



Understanding Sam and Asperger Syndrome

By Clarabelle van Niekerk, Liezl Venter MA CCC-SLP

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The National Parenting Center Seal of Approval Winner Holiday 2008

Shortlisted for Speech Pathology Australia's Book of the Year in the lower primary category

Answering the question *Why is Sam different?*, this heartwarming story tells of the challenges of living with Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism. This firsthand view of the life of an undiagnosed child presents behaviors and characteristics that are common among children with this disorder. Sam doesn't like his pancakes to touch, his sister is annoyed with his repetitive song, and his new coat hurts his skin, but once he is diagnosed, teamwork-based support helps Sam's life become a little easier. With endearing illustrations, the book includes 10 helpful tips geared toward children, showing them how to respect and accept differences as well as to interact with a classmate or friend with Asperger Syndrome.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreSchool-Grade 2—A third-person past-tense narrative tells the story of Sam, a boy with Asperger Syndrome. Positive qualities are listed first: "Sam loved to giggle.... Sam was a happy boy." Next come some of his challenges: he is afraid of loud noises, he has trouble making friends, and he does not like change. When he leaves the house at night, walking all the way to the local fairgrounds because he loved the Ferris wheel so much, his parents know that something must be done. They take him for a check-up and receive the diagnosis. The doctors and therapists give them some suggestions for helping their son at home and at school. The book concludes with Sam playing the cello at a school concert. Because of the interesting story line, the positive approach, and the notion that others can learn to help Sam instead of expecting him to change, this is an excellent introduction to the topic. The pictures are bright and lively, showing mostly happy faces. The book concludes with 10 helpful tips to remember when a friend or a classmate has Asperger's. A useful introduction for both children and adults.—*Wendy Smith-D'Arezzo, Loyola College, Baltimore, MD*

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Review

Recipient of The 2010 Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award, which recognizes high-quality children's literature that includes positive and realistic characters with developmental disabilities

"Because of the interesting story line, the positive approach, and the notion that others can learn to help Sam instead of expecting him to change, this is an excellent introduction to the topic. . . . A useful introduction for both children and adults." —*School Library Journal*

"An excellent book." —Tony Attwood, PhD, author, *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome*

"This book should be in every elementary school library to encourage other children to help a child who has Asperger's Syndrome." —Temple Grandin, PhD, PAS, author, *Thinking in Pictures and Animals in Translation*

"Every parent and teacher of a young child on the ASD spectrum should have a copy." —Susan J. Moreno, MA, founder, MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger Syndrome

"A delightful and factual description of a young child with Asperger's. Bravo to the authors!" —Maureen Barber-Carey, EdD, executive vice president, The Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute

"Helps children accept each other's unique aspects—what a great way for teachers to promote an accepting environment in their classrooms." —Heidi Harbers, PhD, CCC-SLP, highly regarded pediatric speech

language pathologist

"Children will enjoy the appealing illustrations and good writing as they learn about a complex neurological disorder that affects so many." —*The Plain Dealer*

About the Author

Clarabelle van Niekerk is the resident artist for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the founder of the London Puppet Theatre, and winner of many international awards, including the Perry Cumberland Excellence in Puppetry Award and the Educator of the Year Award for Children with Special Needs. She lives in Meadville, Pennsylvania. **Liezl Venter, MA, CCC-SLP** has worked in various clinical settings in the the United States and abroad, specializing in children disagnosed with autustic spectrum disorders and Asperger Syndrome. She is also a certified member of the American Speech Language Hearing Association.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Sweet:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim or goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They may be reading whatever they consider because their hobby is reading a book. Think about the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, individual feel need book after they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will want this Understanding Sam and Asperger Syndrome.

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June Ortiz:

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