AUTISM PROGRAM QUALITY INDICATORS

_____   _____   _____

Administrative Unit   School Year   Evaluation Site/Student

COLORADO
Department of Education

Administrators, Educators, Parents and Support Staff,

There has been a significant rise in the number of students being identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), not only across our state but across the country. Special education and general education teachers and related service professionals are increasingly seeing students with ASD in their classrooms. Because ASD is a disorder with such a very broad spectrum the experiences and needs of students with autism will vary depending on how their autism impacts their learning.

Just as the prevalence of ASD is increasing so too is information about how to teach and support these students. Some of this information is based on scientific and effective-practice methodology; some is not. Thus, there is a significant need for application of educational methods that are most effective and that bode best for agreed-upon student outcomes. In this connection this document is intended to be a guide for teachers, principals, special education directors, superintendents and anyone with the responsibility of ensuring that students with ASD receive an effective and relevant education. The Quality Indicators may be used to evaluate the program provided for a single student or a classroom of students relative to ensuring that these students are provided a comprehensive and evidence-based program.

Relative to its intended use, this document was designed with multiple purposes in mind. A teacher may use it to evaluate a student's program to ensure that all recommended components are in place. Or it may be used by building principals to determine if the students with ASD in their building are receiving appropriate programming and if the staff has the resources and professional development assets needed to work effectively. These Quality Indicators may also be used by educational leaders, including superintendents, special education directors, Autism Team members, and so forth, to determine if systems are in place to support a high-quality educational program.

Although the indicators are specific to the needs of children and youth with ASD they are built on the foundation of an overall strong and well-designed special education program. Thus, this document does not address generic program elements such as how to write an IEP, Response to Intervention, appropriate inclusion, and other standard special education service practices.

We acknowledge the New York Autism Network for their original work, *Autism Quality Program Indicators*, which served as a guide for this document. Together we can all continue to make quality program improvements for students with autism spectrum disorders.

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Autism Quality Indicators
Rubric for Evaluation

Score	Domain	Indicator	Component
FI	<u>Fully Implemented</u> - Every **indicator** in the domain is implemented at the fully implemented level *(in all settings within all curricula, with all staff members, and for all students).*	Every **component** of the **indicator** is fully implemented *(in all settings within all curricula, with all staff members, and for all students).*	Every **aspect** of the **component** is fully implemented *(in all settings within all curricula, with all staff members, and for all students).*
PI	<u>Partially Implemented</u> – Every **indicator** is addressed with at least one indicator not at the FI level AND half or more at PI level.	Every **component** is addressed with at least one **component** not at the FI level AND half or more at the PI level.	Every **aspect** is addressed, with at least one **aspect** not at the FI level AND half or more at PI level.
EI	<u>Emerging Implementation</u> – Not all **indicators** are addressed but at least one **indicator** is at the PI or FI level AND half or more are at EI level.	Not all **components** are addressed but at least one is at the PI or FI level AND half or more of the items are at EI level.	Not all **aspects** are addressed but at least one is at the PI or FI level AND half or more at EI level.
NI	<u>Not Implemented</u> – No evidence of **domain** being implemented OR half or more at the NI level.	No evidence of **indicator** being implemented OR half or more items are NI level.	No evidence of **component** being implemented OR half or more items are NI level.

Domain = Six domains
1. **Individual Evaluation and Individualized Education Program**
2. **Curriculum, Instruction and Methodology**
3. **Review and Monitoring of Progress and Outcomes**
4. **Family Involvement and Support**
5. **Transition Planning**
6. **Behavior**

Indicators = each numbered item under the domain
Components = each lettered item under the indicator

INSTRUCTIONS:

Read each section, and begin scoring from the component level, then move on to indicator level, and finish with the domain. Score each box accordingly: NI = 0, EI = 1, PI=2, FI=3. In the gray box, indicate with an X whether you observed (O) the item or the item was reported (R) to you by team members.

INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION and INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION and INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM: Thorough diagnostic, developmental, and educational assessments using a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach are used to identify students' strengths and needs. This evaluation leads to the development of a thorough and appropriate IEP.						
1) Evaluations are conducted by a multidisciplinary team comprised of qualified personnel who are familiar with the characteristics and response patterns of students with autism spectrum disorders. Evaluations use a variety of measures and sources of information including:						
a) appropriate standardized, developmental, and observational methods (e.g., WISC, BASC, Vineland, FBA, Developmental Profile-3, ADIR)						
b) autism-specific measures (e.g., CARS-2, ADOS-2, GARS-3, ASDS)						
c) review and consider outside reports, records, testing (e.g., DSM-5 diagnostic report, include Co-Morbid Disorders)						
d) parent and family input						
e) review of data on recent progress and present levels of performance (e.g., IEP quarterly progress reports)						
2) For both verbal and nonverbal students, speech and language evaluations use standardized measures, parental report, observation, and spontaneous language samples to assess:						
a) receptive language (e.g., CELF-5, PLS-5)						
b) expressive language (e.g., CELF-5, PLS-5)						
c) use of symbol systems (e.g., INCH by PRO-ED, objects, photos, tangible symbols, picture communication symbols, sign, writing)						
d) use of people as means to ends (e.g., engages people to gain desired objects, people actions, joint attention, initiation)						

INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION and INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
e) use of immediate or delayed echolalia for communicative function						
f) pragmatic functions (e.g., Communication Matrix by Rowland, Conversational Effectiveness Profile, opportunities to request throughout the day, comment about events, protest, brag, question)						
3) Academic access is linked to students' strengths and needs, identified by evaluations conducted by a multidisciplinary team comprised of qualified personnel. Evaluations use a variety of measures and sources of information including:						
a) curriculum based measurements (e.g., ABLLS-R, AFLLS, VB-MAPP, i-Ready, STAR Program)						
b) executive functioning (e.g., organizing, planning, prioritizing, problem solving, flexibility, BRIEF, TOPS)						
c) utilizing or considering area of particular interest or intense focus						
4) Social Interaction of students is assessed through formal and informal observations and is targeted for improvement through:						
a) identify direct instruction needs specific to ASD need (e.g., 1:1, small groups, UCC, Autism Social Skills Profile, SRS, Bellini Social Skills Checklist)						
b) addressing social code of conduct (e.g., hidden curriculum taught in 1st hour, respect personal bubble space)						
5) Behavior and emotional development are assessed by qualified personnel and specific strategies are in place, including:						
a) Use of self-regulation and coping skills taught (e.g., Incredible 5-Point Scale)						
b) Use of emotions receptively and expressively						
6) Other relevant information is identified and addressed in individualized programming, such as the following:						

INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION and INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
a) Sensory needs (e.g., Sensory Profile, sensory screeners, sensory diet)						
b) Technology related supports (e.g., low/high tech communication)						

COMMENTS:

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION and METHODOLOGY	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION and METHODOLOGY: The programming is based on evidence or research-based curriculum, instruction, and methodology that address the significant skill deficits of students with autism spectrum disorders in least restrictive environments. Additionally, the programming is individualized and linked to state standards and access skills. Decisions regarding curriculum changes/modifications are based on reliable/consistent data-collection methods. The programming provides a variety of developmental, functional and **age-appropriate** activities and experiences.						
1) Curriculum and activities focus on maximizing appropriate independent functioning, maintenance and generalization in home, vocational, and community settings.						
2) Curriculum emphasizes (when applicable for pre-k-21) the development of skills across multiple domains, including:						
a) communication and language; functional communication system for students who have emerging communication skills (e.g., pragmatics, conversation, perspective taking).						
b) social relationships (e.g. supported interaction with typically developing peers, natural environment teaching) to include symbolic play, imagination, and creativity (e.g. Legos, cartooning, graphic design).						
c) curriculum emphasizes the development of social interaction skills with adults and peers for a range of occasions and environments (e.g., Social Skills Curriculum, Incredible Flexible You, Social Skills in Our Schools, Second Step).						
d) meaningful, active engagement of the students; instructional activities are appropriately paced to eliminate unnecessary "break-time, free-time".						
e) self-regulation and self-monitoring (e.g., contingency mapping, self-talk, setting goals, monitoring & delivering reinforcement, and analyzing choices).						
f) academic skills to meet the content standards and address the expanded benchmarks.						
g) vocational skills (e.g., responsibility for materials, self-care, use of work systems, and community-based instruction).						
h) self-determination skills (e.g., choice making, problem solving, self-observation/evaluation, and reinforcement).						

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION and METHODOLOGY	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
Activities, materials, instruction, and reinforcement are age-appropriate and incorporate students' areas of interest.						
A variety of instructional formats are utilized, such as direct instruction, small group instruction, student-initiated interactions, teacher-directed interactions, independent work, play, and peer-mediated instruction.						
Meaningful instruction takes place in the general education environment with typical peers to the extent appropriate.						
Environments are initially simplified, as needed, to help students recognize relevant information (area is free of distractions –visual and auditory, and activity areas are clearly labeled and identifiable, etc.).						
Environmental supports (e.g., the use of visual schedules) are provided that facilitate the students' ability to anticipate change and predict events and activities.						

