

The following slides provide guidance on the eligibility category, definition, and criteria for “child with a Autism Spectrum Disorder” in Colorado public schools.

These slides may also be found within the Comprehensive Overview Training PowerPoint, which provides guidance on every eligibility category.

If these slides are used as a self-standing training tool, it is recommended that they be supplemented with the posted slides specific to the HB11-1277 Overview, which can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Training_ECEAEligibility.asp

The HB11-1277 Overview slides will detail the history and timelines of implementation of the new eligibility categories, definitions, and criteria.

Together We Can

Vision

All students in Colorado will become educated and productive citizens capable of succeeding in a globally competitive workforce.

Mission

The mission of CDE is to shape, support, and safeguard a statewide education system that prepares all students for success in a globally competitive world.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- The following slides have been vetted internally within the Colorado Department of Education for training purposes of the definition and eligibility criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- If you make any changes to these slides, please acknowledge that they are different from this vetted product and may no longer represent the viewpoint of the CDE.

Eligibility Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder

- It is recommended that the following training slides be used in conjunction with the post-HB11-1277 Eligibility Checklist for a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder, which can be found at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/IEP_Forms.asp

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism Spectrum Disorder
(formerly under Physical Disability / or called Autism)

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If there are any questions about the definition and eligibility criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder, please be in contact with Melinda Graham at graham_m@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6707 or Brooke Carson at carson_b@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6691.

If there are any questions about whether a specific child meets the established criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder, please be in contact with the administrative unit's Special Education Director.

2.08 (1) A child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a child with a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal social communication and social interaction, generally evidenced by the age of three. Other characteristics often associated with ASD are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental changes or changes in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

2.08 (1) (a) The Autism Spectrum Disorder prevents the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education as evidenced by at least one characteristic in each of the following three areas (*i.e.*, subsections (a)(i) through (a)(iii), below):

The following slides include the exact wording of a Child with a Visual Impairment, including Blindness eligibility criteria that are in the current *Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act 1 CCR 301-8*

2.08 (1) (a) (i) The child displays significant difficulties or differences or both in interacting with or understanding people and events. Examples of qualifying characteristics include, but are not limited to: significant difficulty establishing and maintaining social-emotional reciprocal relationships, including a lack of typical back and forth social conversation; and/or significant deficits in understanding and using nonverbal communication including eye contact, facial expression and gestures;

2.08 (1) (a) (ii) The child displays significant difficulties or differences which extend beyond speech and language to other aspects of social communication, both receptively and expressively. Examples of qualifying characteristics include, but are not limited to: an absence of verbal language or, if verbal language is present, typical integrated use of eye contact and

body language is lacking; and/or significant difficulty sharing, engaging in imaginative play and developing and maintaining friendships; and

2.08 (1) (a) (iii) The child seeks consistency in environmental events to the point of exhibiting significant rigidity in routines and displays marked distress over changes in the routine, and/or has a significantly persistent preoccupation with or attachment to objects or topics.

2.08 (1) (b) The following characteristics may be present in a child with ASD, but shall not be the sole basis for determining that a child is an eligible child with ASD if the child does not also meet the eligibility criteria set out in subsection (a) of this rule, above.

2.08 (1) (b) (i) The child exhibits delays or regressions in motor, sensory, social or learning skills.

2.08 (1) (b) (ii) The child exhibits precocious or advanced skill development, while other skills may develop at or below typical developmental rates.

2.08 (1) (b) (iii) The child exhibits atypicality in thinking processes and in generalization. The child exhibits strengths in concrete thinking, awareness and judgment. Peseverative thinking and impaired ability to process symbolic information is present.

2.08 (1) (b) (iv) The child exhibits unusual, inconsistent, repetitive or unconventional responses to sounds, sights, smells, tastes, touch or movement.

2.08 (1) (b) (v) The child's capacity to use objects in an age appropriate or functional manner is absent or delayed. The child has difficulty displaying a range of interests or imaginative activities or both.

