

Hunter H.

Parents are Scott and Claudia H

Scott contact info: Phone: # Email Occupation: Bus. Owner

Claudia contact info: Phone # Email Occupation: 5th Grade Elem School

Born: 9 weeks premature on December 12, Year at 4 lbs. 1 oz.

Today: He is 7 in. taller and 40 lbs. heavier than his father was at the same age

Grades: avg. As and Bs

Former schools: Elem, MS, MS and JH

Expectation: Hunter will achieve academically, complete college and be a great productive and independent adult.

Gifts:

- Aspergers makes Hunter unique
- very organized (sometimes he wants to throw things away too early)
- does not hold a grudge (does not take offense)
- incredible memory: tells jokes (cut him off after 2-3)
- not shy and wants to meet people
- reading
- will stand up and talk or perform in front of anyone (choir, oral communication, etc.)
- fast typist

Challenges:

- first 2-3 weeks are great each semester
- black and white world
- change can be difficult, let him know if you will be out or email us to prep him
- typically notes do not get home timely
- do not wait to contact us, email or call immediately with an issue (if needed, dad works out of the home and is flexible)
- communication: once he gets something in his mind, that is the way it is, he tends to challenge/argue with you, Do NOT let him do this
- correct inappropriate behavior and communication immediately
be very direct (doesn't understand social cues, or settle communication)
- if he misses assignments, we need to know this asap (they will be completed even for no grade if missed)
- big projects (we need to know about asap and the due date)
- has an agenda to right down what is done in class and we check it
- gets along best with students 3-4 years younger
- handwriting (slow and in the style of an elementary student)

High School Lessons Learned at SHS:

- had to learn how to study for tests (e.g. not everything was a sheet of paper to memorize)
- Allowing for AP Physics. Hunter has not prioritized deadlines in the past and would then consistently turn in his work late, (e.g. parents declined opportunity for Hunter to take AP Lit)
- Found a unique group of friends at SHS (Social skills development is ongoing. Hunter's youth group and others still see him as different enough that he does not get invited to many outside events. Allows anyone who will take interest in him to have a relationship.)
- Been given the opportunity to perform in Mr. SHS (learned guitar in one week for his song, performed a rap)
- Will take the opportunity to say Hi to you everyday (ask Mr. Joenks)
- Hunter and his dad have already started to visit colleges so he can have an understanding of what it takes to earn a degree. (UCA, AR Tech, U of A and NWACC) 1st ACT score 26.
- Tutoring was successful when he prioritized and attended the sessions.
- Gradebook timeliness is critical for our success to support the academic goals for Hunter and his teachers

Enjoys the following:

- Singing
- Technology (laptop, xbox, mp3) time is earned at our house
- Youth Group at Church
- Leading Worship in Children's Ministry
- Boy Scouts and ranked as a Life Scout. Has completed Eagle Project and final merit badge to earn rank the Eagle Rank.
- Reading
- Eating
- Throwing a frisbee

HS Teachers and Staff:

- Do you love what you do? (Hunter needs teachers that want to see him develop and succeed.)
- Do you keep up with Gradebook?
- Do you provide a weekly email communication on lesson plans for the week?
- When is tutoring available?

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Asperger's: My life as an Earthbound alien

One CNN manager, who asked to remain anonymous, recently learned -- at 48 -- that she has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism. Today she shares an inside view of life with the condition.

ATLANTA, Georgia (CNN) -- Recently, at 48 years of age, I was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. For most of my life, I knew that I was "other," not quite like everyone else. I searched for years for answers and found none, until an assignment at work required me to research autism. During that research, I found in the lives of other people with Asperger's threads of similarity that led to the diagnosis. Although having the diagnosis has been cathartic, it does not change the "otherness." It only confirms it.

When I talk to people about this aspect of myself, they always want to know what it means to be an "Aspie," as opposed to a "Neurotypical" (NT). Oh, dear, where to start . . .

The one thing people seem to know about Asperger's, if they know anything at all, is the geek factor. Bill Gates is rumored to be an Aspie. We tend to have specialized interests, and we will talk about them, ad infinitum, whether you are interested or not. Recognizing my tendency to soliloquize, I often choose silence, although perhaps not often enough. Due to our extensive vocabularies and uninflected manner of speaking, we are called "little professors," or arrogant.

