

KIDS WHO ARE DIFFERENT

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Kids Who Are Different A Poem

- Here's to the kids who are different,
The kids who don't always get A's,
The kids who have ears twice the size of their
peers, and noses that go on for days...
Here's to the kids who are different,
- The kids they call crazy or dumb,
The kids who don't fit, with the guts and the grit,
Who dance to a different drum....
Here's to the kids who are different,
The kids with the mischievous streak,
For when they have grown, as history's shown,
It's their difference that makes them unique.

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Different kids/One Class

- The number of children that will enter your classroom with some form of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) increases every year.
- ASD has become prevalent in the regular classroom setting and teachers will have to know how to service them.

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What do we need to know?

- As a school, what are we required to do and/or say with children that are different than the others.
- What is ASD?
- How can we make the connection between assessment and interventions?
- What are the most common behaviors that children with ASD exhibit?

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Real Life

- 80% of those referred are for reading and writing disabilities
- Neurological, genetic, environmental and instructional factors influence Learning Disabilities.
- According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 1 in 150 individuals is diagnosed with Autism, making it more common than Pediatric Cancer, Diabetes and AIDS combined. It occurs in all racial, ethnic, and social groups and is four times more likely to strike boys than girls.

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Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism, Aspergers, Rett Syndrome,
Pervasive Developmental Disorder,
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

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Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

- Autism is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).
- Autism is characterized by impaired social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication, and unusual, repetitive, or severely limited activities and interests.

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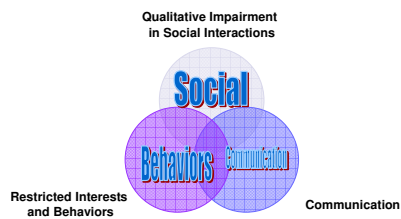
ASD's continued

- The other ASD's include Asperger syndrome, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).

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Areas Impaired in Individuals with ASD



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What do we see?

- Deficits in reciprocal Social Interactions
Such as:
- Difficulty using nonverbal behaviors to regulate social interactions.
- Failure to develop age-appropriate peer relationships
- Little sharing of pleasure, interests, achievements
- Lack of social emotional reciprocity

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Some of the Nonverbal Behaviors

- Trouble with eye contact
- Little use of gestures while speaking
- Few or unusual facial expressions
- Trouble knowing how close to stand to others
- Unusual intonation/voice quality

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Problems with Peer relations

- Few or no friends
- Relationships mostly with older or younger or family members
- Relationships based mainly in shared interests/special interests
- Trouble interacting in groups and following cooperative rules of games

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What do we mean by “Little Sharing of Pleasure, achievements, interests”?

- Enjoys favorite activities (TV, shows, toys) alone
- Doesn't try to call other's attention to activities, interests, accomplishments
- Little interest in or reaction to praise

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What is “Lack of social /emotional reciprocity”?

- Does not respond to others, appears deaf
- Not aware of others, oblivious
- Strongly prefers solitary activities
- Doesn't notice when others are hurt or upset
- Doesn't offer comfort or share

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Deficits in Communication

- Delay or total lack of language development
- Difficulty holding conversation
- Unusual or repetitive language
- Play that is not appropriate for developmental level; lack of varied make-believe play

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Delay or total lack of language development

- No use of words to communicate by age 2
- No simple phrases by age 3
- After speech develops, immature grammar or repeated errors

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Difficulty Holding Conversations

- Trouble knowing how to start, keep going, or end conversations
- Little back-and-forth (monologue)
- Fails to respond to the comments of others
- Difficulty talking about topics not of special interest

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Unusual or Repetitive Language

- Echolalia
- Repeating from videos, books, or commercials at inappropriate times or out of context
- Using words or phrases they made up or have special meanings to them
- Pedantic style

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Inappropriate Play

- Little acting out scenarios
- Rarely pretends an object is something else
- Prefers to use toys in a concrete manner (e.g., arranges toys in dollhouse)
- When young, little interest in social games (e.g., peek-a-boo)

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Restricted Interests and Behaviors

- Interests that are narrow in focus, overly intense, or unusual
- Unreasonable insistence on sameness/routines
- Repetitive motor mannerisms
- Preoccupation with parts of objects

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Narrow, Intense, Unusual Interests

- Very strong focus on particular topics
- Difficulty letting go of special activities/topics
- Interference with other activities
- Topics that are unusual for age
- Excellent memory for details of special interests

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Insistence on Sameness

- Performs activities in certain order
- Upset by minor changes in routine
- Need for advance warning of changes
- Highly anxious if routines not followed
- Lining up objects

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Repetitive Mannerisms

- Flapping hands when excited and/or upset
- Flicking fingers in front of eyes
- Odd hand postures/movements
- Spinning/rocking
- Walking/running on tiptoes

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How does it manifest in Preschool?

- Misbehavior/meltdowns
- Not sitting during Circle time in school
- ADHD - Unusual fears
- Perfectionist - Not listening
- Sensory issues (being touched, bathing)
- Too well-behaved at home!

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What does it look like in Elementary School?

- Child not completing/turning in written assignments
- Depression
- Major disorganization (does homework, forgets to turn it in)
- ADHD!
- Social difficulties

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- “When you have seen one child with Asperger...you have seen one child with Asperger” Brenda Smith Myles, Ph.D.

- Different children show different symptoms!
- Just because a child is intelligent does not mean he/she is not very impaired

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Educational Issues: What's going on?

- Areas of expected difficulty:
 - handwriting, handwriting, handwriting
 - Sometimes reading comprehension
 - A surprising number of ASD children have dyslexia

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Accommodation

The Road to Success

Accommodations should be:

- **Temporary**
- **Revised**
- **Possible in the environment**
- **Teacher Supported**
- **Child Supported**

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Accommodations:

- Are negotiated
- Are reasonable and possible within the environment
- Do not alter fundamental requirements
- Are viewed as empowering

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SUMMARY

- What have we learned? Teachers are often the first to notice poor academics and unusual behavior.
- Every class is a Special Education Class because every child is different.
- When we've seen one child with ASD, we've seen one child with ASD. Every child is different and personality matters.
- We have to remember that our jobs involve educating different children and all that it entails.

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References

- Ketty Patiño González, Ph.D., Diagnostic Issues in Autism Spectrum Disorders (July, 2008)
- Autism Speaks, <http://www.autismspeaks.org>
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke <http://ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism>


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Where Can I Get More Information?

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>
- National Association of Special Education Teachers <http://www.naset.org>
- Misunderstood Minds <http://www.allkindsofminds.org>
- National Center of Learning Disabilities <http://www.nclld.org>

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Thank You

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