Implications on school life

Changes in routines can cause distress to students with an ASD. These changes may include the teacher being absent, change in activities, such as excursions, performances, sports days and assemblies.

Due to sensory issues, students with an ASD can become anxious when it becomes noisy. The school playground, school assemblies and sometimes even the classroom can be noisy places.

Some students with an ASD will experience difficulty making and maintaining friendships with other students. This will often cause difficulties in the playground. The students may appear to be a little demanding or aggressive which is there way of coping with the stressful situation. They are unable to effectively communicate their needs.

These are just a few of the many implications students with an ASD have to face each day.

Students with an ASD can react to these stressful situations in various ways. Some will scream uncontrollably until they calm, others will lash out, kick and thrash about until all pent up tension is relieved while some may even become withdrawn and refuse to talk, often hiding under the tables or pillows until they are calm.

We as Special needs teachers face these issues everyday. We have several strategies and techniques which are used to try and avoid these stressful situations. Unfortunately we can’t control or avoid all situations, so if you see a student with an ASD releasing some tension please don’t stare and remember, they are just like every other student, they just need a little bit of understanding.

For Further Information

http://www.autismtraining.com.au
http://www.autismspectrum.org.au
http://www.autismawareness.com.au
http://www.autismaus.com.au
What is Autism?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability. People with an ASD may experience difficulties in social interaction, have impaired communication, restricted and repetitive interests and behaviours and sensory sensitivities.

There are three diagnoses that are currently classified as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). They are:

- Autistic Disorder, sometimes known as classic autism or childhood autism
- Asperger syndrome, sometimes known as Asperger’s Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

1. Impairment in social interaction — may include:
   - Difficulties understanding non-verbal communication such as eye contact, facial expression and gestures
   - Difficulties forming and maintaining friendships

2. Impairment in communication — may include:
   - Delayed language development
   - Difficulties initiating and sustaining conversations
   - Stereotyped and repetitive use of language such as repeating phrases from television (Delayed echolalia)
   - Limited imaginative or make-believe play

3. Restricted and repetitive interests, activities and behaviours—may include:
   - Fixation or focus on particular interests.
   - Repetitive body movements such as hand flapping and rocking
   - Repetitive actions such as lining up pencils, closing doors
   - Adherence to routines such as insisting on travelling the same route home each day

Sensory sensitivities—may include:

- Unusual sensory interests such as sniffing objects or staring intently at moving objects
- Hypo or Hyper sensitive to touch or smells. E.g.: Car deodorises, Cigarette smoke.