

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without [necessarily] accepting it."

--Aristotle,  
Greek philosopher

When considering residential placement for educational purposes or residential placement for a student with autism it is important to remember that an education is an 'entitlement' for the student and the residential component is an 'eligibility' matter. If, however, the student does not receive educational benefit from a day school program alone and it has been determined that only through residential services can the student obtain educational benefit then the residential component is necessary for the student to receive what he is entitled to; a free and appropriate education [FAPE].

Understanding the constructs of 'right and wrong'; 'legal and illegal'; versus 'correct and incorrect' and 'true and false' are quite a challenge for those on the autism spectrum. Right and Wrong, for example, have more of a social foundation, call it social consensus, and therefore can seem quite alien to a person with autism. People with autism tend to think of things as being 'correct or incorrect'/'true or false'; coming from a physical science foundation if you will. They also have difficulties fathoming some of the court rulings of 'legal or illegal'; especially if the law is based upon 'right and wrong'. If the law is based upon physical constructs, i.e., correct or incorrect and true and false, they are more likely to understand and adhere to such rulings. For example, laws forbidding the viewing or ownership of child pornography, but not pornography with adults, seems incongruent for some on the Spectrum; they would think in concrete terms of 'either pornography is something that is correct to view or own, or it is incorrect to view or own'.

'Sinful and Righteous' also can enter into the picture when considering the responses of people on the autism spectrum. If, for example, a person has found comfort in the 'rules' set forth in the Bible, Koran or other religious doctrine then they might be more inclined to follow the 'letter' of the commandment as opposed to the 'spirit' of the commandment. This may sound counterintuitive when considering the posits set forth above because 'commandments' tend to be viewed as having 'social constructs'. This is true but herein lies the difference; 'Commandments' are hard and fast and redundantly presented 'rules', rules set forth not by social consensus but set forth by 'God'. 'God' is not an entity that a religious person on the Spectrum dares to challenge.

The argumentative nature of some people on the Spectrum can be traced to these matters as well as the perceived 'paranoia' that some folk present. People with autism will argue with others; acquaintances, family members and supervisors, because they are trying to get to 'correct' and the person they are interacting with is operating under what's 'right'. For example, the boy who read that the sun's ultraviolet rays can cause skin cancer and therefore wants to cover up all his exposed skin, to the dismay of his mother, may argue and fight with his mother even though his mother tells him it's okay to have exposure to the sun, but not too much, and, that he will be made fun of by his classmates and he will be uncomfortable if he goes to school when it is 85 degrees out and he is dressed like he lives in the arctic. Or, in the case of 'perceived' paranoia, they can begin to think that the 'world is against them/out to get them' as they view a construct as 'incorrect' and society has consented that it is

'right'. For example, they may view gay relations as 'not right/incorrect' yet there are laws protecting such relationships and segments of society that 'embrace/feel it's right' to have such relationships. These examples represent 'truth' challenges that can be very troublesome for a person on the spectrum and for those who are interacting with them or caring for them.