COMMENTS:

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
REVIEW AND MONITORING OF PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES: Relative to the needs of students with ASD, measurable, ongoing and systematically collected and monitored student achievement data are used to make decisions regarding educational programming.						
1) Programming provides regular and ongoing developmental and academic assessment of each student's progress on his/her specific IEP goals and objectives. Written data are gathered reliably and consistently on a frequent (daily or weekly) and consistent basis and utilized as a means **to inform and guide instruction**.						

COMMENTS:

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT: Parents, guardians, siblings and family members are recognized and valued as full partners in the development and implementation of IEPs for children with ASD.						
1) Parents, guardians, siblings and family members are supported as active participants in all aspects of their child's ongoing evaluation and education.						
2) The program makes available services, which:						
a) provide parents, guardians, siblings and family members with information about child development, and/or specific instructional strategies being utilized in the classroom.						
b) foster coordination of efforts between school and home (e.g., daily communication system).						
3) Parents, guardians, siblings and family members are provided with information about school events, educational conferences, workshops, support groups, neighborhood events, etc.						
4) Parents, guardians, siblings and family members are assisted in accessing comprehensive services often needed by students with autism spectrum disorders, such as respite, in-home behavior support, home health care, transportation, DVR, CCB, etc. Collaboration and communication with outside service providers and agencies is evident.						

COMMENTS:

TRANSITION	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
TRANSITION: A coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities (IDEA). Relative to ASD, parents/guardians, professionals and students work collaboratively in planning transitions from one activity to another or one environment to another.						
1) Transition planning:						
a) begins while students are in their current educational placements.						
b) includes instruction and supports to help students learn and adapt to new environments.						
c) provides the students and families with the opportunity to visit the new setting (e.g., meet teachers, view classrooms and/or new environments).						
d) is a collaborative effort between the two settings.						
2) Planning includes teacher preparation, ongoing professional development and other supports to ensure success of the students in the new environments, so students' programming moves from level to level.						
3) Self-determination skills are taught so students advocate for themselves in new and familiar environments. Students are taught self-advocacy skills to lead their own IEP meetings or participate to the greatest extent possible (e.g., presenting their own strengths and interests and/or summarizing goals from their previous years in a variety of formats utilizing technology and programs like SD Futures).						
4) Every student develops and leaves school with a resume or portfolio.						
5) Students are provided instruction and experiences that support the development of positive work skills.						
a) Assessments are used to determine individual skills & interests for future employment (e.g., interests' inventories and direct observation of student interest).						
b) Students are provided with instruction in a variety of work experiences and work sites (e.g., apprenticeships).						
c) Students utilize natural and visual support and work systems in a variety of work environments.						
d) Students and staff provide student specific & ASD information to business personnel at work experience and employment sites.						

COMMENTS:

BEHAVIOR	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
BEHAVIOR: Relative to the students with autism spectrum disorder, positive behavior intervention supports are used to address challenging behavior.						
1) A problem-solving process exists to determine if a student's behavior interferes with their ability to access learning and social experiences indicating the need for a FBA.						
2) A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) involving and including multiple methods (e.g., direct observations, functional assessment, rating scales – parent, teacher, student, and interviews) are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team and is used to direct intervention planning, from which a Behavior Support Plan (BSP) is developed.						
3) The FBA identifies both immediate antecedents (e.g., request to perform a task) and more distant setting events (e.g., poor sleeping habits) that increase challenging behaviors.						
4) The FBA identifies and tests one or more hypothesized functions (e.g., access to tangibles, access to attention, escape/avoidance, sensory/automatic) for challenging behaviors. Based on the findings of hypothesis testing a suitable intervention plan is designed and implemented.						
5) Behavioral goals focus on increasing positive behaviors/interactions instead of exclusively decreasing undesirable behaviors.						
6) Environmental accommodations and adaptations are used to prevent or minimize occurrences of the problem behavior.						
7) Instruction in replacement behaviors, self-monitoring and cognitive based methods (e.g., social narratives, cognitive behavior management, self-advocating) is routinely incorporated into behavior support plans.						
8) Reinforcement is based on positive supports and strategies that are determined by the individual students' needs and preferences.						
9) A reinforcement inventory is used and regularly updated to identify motivating items and activities.						
10) A clear data collection system is established within the BSP to monitor progress toward increasing positive behavior, as well as a timeframe for determining progress.						

BEHAVIOR	FI (3)	PI (2)	EI (1)	NI (0)	O	R
11) Behavior support plans focus on long-term outcomes (e.g., making new friends, participating in extracurricular activities, self-determination skills- choice making, problem solving, decision making, goal setting and attainment).						

COMMENTS: