEW BOOK! The Classroom and Communication Skills Program: Practical Strategies for Educating Young Children with Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disabilities in

a Public School Setting by Megan Ahlers & Colleen Hannigan Zillich

-In this book, the authors openly share their experience in the classroom and how they developed the CCSP. It is brimming with effective ways to facilitate the learning of young children who are non-verbal/limited verbal and not table ready in a public school setting.

Available for check out from the ESU 6 Autism Library! Check out our list of materials in the library at http://esu6.org/services/asd_home.htm

Websites

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com> - Create your own comic strip! Great for comic strip conversations.

<http://education.com/special-edition/aspergers/> - A wealth of information on Asperger Syndrome, Interventions, and Transition to Work/Life

<http://www.tinsnips.org> - A website dedicated to special education teachers who work with students with ASD. A variety of tools and free pintables are located on this website.



Contact Information

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Check us out on the web for more upcoming trainings!

http://www.esu6.org/services/asd_home.htm

<http://seasdnetwork.wordpress.com>

Save the Date

2010 Nebraska ASD Conference

Date: April 8th and 9th, 2010

Location: Holiday Inn and Convention Center,
Kearney, NE

Keynote Speakers Include:

Fern Sussmen, The Hanen Centre

Ruth Aspy and Barry Grossman, The Ziggurat
Model

Mary Schlieder, Behavior Specialist, Norris Public
Schools

*Registration Flyer will be sent out in January 2010.

*Look for additional information on our website at
<http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork>

Upcoming Workshops

January 19th—20th, 2010—Structured Teaching
(rescheduled from September) at ESU 6 in Milford,
contact jhoarty@esu6.org to register. No fee for the
workshop.

February 22nd and 23rd, 2010—ADOS Training in
Omaha (more information coming)