



INTRODUCING AN ASD DIAGNOSIS TO YOUR CHILD

At The SNAP Centre and on the SNAP helpline we are often asked for help with this particular issue. It is difficult for parents to know when and how to broach the subject.

You will need to take several things into account when deciding on when to tell your child. The needs of your child will vary according to their age, ability and specific circumstances. Their diagnosis may mean that their level of understanding or ability to process language is different to other children of their age, so the right time to discuss the diagnosis will depend on their individual abilities, needs and emotional strength.

Some parents have found that the right time for this conversation has been when their child has started to ask questions about why they are different from the other children in their class. They might wonder why they get extra help or find it difficult to make friends. There may need to be some explanation for all the medical and assessment appointments they have attended. Some children however may find it difficult to speak about their worries at all, which may be expressed through other behaviours.

Before speaking to your child about their diagnosis it is important to be prepared and feel confident that you can explain the condition positively and answer any questions that follow. It is important to choose a time when your child is less likely to be tired, anxious or involved with one of his or her favourite activities. However, be prepared for the big discussion to be sprung upon you by your child's own questions at an inconvenient moment.

Learning of their diagnosis may have a big effect on your child. They may have lots of questions, experience a sense of relief or initially find learning about the diagnosis difficult. Your child will need time to think about the diagnosis, find answers to their questions or thoughts and deal with their feelings about it. They may also need support with whether and how to tell other people about their diagnosis.

The National Autistic Society has further advice on telling your child about their diagnosis – <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/diagnosis/children/recently-diagnosed.aspx>

The SNAP library contains a number of resources to help with talking together about an ASD diagnosis including the following:

Autism: Talking About a Diagnosis: A guide for parents and carers of children with an autism spectrum disorder - Rachel Pike (An NAS book, which would be a good starting point for your preparation)

The ASD Workbook: Understanding your autism spectrum disorder - Penny Kershaw (A perfect guide to sharing the diagnosis and how to work through some of the issues and difficulties common to ASD)

Finding out about Asperger syndrome, high functioning autism and PDD - Gunilla Gerland (A simple book explaining all aspects of ASD)



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Can I tell you about Asperger syndrome? - Jude Welton (Clear, simple book ideal for younger children)

What is Asperger syndrome and how will it affect me? - Martine Ives (NAS guide for young people)

My autism book: A child's guide to their autistic spectrum diagnosis - Gloria Dura-Vila and Tamar Levi

Dude, I'm an Aspie! - Matt Friedman

The ASD and Me Picture Book – Joel Shaul

I am special: introducing children and young people to their autistic spectrum disorder – Peter Vermeulen (A workbook for a child to work through with an adult to explain ASD positively)

I have autism what's that? - Kate Doherty

Inside Aspergers Looking Out – Kathy Hoopmann

All Cats have Asperger Syndrome – Kathy Hoopmann

Aspergers...what does it mean to me? - Catherine Faherty (Workbook for joint working with an adult)

Do you understand me?: my life, my thoughts, my autism spectrum disorder - Sofie Koborg Brosen

Different like me: my book of autism heroes - Jennifer Elder (Details some famous people with an ASD)

How to be yourself in a world that's different - Yuko Yoshida (Ideal for older children)

A special book about me - Josie Santomauro (Simple explanation about Asperger syndrome)

Jack has Asperger's syndrome - Alison Harris & Nika Oberholster

Katie has autism - Alison Harris & Nika Oberholster

I am utterly unique - Elaine Larson

Freaks, Geeks and Asperger syndrome - Luke Jackson (Personal account of a 13 year old boy with Asperger syndrome)

Different croaks for different folks: all about children with special learning needs - Midori Ochiai (Ideal book as an introduction to young children about difference)

The SNAP library also has novels for children and young people that feature characters with an ASD:

Baj and the word launcher: space age Asperger adventures in communication - Pamela Victor

Blue bottle mystery: an Asperger adventure - Kathy Hoopmann

Adam's alternative sports day: an Asperger story - J Welton

The boy who ate stars - Kochka

Buster and the amazing Daisy - Nancy Ogaz

Wishing on the midnight star: my Asperger brother - Nancy Ogaz

Lisa and the Lacemaker: an Asperger adventure - Kathy Hoopmann

The curious incident of the dog in the night-time - Mark Haddon



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Additional resources are also available from the SNAP library written for friends, siblings, grandparents and other members of the family to help them to understand an ASD diagnosis.

Amazing Things Happen - A wonderfully positive, animated short film to introduce autism and encourage tolerance and understanding. www.amazingthingshappen.tv

The contacts and links given via this SNAP information sheet have been shared as a starting point for your own research. We believe the information to be genuine and correct at the time of publishing, however no responsibility for loss occasioned by any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of the material contained herein can be accepted by SNAP.