

# TOPSoccer 301

## Children, Sports and Autism Spectrum Disorder:

- A look at how ASD affects children and impacts the decisions we make as coaches.

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# What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-5). May, 2013.
  - Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction.
  - Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities.
  - Symptoms present in early developmental period.



# What *was* Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-4).
  - Autistic disorder.
  - Asperger's disorder.
  - Pervasive Developmental Disorder- NOS.
  - Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.



# What does it *look* like?

**My Autistic Kid Will Lick Your Honor Student.**

[www.lweraysoffenshine.wordpress.com](http://www.lweraysoffenshine.wordpress.com)



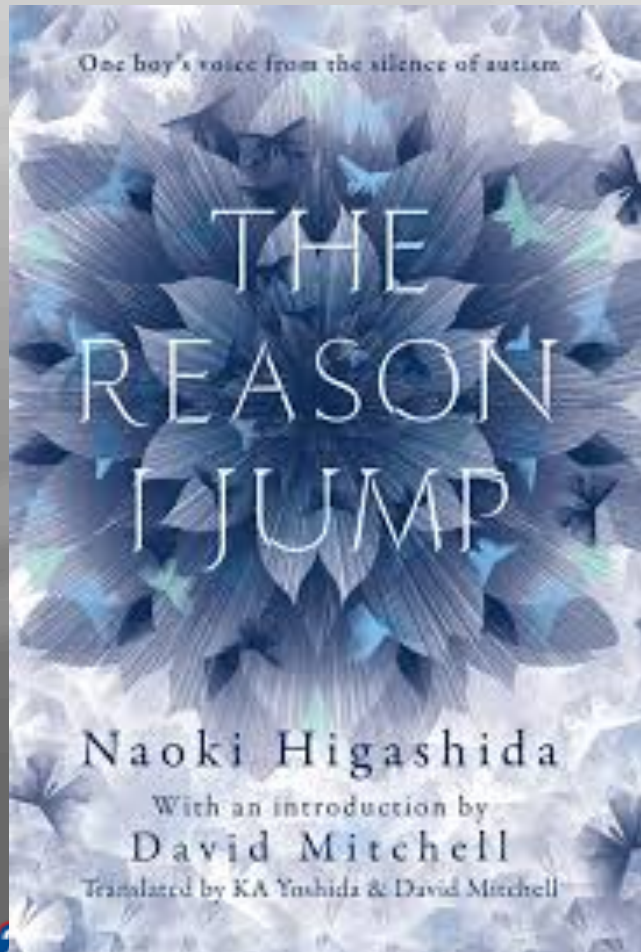
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# What does it *look* like?

- Communication deficits: verbal/nonverbal.
- Deficit in social-emotional reciprocity.
- Overly dependent on routine.
- Highly sensitive to changes in environment.
- Intensely focused on inappropriate items. Fixated interests.
- Concrete views and understandings. Inflexibility.
- Deficits in developing and understanding relationships.
- Hyper or Hypo reactivity to sensory input.



# The Reason I Jump



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*-Autism is not a processing disorder, it is a whole different operating system...*



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# Facts about ASD

- Affects 1 in 88 children and 1 in 54 boys.
- Autism prevalence figures are growing.
- Fastest growing serious DD in the U.S.
- Costs a family \$60,000.00 on average annually.
- Receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases.
- Boys are nearly 5x more likely than girls to have Autism.
- No medical detection or cure for Autism.





# Benefits of Physical Activity for Individuals with Autism

- More than half of children with ASD are overweight or at risk.
- Improvement of motor functioning.
- Decrease BMI.
- Increase balance, speed, agility, strength, etc.
- Decrease frequency of negative, self-stimulating behaviors.
- Decrease aggressive and self injurious behaviors.
- Improve attention.
- Develop social skills.



# The Game: What is Soccer?

- A competitive game, made difficult by the opponent.
- Has an objective to achieve; to win the game.
- Has rules to follow.
- It is free flowing.
- Player centered. Players must solve the problems presented.



# Challenges of Sport in Individuals with Autism

## In general...

- Team sports are generally NOT recommended.
- Soccer is the LEAST recommended of all team sports.
- Gross motor skills can be significantly delayed.

