

Aspergers Talk delivered to the SACP Feb 2007

General comments

Aspergers is a condition in the autistic spectrum.
Autistic children are not social, but aren't really aware or care.
Aspergers children want to be social but don't know the boundaries.
Parents often don't want to accept that their child has Aspergers.

Mother talking about her child who has Aspergers

2 ½ years old and the child was still not speaking – didn't start until 4/ 4 ½.
Parents wondering what was wrong.
Over 4 before toilet trained – child didn't seem to see the point as they had a nappy. Then took the lead from his younger sister when she started.
Initially diagnosed with Symantic Pragmatic Disorder - eventually diagnosed formally at Yorkhill hospital with Aspergers at the age of 8.

Psychologist started working with him

- very affectionate (not normal)
- eye contact there
- Intelligent
- Put a toy farm in front of him – played with the inanimate objects.

Being kept up to date at Primary School, but then moved school and it was found out later that his support teacher had been taken away and he was often put out of the class in P7 for disruptive behaviour (sometimes correcting the teacher).

Secondary school had a specific unit for Aspergers, allowing him to slowly integrate with normal school lessons.

Did have problems though, e.g. when fire alarm went off, he had to go outside, even in the pouring rain and for his maths prelim, he refused to take in his calculator because he thought it would be cheating (although it was allowed).

Could leave themselves open to be victims as they don't defend themselves, e.g. accused of putting his hand up a girls skirt and got chewing gum stuck all over his trousers.

Got 7 ½'s at Standard Grades. 2 Highers and 2 Intermediates.

Now 18 at Nautical College on a 2 year course designed for Autistic/Aspergers children (which includes Psychology).

Things to consider when dealing with a child with Aspergers at a Children's Hearing

The hearing could take longer, so Reporter should build this into the schedule.

Easily led into trouble and vulnerable to abuse.

Try and have people in the hearing room that they have a strong bond with, but not too many people as they tend to struggle with large numbers.

It can take a long time to build up trust with a new person, so getting an initial response could be difficult. Time required to drip feed ideas to win him over.

Some kids respond better to females, some to males.

A thorough Social Background Report is essential.

Aspergers children can have extremely low self esteem.

If you ask a question, like..... how did that happen? They don't know how to respond to that.

Try not to look directly at them, almost ignoring them can be the best policy.

Quite often will speak with a foreign accent, perhaps American or English.

Be aware that a sibling can lose out at times in terms of attention, time and recognition.