PPS Autism Services

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Components of an ASD Eligibility

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This November Newsletter will address the components of an Autism Spectrum Disorder Eligibility. It will include some practical tips and reminders about the components and more.

This newsletter will include:
- Detailed Components of an ASD Eligibility
- Complex Evaluations
- Approved and No Longer Approved Behavior Rating Tools
- Pre-Referral Considerations when ASD is Suspected
- Determining a Student is No Longer Eligible for ASD
- Additional Resources for ASD Eligibility and Assessment

Please contact your Autism Consultant for any questions around completing an ASD eligibility.

Components of an ASD Eligibility

A Developmental Profile
The purpose of this component is to document historical and current characteristics of ASD associated with the four areas. Components may include:

- Developmental interview of parent or caregiver
- Review of records (medical reports, previous evaluations, current or previous IEPs, other relevant reports
- Interview with teachers and staff

Observations
- Three observations (minimum of 20 minutes each).
- Over more than one day and in multiple settings
- One to include direct interaction with student

Physician Statement:
- Provides the status of the student's general health
- Identifies other conditions (such as hearing loss, TBI, etc.) that may be confused with ASD, when ASD is not actually present
- Identifies medical conditions or genetic syndromes that may (or may not) be associated with ASD

A Communication Assessment to Address Communication Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder
Functional communication assessments are generally more functional and qualitative than those for traditional language evaluations, which are more qualitative and concise. Standardized measures are not required, but can be used where appropriate. Functional communication components may include:

- Pragmatic checklists – informed by your observation(s) and interactions with the student, and checklists completed by classroom teacher to rate functional communication within the classroom
- Standardized measures of pragmatics and social thinking
- Informal measures: Double interview, narrative sampling, language sampling, etc.
- Standardized measures of language content and form when appropriate (i.e., suspect other language deficits, or to document discrepancy within the broad domain of "language."

Components of an ASD Eligibility Continued

Behavior Rating Tools:
See following page

Documentation of Impact of Disability:
Consider all of the following-
- Academic areas
- Non-academic areas
- Progress in meeting goals based on the general education curriculum
- Performance on State-wide and local assessments

Documentation of Educational Needs:
Additional information to help identify specific skills, strengths, and needs for specialized instruction-
- How does the child learn new information?
- What is reinforcing for the child?
- What does the child find aversive?
- What are the child's interest areas?

Is your Autism Consultant available to help with Complex ASD evaluations?

Yes
- The team has completed all of the evaluation components and continues to have difficulty making the eligibility determination.
- The student being evaluated is a safety risk to him/herself or to others.
- The team needs support differentiating between eligibility categories. *(Please note that the ASD consultants are only able to provide information on how a student does or does not demonstrate characteristics of ASD.)*
- The team is considering determining the student no longer eligible for ASD.

No
- As a standard part of the evaluation process.
- As an additional member of the IEP/assessment team.

Behavior Rating Scales when Determining Eligibility for ASD:

Although the TAPS (2009) lists a number of acceptable Behavior Rating Tools, that field was narrowed considerably by the Oregon Commission on Autism (2010). Please see the following table for a list of what tools are and aren't recognized by both the state and Portland Public Schools as "research-based, autism-specific instrument(s)." (p.31)

Approved Behavior Rating Scales	No Longer Approved Behavior Rating Scales
• Children's Autism Rating Scale – standard and high functioning, 2nd edition (CARS2-ST, CARS2- HF) – **used in the majority of assessments** • Autism Screening Instrument for Educational Planning, 3rd Edition (ASIEP-3) – interaction assessment and sample of vocal behavior) – **used rarely, consult from ASD team is recommended** • Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) – **used only under special circumstances, and should always include an Autism Consultant**	• Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) • Pervasive Developmental Disorder Behavior Inventory (PDDBI) • The Social Communication Question (SCQ) • Krug Asperger's Disorder Index (KADI) • Gilliam Asperger Disorder Scale (GADS) • Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)

