



What Is Asperger Syndrome?

Asperger Syndrome (AS) is a neurobiological disorder on the higher-functioning end of the autism spectrum. An individual's symptoms can range from mild to severe. While sharing many of the same characteristics as Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) and High-Functioning Autism (HFA), AS has been recognized as a distinct medical diagnosis in Europe for more than 60 years, but has only been included in the U.S. medical diagnostic manual since 1994 ("Asperger's Disorder" in the DSM-IV).

Individuals with AS and related disorders exhibit serious deficiencies in social and communication skills. Their IQ's are typically in the normal to very superior range. They are usually educated in the mainstream, but most require special education services. Because of their naiveté, those with AS are often viewed by their peers as "odd" and are frequently a target for bullying and teasing. They desire to fit in socially and have friends, but have a great deal of difficulty making effective social connections. Many of them are at risk for developing mood disorders (anxiety, depression), especially in adolescence. Diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders should be made by a medical expert to rule out other possible diagnoses and to discuss interventions.

What Is ASPEN®?

ASPEN® is a national volunteer nonprofit organization with headquarters in NJ. It was established in 1997 to address the increasing need for information, support and advocacy for individuals and families whose lives are affected by AS, PDD-NOS, HFA, and NLD. Chapters meet monthly, alternating parent support meetings with speaker presentations. ASPEN® offers professionals the opportunity to attend those chapter meetings where speakers are scheduled.

ASPEN® publishes a newsletter and resource directory, maintains a comprehensive website and lending libraries, holds workshops and sponsors semi-annual national conferences featuring some of the most prominent names in the research community.

ASPEN® is a NJ Department of Education Professional Development Provider (#1619) and a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Our Mission

ASPEN® provides general information and support to families and individuals whose lives are affected by AS and related disabilities, and advocates for improved programs and services. Its services are not intended as a substitute for medical, legal, or other professional advice, which families and individuals should obtain before starting any course of treatment, therapy, education, litigation or other individual activity. Opinions expressed in any material provided by ASPEN® are not necessarily those of ASPEN®.

Characteristics of Asperger Syndrome

Each person is different. An individual might have all or only some of the described behaviors to have a diagnosis of AS.

- Marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as: eye gaze, facial expression, body posture, and gestures to regulate social interaction
- Extreme difficulty in developing age-appropriate peer relationships (e.g. AS children may be more comfortable with adults than with other children)
- Inflexible adherence to routines; perseveration
- Fascination with maps, globes, and routes
- Preoccupation with a particular subject to the exclusion of all others; amasses many related facts
- Difficulty judging personal space; motor clumsiness
- Sensitivity to the environment—loud noises, clothing and food textures, and odors
- Speech and language skills impaired in the area of semantics, pragmatics, and prosody (volume, intonation, inflection, and rhythm)
- Difficulty understanding others' feelings
- Pedantic, formal style of speaking; verbose
- Extreme difficulty reading/interpreting social cues
- Socially and emotionally inappropriate responses
- Literal interpretation of language; difficulty comprehending implied meanings
- Extensive vocabulary; reading commences at an early age (hyperlexia)
- Stereotyped or repetitive motor mannerisms
- Difficulty with "give and take" of conversation

Membership Application

There is a nominal charge for non-members to attend meetings featuring speakers. Annual dues are \$35 for families and \$55 for professionals. Membership entitles you to the ASPEN® newsletter, discounts on conferences, attendance at monthly meetings, access to our lending library, and a copy of our resource directory. *Please note that all information is kept strictly confidential.*

Please complete the form below and send with a check payable to ASPEN® to: 9 Aspen Circle, Edison, NJ 08820

Name		Email Address	
Mailing Address			
City		State	Zip Code
Home Phone		Work Phone	Fax
Family Issues Chapter I wish to join: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bergen County <input type="checkbox"/> Camden / Burlington Counties <input type="checkbox"/> Central New Jersey <input type="checkbox"/> Essex County <input type="checkbox"/> Hunterdon / Somerset Counties <input type="checkbox"/> Middlesex / Union Counties <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest New Jersey <input type="checkbox"/> Ocean County <input type="checkbox"/> Western Monmouth County 		Adult Issues Chapter I wish to join: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Camden / Burlington Counties <input type="checkbox"/> Hunterdon County <input type="checkbox"/> North Jersey 	
I am applying for membership as a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent /Guardian [->] <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Family Member <input type="checkbox"/> Individual With AS/PDD-NOS/HFA/NLD [->] <input type="checkbox"/> Medical / Health Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <hr style="width: 25%; margin-left: 0;"/>		[->] Name of Child or Adult With ASD	
		[->] Date of Birth	
		[->] Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
		[->] Current Diagnosis	
Information sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. I give my permission to have ASPEN® share my name with other parents and individuals who wish to talk about common issues. <input type="checkbox"/> No. I do not give my permission to have ASPEN® share my name with other parents and individuals who wish to talk about common issues. 		Donations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to make a donation to ASPEN® at this time. <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to join, but would still like to donate to ASPEN® Donation Amount: \$ _____ 	
Your Signature			