

Greetings!

Thank you for helping us implement the **ThinkAsperger's Screening Program**. A delay in the identification of Asperger's Disorder (AD) may lead to a lifetime of struggles that include depression and anxiety. We designed this kit to assist professionals with the early detection of AD so that young children might receive appropriate support. Hopefully, this will lead to an improved quality of life for affected individuals and their families.

The tools in this kit emanate from research conducted into the early developmental history of individuals with AD. Atypical behaviors present in the majority of these children resulted in the development of the Detecting Asperger's Very Early Screening Questionnaire (DAVE Screening Questionnaire).

This kit includes:

1. Step-by-step instructions
2. Asperger's Disorder Surveillance
3. DAVE Screening Questionnaire
4. Asperger's Disorder fact sheet
5. Resources

To assist us in the ongoing development of this program, we request that you follow the step-by-step instructions by including the red flag questions into your routine interview with families. Please direct all children at risk for AD to an appropriate professional for a diagnostic evaluation. Your cooperation gets the family on the right track for much needed support.

Please contact us at (602) 340-8717 with any questions. We hope you find this kit useful in your practice and look forward to any feedback.

Sincerely,

Raun Melmed, M.D.
Medical Director

Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D.
Research Director

Asperger's Disorder Surveillance

When subjective concerns arise, consider asking the following objective probes to further assess the problem.

*If a parent has concerns about a child's **social interaction**, such as:*

- Has trouble making and keeping friends
- Comes across as rude to strangers
- Seems more socially awkward than peers
- Has poor eye contact and appears not to listen or understand when spoken to...

*Then conduct a **social probe** by asking*

Does your child...?

- invite other children to the house or get invited over for play dates?
- have difficulty approaching other children and initiating play?
- pick up on subtle social cues and rules?
- understand jokes and sarcasm?
- stand too close to people or touch them in an overly friendly manner?
- look at you directly in the face when talking and doing things with you?
- have trouble following instructions or the flow of simple conversations?

*If a parent has concerns about a child's **interests and behavior**, such as:*

- Poor fine or gross motor coordination
- Doing poorly in school
- Preoccupation with highly specific interests
- Unable to deal with changes in his or her schedule...

*Then conduct an **interests and behavior probe** by asking:*

Does your child...?

- have trouble catching and throwing balls? Riding a bike? Tying shoes?
- produce school work that is difficult to read?
- have trouble keeping track of school materials and completing assignments on time?
- have specific interests that consume conversations, play, and thoughts?
- become overly distressed when routines are changed at home or school?

*If a parent has concerns about a child's **communication**, such as:*

- Has formal "little professor" speech
- Has a peculiar sounding quality to their speech
- Does not show the same range of facial expressions as other children...

*Then conduct a **communication probe** and ask the following:*

Does your child...?

- have an advanced vocabulary?
- sound flat, or have an unusual pattern to their speech?
- have a smile that appears forced or unnatural?
- show facial expressions that do not match emotions?

ASPERGER'S DISORDER

Asperger's is a pervasive developmental disorder that impairs skills related to social communication, and is marked by restricted and intense interests. It is part of Autism Spectrum Disorder, but impairments may not emerge until elementary school or even later; whenever a clear difference from peer functioning occurs. Early detection is difficult because individuals with Asperger's develop language by an appropriate age, and they have no significant cognitive impairment.

SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES:

- may be considered socially awkward
- have a difficult time forming and sustaining friendships
- may not pick up on social cues
- find jokes, analogies, and sarcasm difficult to understand

COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES:

- may have overly formal speech
- may have a peculiar sounding quality to it such as inappropriate pitch, rate, rhythm, or volume
- may focus on specific areas of interest in conversations
- have a difficult time building on subjects brought up by others

RESTRICTED INTERESTS AND UNUSUAL PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR:

- preoccupied by highly specific topics that consume their thoughts and prevent them from engaging in more appropriate activities
- may be inflexible and rigid in their routines and become upset by minor changes in their daily life

WHAT COMES NEXT?

If a child is suspected of having Asperger's, please see www.ThinkAspergers.org. Then contact the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC) at 602-340-8717 for what to do next.

DAVE Screening Questionnaire

Detecting Asperger's Very Early (DAVE)

School Version

Student's name: _____ Date of Birth: __/__/__ Age: ____ Gender: ____ Grade: ____

Completed by: _____ Relationship to student: _____ Date: __/__/__

Please choose a response for each question and place the score in the box provided.

	Does the student:	1 = Yes 0 = No
1	Have difficulty with fine or gross motor coordination (<i>handwriting, throwing or catching balls, riding a bike, etc.</i>)?	
2	Have unusual speech at times (<i>too slow or loud, formal or "little professor-like," monotone, robotic etc.</i>)?	
3	Have difficulty playing with others (<i>disrupts play, controls the activity, etc.</i>)?	
4	Have trouble making or keeping friends?	
5	Seem socially awkward at times (<i>rude, inappropriate comments, unaware of social cues</i>)?	
6	Have interests that seem overly intense and are expressed in conversation, play, and thoughts?	
7	Have trouble organizing or completing school work?	
8	Find jokes or sarcasm difficult to understand?	
9	Have few or unusual facial expressions?	
10	Often act without thinking (<i>interrupts often, takes things from others without asking, etc.</i>)?	
11	Have difficulty following instructions or the flow of simple conversations?	
12	Become overly distressed when routines are changed at home or school?	
13	Have trouble following rules of personal space and boundaries (<i>excessive touching, stands too close, etc.</i>)?	
14	Have poor eye contact?	
15	Have exceptional skills (<i>advanced language development, early letter or number recognition, memorization of facts, etc.</i>)?	
	*Total score	

*If total score is 6 or higher pursue a formal diagnostic evaluation for Asperger's Disorder.

This is a screening questionnaire and is intended to guide a qualified professional toward an assessment for Asperger's Disorder. It does not replace a comprehensive diagnostic assessment.

Think Asperger's

www.thinkaspergers.org

SARRC

www.autismcenter.org

Step-By-Step Instructions

Provider Assessment Sheet

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Date of Screen _____

1. Detect "red flags"

Please ask the following questions at routine visits from age **4 years** onward.

Does your child have...?

- Difficulty sustaining friendships or with peer interaction
Yes No
- Intense and unusual interests and preoccupations
Yes No
- Unusual/peculiar use of language
Yes No

If all are "No", STOP.

If any of these questions are "Yes," complete steps 2 and 3.

2. Conduct Asperger's Disorder (AD) Surveillance

Are there any concerns?

Yes No

For examples, see over for the AD surveillance probes

3. Have parents complete the DAVE Screener

Are there three or more questions answered "Yes?"

Yes No

4. If questions 2 or 3 are answered "Yes," the child could be at risk for Asperger's Disorder.

5. Next steps for a child at risk for Asperger's Disorder

Refer to Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) for assessment and resources

Please remember, parents need to know this is only a screen and *not* diagnostic of any disorder. In addition this screening program might not always identify children at risk for Asperger's Disorder.

Resources for Asperger's Disorder

- **Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC)**
www.autismcenter.org
(602) 340-8717
- **Phoenix Chapter of the Autism Society of America (ASA)**
www.phxautism.org
- **Tucson Chapter of the Autism Society of America (ASA)**
www.tucsonautism.org
- **Arizona Autism Coalition**
www.arizonaautism.org
- **Asperger Parent Network**
www.apn.150m.com
- **Support Group for Parents and Teens & Young Adults with HFA/Asperger's**
Tempe: Debbie at: azparentssupport@cox.net
Contact: Carolyn Warden at (480) 759-6329
- **Support Group for Adults with High-Functioning Autism/Asperger's**
Tempe: trish_crew@yahoo.com
Tucson: Jerry Newport: jwholphin48@aol.com or (520) 770-1591
- **North Phoenix High Functioning Autism/Asperger's Family Network**
hfaulism@cox.net or (602) 225-0052
<http://members.cox.net/hfaulism>
- **Adults with High-Functioning Autism/Asperger's Group**
Tara: jamethiel9@hotmail.com or (602) 421-2215
- **Parents of Adult Asperger's Group**
Sherman Minkoff: SabaHJM@aol.com or (480) 209-1952
- **Southern Arizona Association of Adult Asperger's**
www.aspergers-tucson.org
- **Asperger Family Support Group**
TucsonAspergerFamilies@yahoogroups.com
Ayn McNutt at 520-275-2869 or ayn138@yahoo.com
- **Organization for Autism Research (OAR)**
www.researchautism.org
- **Autism Speaks**
www.autismspeaks.org