Remember, the CARS2 is:
- A summative tool done after all data has been collected, and assessments completed.
- Only given to families as a non-scored questionnaire (CARS2-QPC.)
- Completed by the evaluation team as a group prior to the eligibility meeting. This is about consensus, not necessarily agreement.
- Scored based on qualitative or quantitative data. All scores are backed up by the information gathered throughout the assessment.
- A tool that provides a standardized score, although it only documents characteristics of autism, not time/intensity or discrepancies. Therefore, the CARS2 is not a definitive tool in determining eligibility, simply one more piece of information to be considered in painting a picture of the student.

Pre-referral Considerations when ASD is Suspected

While most evaluators feel comfortable in our ability to identify characteristics associated with "classic autism," teasing out characteristics associated with high functioning autism can present specific challenges. When a child is demonstrating educational challenges in the school environment, the pre-referral team will want to consider the following:

- It is not permissible to use one instrument to "screen-out" ASD
- An effective pre-referral process can best address whether to recommend pursuing ASD evaluation when that process can demonstrate concerns in each of the four defining areas.
    1. Impairments in communication
    2. Impairments in social interactions
    3. Patterns of behavior that are restrictive, repetitive or stereotypic
    4. Unusual sensory response.

A sound process in collecting this information is one that utilizes multiple sources. In addition to observation, and teacher interview, standardized "screeners" like the Social Communication Questionnaire, the Children's Communication Checklist, and the Social Responsiveness Scale can provide a team with pertinent information. Be sure and request permission via the BSC-2 form prior to observing the student or administering one of the above instruments. And most importantly, a conversation about the school's concerns regarding the student's challenges needs happen prior to sending the BSC-2 home.

Determining a Student No Longer Eligible for Autism Spectrum Disorder

As an educational eligibility, there may be a time when a student's school team and/or family question whether or not ASD continues to accurately describe the student's educational needs. As outlined in the TAPS (2009, revised 3.2010), this requires a full evaluation – all components must be completed anew.

"When you are considering changing an established eligibility, all components need to be reevaluated. The team must have current information concerning the functioning of the student. *The team would follow the procedures for an initial evaluation.*" (TAPS 2009, p. 60 – emphasis added)

A file review may offer valuable historical information, but is inadequate to determine ineligibility, as previous testing indicated characteristics of ASD in the areas of communication, social interactions, restrictive/repetitive/stereotypic actions, and unusual responses to sensory information that are discrepant with development over time/with intensity.

Additional Resources for ASD Eligibility & Assessment

Here are a few additional resources for you to check out or explore for more information about ASD Eligibilities and Assessment.

Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS2)
The autism team has access several CARS2 manuals. The manual provides some additional information about the questions within the CARS2. Contact your ASD Consultant to check out a CARS2 manual.
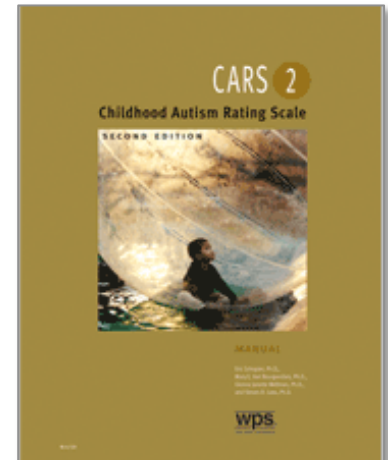
Autism Screening Instrument for Educational Planning – Third Edition (ASIEP-3)
The ASIEP-3 kit is available to be checked out through Judy Gillette.

Technical Assistance Paper (Fall 2009 – Revised March 2010)
   --a link to this document will be included on our website --
The overall goal of this technical assistance paper is to assist Oregon's educational teams to appropriately identify and make eligible individuals who are suspected to have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This document will assist teams to use evidence-based evaluation practices, to complete the eligibility determination, to identify the student's current level of educational performance, to identify needs, and to link that information to the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP).