



Newsletter



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Autism Spectrum Disorder resources*



Workshops:

July: Redcliffe, Qld

Sept: New Zealand
Canberra, ACT
Brunei

Oct: Canberra, ACT

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Hello Term 3!!!

Hope the beginning of term 3 brings you back refreshed and ready to start the new term. In this newsletter there are tips for both parents and teachers as I'm sure you all realize that by working together we can create great opportunities for teaching our children and students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Discuss what is working at

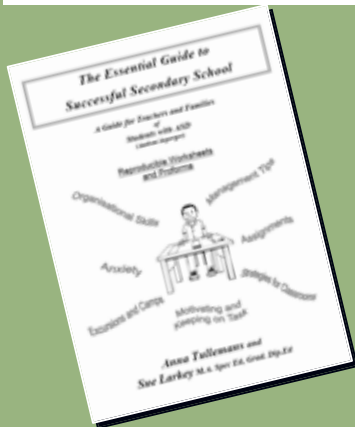
home and at school and see if there can be a crossover of ideas between teacher and parent. This will also help to create better communication between home and school.

Welcome to those of you receiving the newsletter for the first time. If you have any questions, comments etc please contact me.

Essential Tips for Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

- ASD students don't have to look at you all the time
 - They find looking and listening at the same time hard to do
- Give them time to answer any of your questions.
 - They have a slower processing time. Sometimes it can take them up to a minute to formulate the answer in the correct sequence.
- If they feel pressured they will answer with stock standard answers
 - They know it will get them out of trouble quickly. This may include: "I don't know. "yes". "maybe", and often this isn't their true answer.
- They often don't generalise information between people and places
- They find organisation of their school equipment very difficult
 - They are best with one folder with everything inside. Limit the number of pencils, pens etc.
- Offer real choices.
 - They find choices overwhelming. Ask "Do you want to wash up now or in five minutes. NOT Do you want to wash up?"
- Be as clear and concise as possible.
 - People with ASD have difficulty with abstract thinking.
- Avoid verbal overload.
 - They are visual learners and verbal information takes longer for them to process and retain.
- Avoid verbal arguments by redirecting them to what they should be doing. Eg "start your work"
 - They often enjoy verbal arguments.
- Asperger people need positive feedback to know they are on the right track.
 - Because of their fear of failure and they want to be Mr Perfect.

**To purchase these books
by Anna Tullemans...**
See contact details on page 3



*The Essential Guide to Successful
Secondary School A4 Spiral
Bound*



*How to Stop Your Words From
Bumping into Someone Else's
A4 Spiral Bound*



*Talking to Family and Friends
about the Diagnosis A5 Bound*



Working with Teachers

Creating Opportunities for Hugs

Creating Opportunities for Hugs – Anna Tullemans 2006

Many ASD people find touch difficult. Light touch and light massage can help to make them reach sensory overload quite quickly. They much prefer a firm touch and/firm massage.

As a mother it would upset me when my son didn't respond to my hugs and actively tried to get away. He would struggle and sometimes kick or hit me. Then there were times when he would actively seek me out and give me a hug that was so tight that I couldn't breathe.

Mothers Need Hugs to be Beautiful

He knew that when he heard these words I was going to give him a firm hug. It wasn't so much the sentiment behind the words that worked, but more so the advance warning. I was preparing him for the touch that was about to happen and he could prepare himself for the sensory stimulation that was about to happen.

Sometimes he would reply "but you're already beautiful!" which meant that he could not be touched. As a mum this was difficult for me

"But You're Already Beautiful!"

At first the hugs were one sided with me doing the hugging. When he was used to that I started to bring his arms around me. The next step was to make his arms put pressure around my body. So with my hands on his arms I would gently but firmly squeeze his arms around me.

It was after I noticed this pattern that I came up with an idea that I just had to try. I noticed that he liked firm hugs on his terms.

From all my reading about Asperger's I knew that he needed to be warned ahead of time of things that might impact on his sensory sensitivities.