I don't quite understand small talk, and early in my adult life, solecisms were frequent. At meetings, I launch into business without the expected social acknowledgments. It's not that I don't care about people, I am just very focused on task. Do you have to rehearse greeting people to reinforce that you should do it? I do.

I am lucky to have a very dear friend who savors my eccentricities. She laughs, lovingly, about one particular evening at a restaurant. Before she could get seated, I asked her what she knew about the golden ratio and began to spew everything I know about it. I re-emphasize how lucky I am to have her as a friend, because this incident occurred long before I was diagnosed.

A misconception is that Aspies do not have a sense of humor. It is true that we can be very literal, so we often miss the humor in everyday banter, but we can and do enjoy even subtle humor. Our literal interpretations, however, can be problematic.

In first grade, whenever someone made a mess in the classroom, the teacher would ask a student to get the janitor. The student would come back with Mr. Jones (not really his name), who carried a broom and large folding dustpan. When I was asked to get the janitor, I looked all over the school and reported back to the teacher that I could not find it. After all, the person was Mr. Jones, so the janitor must be the object, right?

I lack the ability to see emotion in most facial expressions. I compensate for this deficiency by listening to the inflections in people's voices and using logic to determine emotional context. The words people choose, their movements, or even how quickly they exit a meeting can provide clues to emotion.

I also have intensified senses -- touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound -- so I am attuned to lights, noise, textures, and smells. In a "busy" environment, I will eventually go into sensory overload and my mind will go blank. When this happens, I have to "go away" mentally for a brief period to regain focus. When I "return," I have to piece together what occurred while I was "away." The additional mental processing I must do to function every day is fatiguing, and I don't handle "ad hoc" very well. Being asked to respond quickly in the

midst of all this other processing is difficult, sometimes impossible.

I am so sensitive to touch that a tickle hurts me. This is the hardest concept for most people to understand. How can a tickle hurt? All I can tell you is that it does, so I avoid being touched except by those who have learned how to touch me.

Hugs are dispensed infrequently, but if I do hug someone, I resemble Frankenstein's monster, arms extended to control contact. When my dad (who I suspect is an Aspie, too) and I hug, we both have "the approach." We sometimes miss and have to re-approach a couple of times until a brief, awkward hug is achieved.

In school, other children noted my differences, and I was bullied (and tickled into fits of despair) for years. Already needing extended periods of time alone, my response was to become even more of a loner. Uh oh. When you are weird, you are a joke. When you are a loner, you frighten people. It's always the quiet ones. ...

I am married (wow!), and my brilliant husband is an absolute sweetheart. I don't know any other man who has the self-confidence to be pushed away (sometimes sharply), both physically and mentally, as often as he has been. He has been gentle and patient (and, yes, frequently emotionally depleted) as we both worked through my need for space, tendency to go so deep into my own world that the real world and everyone in it cease to exist, and sensitivity to touch during the 26 (soon to be 27) years of our marriage.

I live with anxiety, because the world can be overwhelming and people have expectations that I always, sooner or later, fail to meet. I cannot begin to tell you how many times I have been told that I am rude, inaccessible or cold, yet I have never purposely tried to harm anyone, nor do I mean to be, well, mean.

I could tell you so much more, but instead let me share one last insight. Don't pity me or try to cure or change me. If you could live in my head for just one day, you might weep at how much beauty I perceive in the world with my exquisite senses. I would not trade one small bit of that beauty, as overwhelming and powerful as it can be, for "normalcy."

Unraveling the mystery



CNN reports on the world impact and latest science concerning the developmental syndrome of autism in a global investigation. What is Asperger's?

Asperger's syndrome is a developmental disorder that is part of the autism spectrum. Symptoms include:

- Engaging in one-sided, long-winded conversations, without noticing if the listener is listening or trying to change the subject
- Displaying unusual nonverbal communication, such as lack of eye contact, few facial expressions, or awkward body postures and gestures
- Showing an intense obsession with one or two specific, narrow subjects, such as baseball statistics, train schedules, weather or snakes
- Appearing not to understand, empathize with, or be sensitive to others' feelings
- Having a hard time "reading" other people or understanding humor
- Speaking in a voice that is monotonous, rigid or unusually fast
- Moving clumsily, with poor coordination
- Having an odd posture or a rigid gait
- Source: MayoClinic.com