

ASD, PATIENCE AND PROGRESS!

THE ASD CHILD RESPONDS BEST TO ONE SPECIFIC METHOD OF DISCIPLINE, AND ONE ALONE. (RELEVANT HOWEVER MILD OR OTHERWISE THE CASE IS.)

We must make sure we correct him, and make sure other children and adults see we are correcting him, but we need to correct him in a very specific way. **He works by ultra-strict rules of logic rather than by empathy. He does not easily infer from past experiences. He sees everything in black and white and takes things very literally.** He needs a great amount of schooling in role play to help him to see 'the other person's point of view' – he needs it **spelled out to him**, he does not absorb it naturally. He RECEIVES to a greater or lesser extent, a somewhat chaotic, narrow, blinkered view of life.

ASD children mirror the emotions presented to them. His anger and aggression is rooted in frustration and fear but creates anger in others – understandably, if they do not understand the way an ASD child's mind works! But, unfortunately, the more angry the other person becomes, the more angry and panicked he grows, and the situation escalates. A busy, crowded situation leads to over stimulation. **Until he is calm again, no verbal reasoning reaches him – quite literally.** He DOES NOT process it. Indeed, we believe that in that over-stimulated (therefore unduly stressed) state **he CAN NOT process it.** The only method that gets through to him is to **take him out of the over stimulating situation** and try to calm him. **Then** we must explain the rights and wrongs of the situation, **slowly, quietly, calmly, logically, one step at a time in a very plain, simple, logical, very literal and precise manner.** We have been called, half in respect, half in disapproval, extremely patient. That is because **NOTHING ELSE WORKS – and believe us, we have tried other ways first!** Any ongoing effort of showing endless patience, apart from being pleasing to our Father, is also worthwhile because it works!!!

Because he does not 'fill in the gaps' of logic, or 'join the dots' by common sense and empathy, we cannot miss out any single one of the steps of logic at all. Only then can he fully understand and be able to correctly file in his mind and memory the information for retrieving the next time he meets that situation. At each 'blip', we need to explain to him:-

1. what it was that he did wrong, because usually he has no idea with it was that he did wrong,
2. what his words or actions may have made *others feel* like,
3. why it is that he cannot have his own way.

It takes time, patience and understanding of his autistic spectrum disorder. Once he truly genuinely understands the whole larger picture, and understands exactly what in his behaviour was wrong, and why it was wrong, he accepts the rule. In fact, he will then stick to that rule so rigidly and to such an extent that he reminds other children – and adults – about the matter and scolds them if they overstep the mark in that matter – even when their overstepping it was for a sensible reason!! We then find he doesn't automatically understand why or how or when there should be **exceptions** to rules!! We have therefore to repeat the slow, patient process of explaining to him in precise, step by step, logical stages, *what* the exceptions are...

Understand that all his frustration and anger at trying to make sense of the world around him can come out in rages, tempers, tantrums, and - at times - tears and nightmares. When we get to the bottom of these, we can elicit from him that they are usually communication related. While he has great strengths in some areas, with a high IQ, the communication tools he currently has to work with are not as adept as some children's. He can feel humiliated or frustrated at not being able to work out everything that is coming at him. The fact that he has a higher than average IQ, makes it all the more greatly frustrating for him.

We pray that a better awareness of ASD traits will help you to understand where he is coming from and what he is going through.