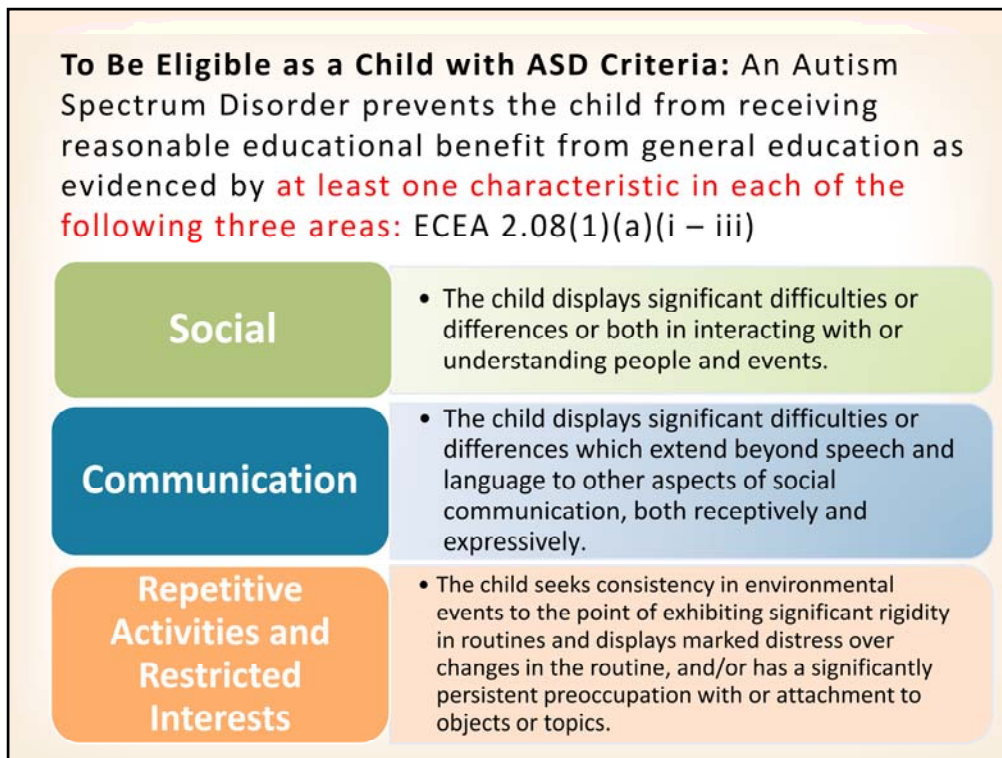
2.08 (1) (b) (vi) The child exhibits stereotypical motor movements, which include repetitive use of objects and/or vocalizations, echolalia, rocking, pacing or spinning self or objects.

ECEA Criteria to Determine an Eligibility

Definition: A child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non verbal social communication and social interaction, generally evidenced by the age of three. Other characteristics often associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental changes or changes in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. **ECEA 2.08(1)**

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The definition is taken from the IDEA definition of autism with some changes to be consistent with the new definition in the DSM-V. The State Autism Task Force with additional school administrators determined that this definition written in 1992 and based on the DSM III-R is vague and outdated. It was decided to add additional definition to the ECEA rules that more explicitly defined Autism Spectrum Disorders. It was also decided to use the term Autism Spectrum Disorder in place of "Autism" since that is prevalent in the literature and will be the new term used in the DSM-V due to be published in May. There will no longer be separate categories for Autistic Disorder, Asperger Syndrome and Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified.



The triad of impairments has been used to describe the autism spectrum disorders. Since it is prevalent in the literature and the DSM-IV-R that there must be characteristics in each of these core areas, the three areas were retained knowing there is overlap in social communication and the DSM-V has collapsed these into one.

A student must have characteristics in each of the areas. When evaluating the receptive and expressive language of high functioning students, it is the functional use in the context of the educational setting that is where the breakdowns occur not necessarily within the context of a structured assessment. Students often have difficulty expressing their thoughts or explaining situations and misunderstand the expressions of others especially if the person is using inferences, idioms or other more abstract language.

Social

The child displays significant difficulties or differences or both in interacting with or understanding people and events. Examples of qualifying characteristics include, but are not limited to:

