

AUTISM DOCUMENT -

Section 2.IC 20-26-5-32.4 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JANUARY 10, 2010]:
Sec. 32.4 The Department of Education shall create a document explaining aspects of autism including behaviors that students with autism may exhibit. Said document is to be distributed to school corporations for distribution to noncertified employees (as defined in IC 20-29-2-11). This document has been created to fulfill this requirement.

As of December, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the estimate that one in 110 children has autism. The CDC found that autism affects boys at a rate of about one in 70, while it affects girls at a rate of about one in 375. It is very likely that all school personnel already know students with autism.

In a school setting, students qualify for special education services through a case conference committee decision based on the results of an educational evaluation. It must be determined by a case conference committee that the student's disability adversely affects the student's academic and/or functional performance. This determination may be different from a medical diagnosis. In Article 7, the Indiana Special Education Rule, autism is defined as follows:

511 IAC 7-41-1 Autism spectrum disorder

Sec. 1. (a) Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental disability that includes autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome, and other pervasive developmental disorders, as described in the current version of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The disability is generally evident before three (3) years of age and significantly affects verbal, nonverbal, or pragmatic communication and social interaction skills and results in an adverse effect on the student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated include the following:

(1) Engagement in:

- (A) repetitive activities; and
- (B) stereotyped movements.

(2) Resistance to:

- (A) environmental change; or
- (B) change in daily routines.

(3) Unusual responses to sensory experiences.

(b) Unless the characteristics of autism spectrum disorder are demonstrated to a greater degree than is normally attributed to these disabilities, autism spectrum disorder does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily by: (1) an emotional disability; (2) blindness or low vision; (3) deaf-blindness; or (4) a cognitive disability.

Although this is the general description of this eligibility category, it is important to understand that this condition will look different from one student to another. For example, one student may be hypersensitive to loud sounds while another student may react strongly to a smell that most would not notice. Repetitive behaviors may include particular hand movements for one student while it might manifest as a more complex set of routine events for another student. A student may be fully compliant when faced with a major change while becoming very anxious about something that may seem inconsequential. To complicate matters, sensitivities and behaviors often change for students as they mature.

Students with autism require different types and amount of assistance in the educational environment. A student may require minimal accommodations or may require support from an aide or assistant. It is the expectation that all school personnel who work with a given student with autism have the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately respond to each student as an individual. Just memorizing the definition of autism is not enough.

511 IAC 7-42-6 Developing an individualized education program...

... (c) The CCC must also consider the following special factors when applicable:

- (1) Positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address any of the student's behaviors that impede the student's learning or the learning of others.
- (2) Any supports, under 511 IAC 7-35-2, necessary to provide public agency personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the student's IEP.

Each student with a disability must have a teacher of record identified. This licensed educator is responsible for providing support personnel with the information that they need in order to anticipate the needs of a student with a disability and respond appropriately when the student behaves in a way that requires a supportive response.

511 IAC 7-32-97 "Teacher of record" defined

"Teacher of record" (TOR) is the single special education teacher to whom a student with a disability is assigned. The TOR shall:

- (4) Ensure the student's IEP is accessible to each of the: (A) student's teachers; (B) related services providers; and (C) other services providers...
- (5) Inform each teacher and provider of his or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's IEP.
- (6) Ensure that: (A) supplementary aids and services; (B) program modifications; and (C) supports for school personnel; are provided in accordance with each student's IEP.
- (7) Serve as a consultant and resource person to all other personnel providing services to the student.

There are many helpful links for additional information on autism including:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/AutismFactSheet.pdf

http://www.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Autism_101_Fact_Sheet_1_3_.pdf?docID=83363

http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_home

http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism/detail_autism.htm

<http://www.autism.com/autism/index.htm>

