

Ejercicios resueltos > Write in your own words

Pointing the Finger

A child's future really may be written in his hands-not in the creases of his palms but in the relative lengths of his fingers. A report just published in *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* suggests that people with autism have ring fingers that are abnormally long compared with their index fingers.

Children with autism have trouble interacting with other people. Both their verbal and their gesture-based communication is poor, and they often have low intelligence. Early symptoms -a failure to point at things, follow the gaze of someone else, or engage in pretend play- are often obvious by the tender age of 18 months. About one child in 500 suffers from the condition.

Two British researchers, who have studied what fingers can indicate about everything from fertility to sexual preference, have observed 72 autistic children and 23 with Asperger's syndrome, a related condition in which the individual's intelligence is not affected.

The scientists photocopied the children's hands, and carefully measured the lengths of their fingers from the copies. They worked out the ratio of the length of the index finger to the length of the ring finger for each child, and compared it with those of their relatives.

The researchers found that autistic children had extremely long ring fingers compared with their index fingers. Children with Asperger's also had abnormal index-to-ring finger ratios, though less so than autistics. Even the unaffected relatives of the autistic children had ratios that differed significantly from the average lengths.

In your own words and based on the ideas in the text, answer the following questions. (?)

a) *Why are the British researchers studying fingers? Explain*

Two researchers from Britain have studied that fingers can indicate many things, such as fertility and sexual preference. Now, they are studying the length of fingers and the ratio between the length of the index and ring fingers because they think that it may be related to autism and a similar syndrome, the Asperger's syndrome.

Ayuda: la respuesta la encontramos en los tres últimos párrafos, en los que se nos señala brevemente los estudios anteriores de los investigadores, se nos presenta su proyecto actual y se nos explica las conclusiones del estudio.

Vocabulario: *such as:* como; *similar:* parecido

b) *According to the text, what cannot autistic children do?*

According to the text, babies with autism cannot point at things or follow someone else's gaze, nor can they engage in pretend play. In addition to this, when they are children they have difficulties interacting with others due to the fact that they have a low intelligence and that their ability to communicate by gestures is very limited.

Ayuda: la respuesta la encontramos en el segundo párrafo que nos explica que los niños autistas no son capaces de señalar objetos, seguir con la mirada a alguien o jugar. Además, según el texto, los niños autistas tienen problemas en relacionarse con los demás debido a su incapacidad de comunicarse gestualmente y a su baja inteligencia.

Vocabulario: *In addition to this:* además de esto; *due to the fact:* debido al hecho; *gestures:* gestos