## Soccer is...

- Too **abstract** and random.
- Lack routine and repetition.
- Deficits in **problem solving** skills.
- Require a high degree of **social interaction**.
- Requires a high degree of **verbal and nonverbal communication**.



# Top Sports Recommended for Individuals with ASD

- Swimming
- Track and Field
- Bowling
- Basketball\*\*
- Golf
- Rock Climbing
- Martial Arts
- Hiking
- Horseback Riding
  - Hippotherapy
- Bike Riding
- Gymnastics



# Making it work: Creating an Environment on the Soccer Field

- Consider developmental age, rather than chronological age.
- Mosston's Slanty Line Concept.
- Break complex skills into smaller tasks with greater organization and reward players regularly.
- Games based with individual goals.
- Work with the child's tendencies rather than against them.
- How will the physical space affect participation? How can you address this?
- "I" on the prize...

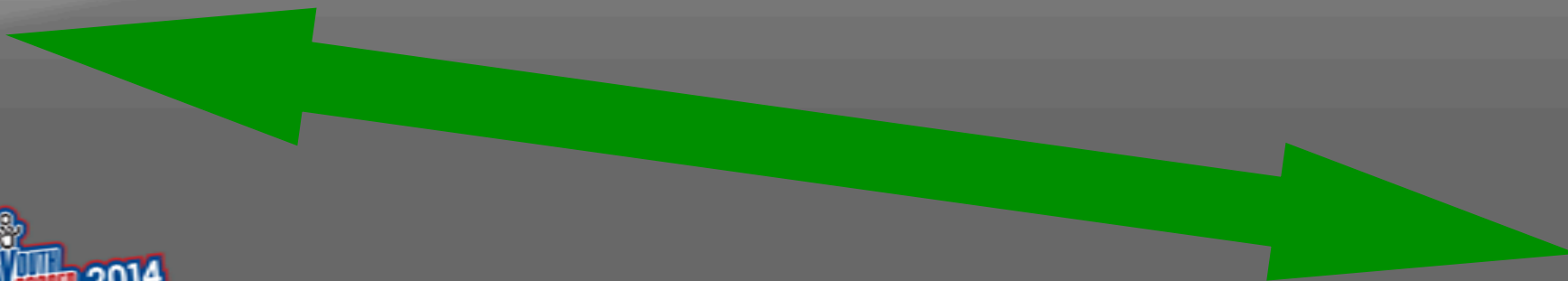


# Dr. Muska Mosston's Slanty Line Theory

Straight Line Approach



*Slanty Line*



# Mosston's Slanty Line

- Mosston's slanty-line concept is the belief that all children have a right to participate in activities at their own ability level.
- Children will not continue activities in which they are continually eliminated or wait to take turns.
- Given opportunities, children seek out challenges and take risks.



- *Individuals with Autism are the ultimate square pegs, and the problem with pounding a square peg into a round hole is not that the hammering is hard work, it's that you are destroying the peg.*

- Paul Collins



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# Making it work: Creating an Environment on the Soccer Field

- Must understand each child's level of severity and unique needs.
- Recognize that behavior is a function of the disability.
- Focus on using soccer as a means to enhance socialization, gross motor skills, attention to task.
- Focus on soccer as a means to decrease negative, stereotypical behaviors associated with ASD.
- Work with families to utilize available adaptive devices.



# Making it work: Creating an Environment on the Soccer Field

- Go ahead, plan an activity...
  - Diagram and describe an activity. Include rules and adaptations for your activity.
  - Work as an individual or within a small group.



# Making it work: Creating an Environment on the Soccer Field

TOPSoccer 301  
USYS Workshop 2014  
Philadelphia, PA

Activity Description	Activity Diagram	Coaching Points	Adaptations



Silly Brilliant Caring Mysterious  
Interesting Smart Funny Gifted  
Exceptional Zany **I** Brave Happy  
Intriguing **am** Talented Clever  
Sensitive Keen **more** Intelligent  
Curious **than** Gifted Goofy  
Unique Charismatic  
Blessed Amusing  
Smart **Autism** Wise  
Humorous Aware Bright Witty  
Inspirational Strong Kind Lively  
Loving Creative Spirited Human

A child with Autism  
is not ignoring you,  
they are simply  
waiting for you to  
enter their world.



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# References

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- [www.autisminreallife.com](http://www.autisminreallife.com)

