

Team Notes on Aspergers and Sam

**This handout is intended to be a guide in creating an informational handout of your own to use for students on the spectrum in the general education classroom.*

Asperger Syndrome in General

(In this section, include information on the spectrum disorder, getting the team better acquainted with what it is and isn't)

- A neurological disorder that affects a person's ability to communicate and relate to others
- Common effects:
 - trouble understanding social cues and conversational language styles
 - Inflexible adherence to a nonfunctional routine or ritual
 - Repetition of movements or words and phrases
 - Difficulties with fine-motor skills and sensory integration
- Students with Aspergers often learn social skills without fully understanding when and how they should be used. The "hidden curriculum" of social nuances has to be more obviously taught
- Struggles include abstract concepts, especially with language that involves metaphors, idioms, parables, irony, sarcasm, etc, generalizing knowledge, understanding that other people have their own thoughts and feelings, tasks that require lots of handwriting, sudden changes in schedules.
- More concrete and literal in their learning styles
- When under stress, tend to react emotionally rather than logically (ie. Changes can = stress); inform students of changes in schedules ahead of time as much as possible
- "Asperger time": twice as much time, half as much done

In the Classroom

(In this section, include actions and routines that would be helpful for the classroom teacher to follow to decrease anxiety on the student as well as the teacher, minimizing things that could trigger behaviors)

- Avoid rushing: allow for additional time for transitions, completing work, gathering materials, etc
- Share changes in schedules
- Name what you're doing; "Live out loud" and state the obvious
- Keep your language simple; be clear and clarify as needed
- Be generous with praise: compliment attempts as well as successes. Be specific to ensure that he knows why the teacher is providing praise

- Provide visual supports as much as possible
 - Outlines and notes from lectures: print offs or fill-in-the-blanks
 - Sample models of assignments (especially special headers that you require on papers)
 - List of schedule changes for the day
 - Graphic organizers to visually see information

Specific to Sam

(This section is all about the student. Hopefully you've gotten a chance to know him, or have reports from previous teachers as to strengths and weaknesses that the team should accentuate. These things are also helpful in developing an award system and establishing repore within the classroom.)

- Academically: reading is a strength; math is more of a struggle
- Things he loves: music, working on the computer, drawing, building things. These will be reinforcers for positive behavior at the end of the day during his check out time, but feel free to tap into these things whenever you can, especially for alternative/modified assignments/building repore with Sam
- Sam will check-in/check-out with Mrs. R (para) or Ms. B(*special ed teacher*) every day. If he's off to a rough start when he arrives to school, he may spend more of his day in the IR room than in the classroom
- Emergency card: he has one to use when he's feeling overwhelmed or needs to calm down, and it has Ms. B's schedule on the back of it so he can find her if needed. If you feel like he needs some assistance in cooling down or need Ms. B for anything, send the card with a student to where she is, and she can come get Sam
- If Sam makes a threat (written, verbal, or gestured), Mrs. R is to take him to the IR room to do a think sheet and have cool down time; this is the current targeted behavior we're focusing on modifying
- Sam has a notebook that he'll take with him to every class that has his schedule in it, his rules, and social stories, and will help him keep track of all his assignments

Mrs. R's Specialties

(This section outlines the para's strengths with the student as well as her responsibilities and her role in assisting the teachers in the child's education)

- Visuals/visual reminders on what to do
- Modifying assignments: if she sees that he gets the concept in one or two problems, she may sign off on additional work or the need to show work, going along with the teacher's discretion
- Highlighting text and key information that Sam will be responsible for in upcoming tests
- Copying work that has been complete before sending anything home for homework; this way there is something that can be taken for a grade 😊
- Providing choices when possible (using pen/colored pencils/etc on assignments, using different paper to finish assignments, typing/scribing answers, rewards, etc)
- Notes home in agenda: just as many positives as negatives on the day; more positives when can! (this is the main method for communication with home; Mrs. R signs it at the end of every day, and the parents sign it when they read it at night)
- Once repore is developed and you know what he can do, don't hover too much; ask him to do a problem or two and then check in with you, developing independence

**Information in this handout was taken from www.reasearchautism.org: *Life Journey Through Autism: An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome*