

ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

The challenges faced by people with autism and Asperger's come from the same place," says Stephen Shore, a doctoral candidate in special education, concentrating on the autism spectrum at Boston University. "They just express themselves differently. For example, we see significant delays in communication for autism. There is no significant delay in verbal ability for Asperger's."

Other characteristics of Asperger's include:

- Deficiencies in social skills
- Difficulties with transitions or changes, preference for sameness
- Obsessive routines
- Repetitive motions
- Restricted interests
- Difficulty reading nonverbal cues (body language)
- Sensory issues
- Difficulty determining proper body space boundaries

By definition, people with AS have a normal to above average IQs. But while many Asperger's kids possess advanced vocabularies – often sounding like "little professors" — they can be extremely literal and have difficulty using language in a social context.

When interviewed by the ASA, Rick Rollens, who has helped with the California studies, acknowledged the possibility exists that vaccinations could be responsible. "...Since mercury containing vaccines are still in use today, including the most recent recommended addition to the childhood immunization schedule ... (of) two shots of flu vaccine for babies, it will take a few years to start seeing the effect of the phasing out of the mercury containing preservative thimerisol from childhood vaccines on the autism epidemic."

Among the treatments that can help children with autism and Asperger's:

- Behavior modification
- Special education
- Medications – though not specifically for Asperger's, anti-anxiety drugs and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors can be helpful for symptoms.