

M I N D S & H E A R T S

Suite 6
88 Boundary Street
West End

PO Box 5675
West End Q 4101

p.: 07 3844 9466
f.: 07 3844 9533
e.: info@mindandhearts.net

Over the last few years, there have been several guidebooks that have been written to explain the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome to children of varying ages and using different styles. Parents, especially mothers, who have recognised the importance of their own child's understanding of the diagnosis, have written several of the guides. The choice of which guide book would be most suitable for a particular child is the decision for his or her parents based on their knowledge of their son or daughter's interests, reading age and sense of humour. The following is a list of guidebooks to explain the diagnosis to a child.

Faherty, Catherine (2000) *What Does it mean to Me? A workbook explaining self-awareness and life lessons to the child or youth with high functioning autism or Aspergers*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Gagnon, Elisa and Smith-Myles, Brenda (1999) *This is Asperger Syndrome*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Gerland, Gunilla (2000) *Finding Out about Asperger Syndrome, High Functioning Autism and PDD*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Ives, Martine (1999) *What is Asperger syndrome and how will it affect me?* London: The National Autistic Society.

Schnurr, Rosina (1999) *Asperger's Huh? A child's perspective*. Gloucester, Ontario: Anisor Publishing.

Vermeulen, Peter (2000) *I am Special: Introducing children and young people to their autistic spectrum disorder*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

There is a series of books that explain the diagnosis to the child, siblings, other family members and teachers written by Josie Santomauro. I am sure that the books will soon be published and available to readers throughout the world. In the meantime, more information about Josie's books is available using the following website www.powerup.com.au/~josies.

Anna Tullemans has a son with Asperger's syndrome and she has written a booklet entitled, *Talking to Family and Friends about the Diagnosis*, published by DJ Publishers of Redcliffe in Queensland, Australia in 2004.

Gretchen Mertz has written *Help for the Child with Asperger's Syndrome: A parent's guide to negotiating the Social Service maze*, published in 2005 in London by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. The advice is mainly for families living in the United States.

We also have fiction and adventure stories written for children and adolescents, where the central hero of the story has Asperger's syndrome. These stories, as well as augmenting children's knowledge of Asperger's syndrome, encourage them to identify with the experiences of the central character. The reader will also recognise how some of the characteristics and abilities associated with Asperger's syndrome can create a hero. The following is a list of current fiction where the central character has Asperger's syndrome.

Hadcroft, Will (2005) *Anne Droyd and Century Lodge*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Haddon, Mark (2003) *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Oxford: David Fickling Books.

Hoopmann, Kathy (2001) *Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hoopmann, Kathy (2001) *Of Mice and Aliens: An Asperger Adventure*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hoopmann, Kathy (2002) *Lisa and the Lacemaker*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hoopmann, Kathy (2003) *Haze*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Ogaz, Nancy (2002) *Buster and the Amazing Daisy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Welton, Jude (2005) *Adam's Alternative Sports Day: An Asperger Story*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Another resource that can help explain the nature of Asperger's syndrome from a personal perspective is the autobiographies written by children, adolescents and adults who have Asperger's syndrome. Each author has a life story to tell, with experiences that the reader with Asperger's syndrome can identify with, and

parents can read to understand their son or daughter's experiences. The following is a list of autobiographies:

Children

Hall, Kenneth (2001) *Asperger Syndrome the Universe and Everything*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Adolescents

Jackson, Luke (2002) *Freaks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome: A user guide to adolescence*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Jackson, Nita (2002) *Standing Down Falling Up*. Bristol: Lucky Duck Publishing.

Peers, Jessica (2003) *Asparagus Dreams*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Adults

Birch, Jen (2003) *Congratulations! It's Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Fleisher, Marc (2003) *Making Sense of the Unfeasable: My Life Journey with Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Gerland, Gunilla (1997) *A Real Person: Life on the outside*. London: Souvenir Press.

Grandin, Temple (1995) *Thinking in Pictures and other reports from my life with autism*. New York: Doubleday.

Hadcroft, Will (2005) *The Feeling's Unmutual: Growing up with Asperger Syndrome (Undiagnosed)*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Holliday Willey, Liane (1999) *Pretending to be Normal: Living with Asperger's Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kearns Miller, Jean (2003) *Women From Another Planet? Our Lives in the Universe of Autism*. Private publication.

Lawson, Wendy (1998) *Life Behind Glass: A personal account of Autism Spectrum Disorder*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Schneider, Edgar (1999) *Discovering My Autism*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Shore, Stephen (2001) *Beyond the Wall: personal experiences with autism and Asperger syndrome*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Sanders, Robert (2002) *Overcoming Asperger's: Personal Experience and Insight*. Murfreesboro, TN: Armstrong Valley Publishing Company.

Williams, Donna (1992) *Nobody Nowhere: The remarkable autobiography of an autistic girl*. London: Transworld Publishers.

Biographies

The following biographies are also part-autobiography and were primarily written by a parent, usually a mother, or family member of someone with Asperger's syndrome. They provide a family perspective of the development of someone with Asperger's syndrome and the search for a diagnosis and services.

Barnhill, Gena (2002) *Right Address...Wrong Planet*. Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Fling, Echo (2000) *Eating an Artichoke: A mother's perspective on Asperger syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

LaSalle, Barbara (2003) *Finding Ben: A mother's journey through the maze of Asperger's*. New York: Contemporary Books.

Paradiz, Valerie (2002) *Elijah's Cup: A family's journey into the community and culture of high functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome*. New York: The Free Press.

Books for siblings, friends and family

Bleach, Fiona (2001) *Everybody is Different: A book for young people who have brothers and sisters with autism*. London: The National Autistic Society.

Davies, Julie *Able Autistic Children – Children with Asperger's Syndrome: A booklet for brothers and sisters*. Nottingham: The Early Years Centre. Year of publication unknown.

Welton, Jude (2004) *Can I tell you about Asperger Syndrome?* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Carol Gray and the author were concerned that when an adult with Asperger's syndrome reads the diagnostic criteria, the characteristics are almost exclusively those that are qualitatively different in terms of being less able than the person's peers, with a very distinct value judgement on what is acceptable and clinically significant. We noticed that children and adults with Asperger's syndrome have specific qualities that can be superior to their peers. To provide a counter argument, we wrote diagnostic criteria that describe positive and affirmative characteristics of Asperger's syndrome in adults, in a paper entitled *The Discovery of Aspie* which can be downloaded from www.thegraycenter.org/discovery_of.htm or the author's website, www.tonyattwood.com.au.

The author has presented seminars for professionals and parents on the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome in children and adults. The seminars include the presentation of a recording of the diagnostic assessment of a ten-year-old boy by the author and a review of the diagnostic criteria and explanation of assessment strategies for clinicians. One of the seminars has been recorded as a DVD entitled *Asperger's Diagnostic Assessment* and is available from www.FutureHorizons-autism.com