One of these was light touch. It always sent him into some inappropriate behaviour when anyone touched him too lightly.

And so was born the phrase: mothers need hugs to be beautiful.

"Mothers need hugs to be beautiful"

but I needed to respect his wishes. Something that surprised me was when he began to use the same phrase back to me. He would use it when he needed to be hugged extra tight.

When my son was stressed or in the middle of sensory overload he searched for places that were small or tight. (In the dryer, tightly wound in a doona or sheet, piled pillows on top of himself) I think that he realized that a tight hug would help to calm him.

After a while I told my son that a proper hug needed two people to use their arms to squeeze. He seemed to understand this and began to hug back.

It was fantastic the day that my son initiated a proper hug and it was breath taking, but in a great way! A day I'll never forget because:

Mothers Need Hugs to be Beautiful



This book available through:
Book in hand, Qld
Ph: 07 3885 8525

Understanding How Asperger Children and Adolescents Think and Learn

Creating Manageable Environments for AS Students

Paula Jacobsen

JKP Publishing

I love the title of this book! I was drawn to it. I kept thinking this is just what I need. I need to understand how they think so I can teach them from their perspective, not from my own. We tend to make the mistake of teaching Asperger people the way we think they should learn, and get very frustrated when the learning doesn't happen. However if we understand from their perspective we will achieve so much more for them.

In this book, Paula Jacobsen provides us with an insight of how AS pupils perceive and understand what happens in the classroom. It is clearly written and provides some great insight into how our Asperger children think and how they learn. She uses actual situations from the classroom and playground, and quotes from many children and adolescents in helping us to see situations and words as our AS children see them.

It covers aspects such as: considering Asperger perspectives, learning who the child is, not what the diagnosis is about, and addressing and supporting life and learning during the school years.

This is an exceptionally good book. What I like about it is that it is easy to read. It's too long to read in a single night, but you can pick it up again and read on. It is also a book that I can re read several times and still find some interesting aspects that I can use with the children I see and with my own son.

The book is written with parents and teachers in mind. It is definitely not an academic book, although I think they all should read it. I would highly recommend it to anyone who is working with, living with or teaching a person with Asperger Syndrome.

Thoughts from an Asperger adolescent

"I was diagnosed at a very young age (somewhere around six I think), so I grew up with the knowledge that I was different. At the time, it didn't really mean much to me – I'd never experienced anything different to how I was, so it was (and still is) essentially "normal" for me. I think that growing up with a diagnosis was overall a good thing, because I never had to wonder why I was "different" to everyone else."

Daniel, 19 yrs old

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Book Orders

**To order any of the
books on page 2
please use the
above contact
details.**

Want to know about
suitable resources for
your classroom or
home?

Check out my website at
www.annatullemans.com

For Teachers

Helping with Organisational Skills

Are you tired of ASD students leaving their pens and pencils behind, forgetting pencil cases and bringing the wrong exercise book with them or worse still turning up with no exercise books at all?

I have found a great way to help students with their organisational skills. It's called a Tudor Organiser. You can buy it from K-mart, Officeworks, and most newsagent stores. (It costs \$25.00 to \$35.00)

It has a pencil case that is sewn onto the folder. It can house pens, pencils, eraser, and a pencil sharpener. It also has room for a ruler and pockets for disks and CDs etc.

As it is a ring binder with 4 rings, when opened it can hold 8 subjects or more (less chance of loose leaf paper tearing and falling out).

There is also room for plastic sheets where assignments can be placed in the appropriate area for each subject.

Notes can also go home in these pockets so parents know where to look for them.

There are cheaper versions on the market but they have Velcro tabs for the pencil case and will make that wonderful Velcro sound when the student is bored or trying to reach your attention!



Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.

I welcome any thoughts or ideas that you would like to contribute to the newsletter.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding Asperger Syndrome/Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder. If I can't help you with an answer I will try to find some one who can.

Looking forward to meeting you at a future workshop.

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