

Child Psychology *Asperger's Case Study*

You will read a case study about a (real) 6-year-old boy who received a diagnosis of Asperger's disorder. In the case study, you will find a description of family history, reports from classroom observations, and the test results from psychological assessments (with a brief discussion of the relevant research). After reading through a sampling of background literature, you will make recommendations for treatment/support in the case.

In-class on Wed 3/27: Choose your group of 4 classmates, and divide the research areas below among your group.

Before Wed 4/3: *First*, write your individual response to question #1 in the packet. *Next*, read the case and your additional source. Prepare a handout on your source for other group members to read (only 1 pg, including a proper APA citation for the source). Email your handout to the group before class (cc me) and bring print copies with you.

In-class on Wed 4/3: You will meet with your group and discuss what you found in your research (sharing samples). As time permits, you can discuss and start responding to questions #2-6 together.

For Fri (4/5): Finish your responses (including #6, your final recommendations); submit on Moodle by the start of class.

Research Areas

Historical background - Asperger

Read Asperger's 1944 article. It's long, so skim, and focus especially on p. 67-83. What symptoms does he describe, and what is their impact on the child's functioning at home/school?

Assessment: The GARS

Read both the publisher's information and the GARS template. How does the assessment work? Which of these items are relevant for Asperger's? How can this help us interpret the assessment results reported in the case?

Support in the classroom

Read the Williams (1995) article cited in the case study. Which of the supports suggested focus on accommodating the child's disorder (changing the school setting), and which focus on confronting the child's tendencies in order to help them meet school demands?

Social integration strategies

Read the Attwood (2000) article cited in the case study. What are some examples of social difficulties that children with Asperger's have? Describe a few of the intervention techniques suggested that you find most promising/interesting (keep Dylan's case in mind).

1. Pre-Writing

How do you think Asperger's might manifest at age six – what symptoms might this young boy have? (Think specifically about what symptoms might lead you to seek out a psychologist.) Also, what interventions might be available at this age, and which of these would you want to try first? *Justify your answers by citing course readings and acknowledging any other sources of background knowledge.*

2. Historical background (Asperger, 1944)

What symptoms does Asperger describe as common, and in what ways do they impact the child's functioning at home/school?

3. Psychological assessments: The GARS-2

How does the GARS assessment work? In which categories did Dylan show impairment, and which of the sample items might his caretakers have marked?

4. Social integration strategies (Attwood, 2000)

Identify three different intervention strategies that might be useful in Dylan's case. Discuss the procedures and how they are expected to help.

5. Support in the classroom (Williams, 1995)

What supports can teachers provide in the classroom for students with Asperger's? Include both those that accommodate the child's disorder (changing the school setting), and those that confront the child's tendencies (changing the child) in order to help him meet school demands.

6. Final Recommendations (*double-weighted*)

Now that you have read the case study and background literature, what tentative recommendations could you make? Suggest a few ways that (a) Dylan's parents and (b) his teachers could help him be successful at school. (*Be sure to refer back to - and cite - specific details of both the case and the additional sources to justify your decisions: Why are these particular strategies likely to be helpful in this particular case?*)