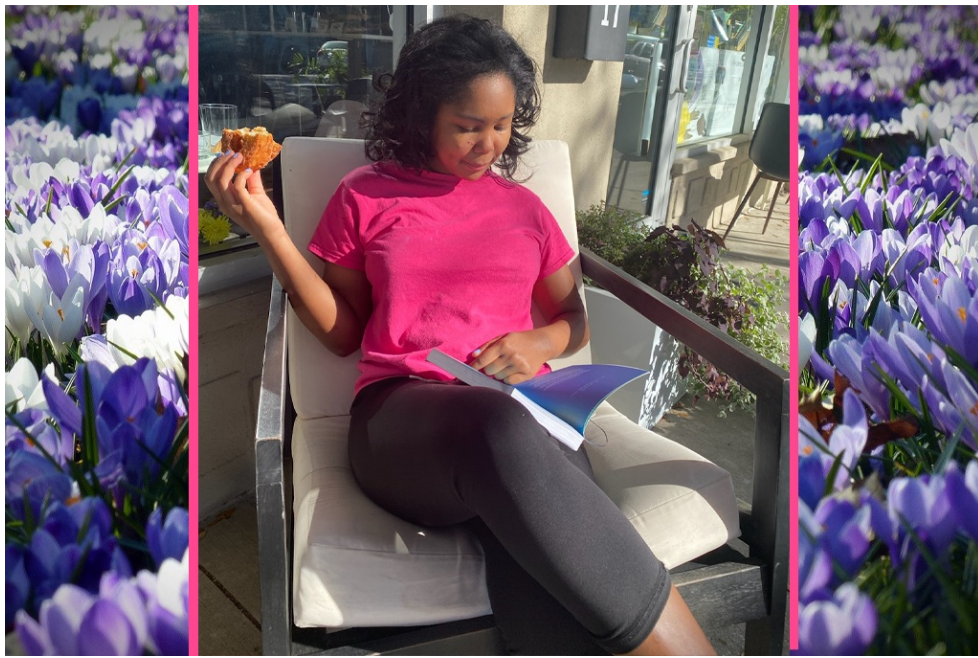




Proud Aspy Mom Newsletter | March 2021

In My Feelings



There is something about being a parent. You get this child and you look at it and you say how do I do this? You are overjoyed with emotions. You pray to whoever you believe in that you have the strength stamina and capability to do the best for the child. You do not know what obstacles lie ahead, but you will do anything for this child. It is the most beautiful experience in the world.

Imagine how you would feel when

someone tells you that what you have made, what you have created is wrong or there are challenges ahead that you cannot change or your situation is not normal. That is what it feels like to be the parent of a child with special needs. It is what I felt like when someone told me my child had ASD even though, to her, nothing changed. She was still overwhelmingly beautiful. She still had joy in her spirit. She was still a happy baby, curious toddler and incredibly kind spirit - but that label changed literally everything.

It is funny how we believe in labels. Everyone wants to belong to a tribe. I am so grateful my daughter belongs to this intellectual, creative, unique tribe called autism. She is exceptional in so many ways and I am a different person because of who she is.

I continue to go back to research what I wish I would have known when she was first diagnosed. It was as if every word was a foreign language to me. I wanted definitions. I wanted concrete explanations. I wanted a roadmap to success. It is certainly interesting how technology helps you on your journey. Now with a touch of a button I can Google whatever I want and find answers. Recently, thanks to my magical nanny, (we are now calling a life coach), I reviewed a chart of terminology that I wish I would have had in the beginning of my journey. Understanding basic terminology makes all the difference.

I also wish I would have heard from other Aspy's. When my daughter was young there used to be a program at All Children's Hospital called, Speaking with the Professionals. The Professionals were kids on the spectrum. It was so incredible to talk to them about their story and where they were in life and it gave you tremendous hope because you would see your children in them. It allowed parents to step into an ASD world. Next month is autism awareness month. If you know anyone in the spectrum show them some love.

Make Friends with Autism

Terminology and Acronyms

Here are the definitions of some frequently used terms related to Autism:

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA): ABA is the science of applying learning principles to change behavior. Behaviors are carefully defined in observable and measurable terms, and carefully analyzed to determine what triggers and maintains the behavior. Data is collected to determine if the behavior is changing over time. ABA currently has a strong research base of evidence of effectiveness for people with autism. Examples of ABA interventions include positive behavioral supports, reinforcement, shaping, fading and chaining behaviors.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A complex developmental disability that affects communication, socialization and behavior. Autism is called a spectrum disorder because it is defined by a set of behaviors and affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. Those on the autism spectrum can have difficulty with language such as understanding language and expressing selves using language, forming and maintaining social relationships, and/or repetitive behaviors or narrow, restricted interests. ASD's include Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified, Rett Syndrome and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

Asperger's Syndrome: Asperger's is an Autism Spectrum Disorder that is defined by difficulties in communication and social development and by obsessive interests and behaviors. Unlike typical Autism, people with Asperger's have no significant delay in language and cognitive development.

Childhood Disintegrative Disorder: An Autism Spectrum Disorder that refers to individuals whose development appears normal for the first few years of life, but regresses with loss of skills, especially involving regression in speech.

Compulsions: Deliberate non-functional repetitive behaviors that follow specific, self-imposed rules. Examples include cleaning, counting, or checking.

Developmental Milestones: Skills or behaviors that most children can do by a certain age that enable parents and professionals to monitor learning, behavior, and development. While each child develops differently, delay in reaching developmental milestones may be a red flag for greater concern.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV-TR): The official system for classification of psychological and psychiatric disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

"There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what he cannot do."

- Dr. Temple Grandin

Could You Be On The Spectrum?



When you understand ASD you want to diagnose literally everyone. You start thinking, hey I always knew that person was a little different. You also start analyzing every action and questioning other people. This is not a negative, rather it is just awareness. I am often researching autism and random related topics, to address my curiosity about people with ASD. I came across a video of a young man who spoke clear and to the point like my daughter. The young man created a playlist of famous people who have or likely have Asperger's

Syndrome.

It led me to a wider search on famous people with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome. Some of the persons noticed could have been myths and others noted could be conjecture - we will likely never know. But what we do know is there are certain attributes and qualities that we attribute to those on the Spectrum that make them add more "color" to our world. Dan Aykroyd, Tim Burton, Bill Gates, The author of Alice in wonderland. Makes you want to say hmmm....

Our world would clearly not be the same without these unique voices. My daughter asked me, "What does my future hold?" and without hesitating, I said "Everything!"



APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS
PROGRAMS GUIDE

[History's 30 Most Inspiring People on the Autism Spectrum](#)



[Famous People With Autism video](#)

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