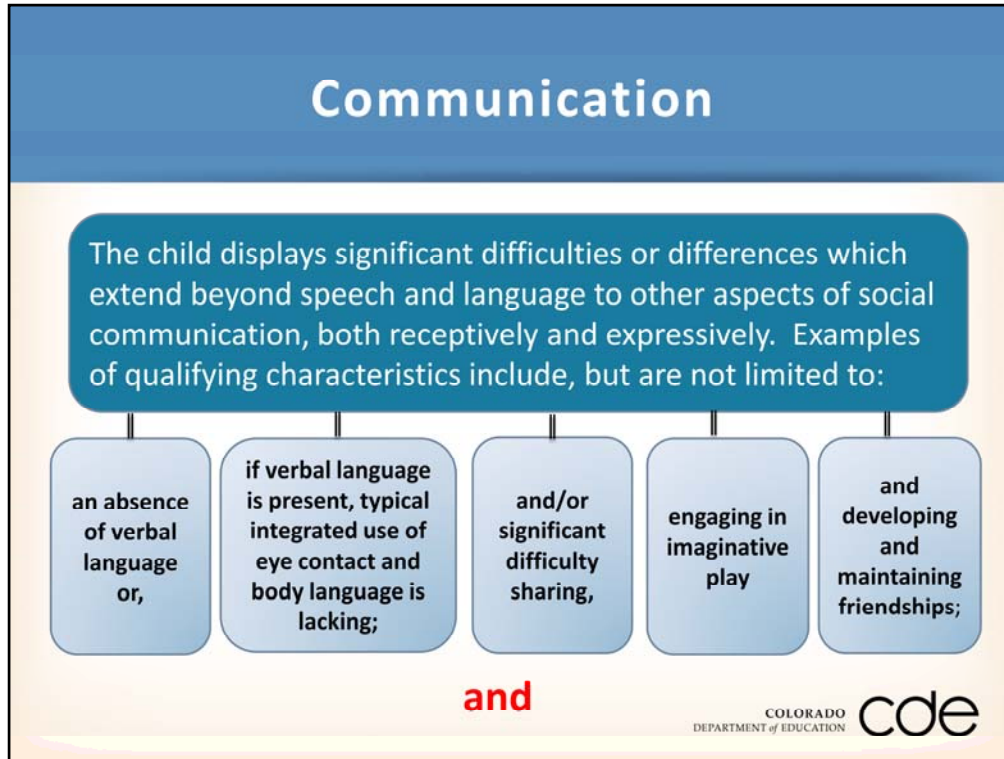
Significant difficulty establishing and maintaining social-emotional reciprocal relationships, including a lack of typical back and forth social conversation

And/or significant deficits in understanding and using nonverbal communication including eye contact, facial expression and gestures

and

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In each area there are numerous ways that a student may be impacted. The general definition is followed by a few examples to help clarify the definition. This is far from an exhaustive list and the features a particular student may have in the area of social relatedness may not be listed, therefore the phrase, “but are not limited to” is used to indicate the student may qualify with features other than those listed but would still meet the general definition. A Guidance document is being developed to aid teams in assessing and further defining each area.



The area of communication has a wide range of challenges from students who are non-verbal and have cognitive impairment to high functioning students who have difficulty with pragmatics or the social use of language. While a student may score average to above average on Standardized assessments such as the CELF-5 or OWLS II with regards to language, they could still demonstrate an inability to use the language in a variety of situations. Therefore, it is necessary to observe the student in a variety of educational and social settings to find the challenges of the individual student.

Repetitive, Restricted Patterns of Interests and/or Activities

The child seeks consistency in environmental events to the point of exhibiting significant rigidity in routines and displays marked distress over changes in the routine, and/or has a significantly persistent preoccupation with or attachment to objects or topics.

This area includes the rigidity in thinking and shifting attention, difficulty with information processing, executive functioning and theory of mind or perspective taking.

Determining Eligibility

- There must be impact in each of these three areas to qualify with an Autism Spectrum Disorder
- On the Eligibility Checklist for ASD, if any of the above areas has a box checked “no” the student does not qualify and the team does not go on to the next set of indicators
- The 2.08(1)(b) section was added to identify other areas that may impact the students education but are not features that qualify the student.

Other Characteristics to be Considered (but not for eligibility)

ECEA 2.08(1)(b)

The child must meet each of the three eligibility criteria above to be eligible as a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. If the above criteria have been met, the following characteristics should be reviewed by the IEP team for further information about the ASD. These characteristics alone will not qualify a child as having an ASD:
Check all that apply.

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The following characteristics are often present with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and should be address as they can severely impact a students academic, social and emotional performance, but they shall not be used to determining that a child is an eligible child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Characteristics Continued

- **The child exhibits delays or regressions in motor, sensory, social or learning skills.**
- **The child exhibits precocious or advanced skill development, while other skills may develop at or below typical developmental rates.**
- **The child exhibits atypicality in thinking processes and in generalization. The child exhibits strengths in concrete thinking while difficulties are demonstrated in abstract thinking, awareness and judgment. Perseverative thinking and impaired ability to process symbolic information is present.**

Characteristics Continued

- **The child exhibits unusual, inconsistent, repetitive or unconventional responses to sounds, sights, smells, tastes, touch or movement**
- **The child's capacity to use objects in an age appropriate or functional manner is absent or delayed. The child has difficulty displaying a range of interests or imaginative activities or both.**

Considerations During Evaluation

- A child with a diagnosis of ASD will not qualify for special education services if specialized instruction is not needed
- A diagnosis may not be required to determine a student's eligibility with an ASD.
- A solid educational eligibility determination informs appropriate services.

- A 504 Plan may provide accommodations if needed

Specially Designed Instruction

- “Specially Designed Instruction” means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction to address the child's unique needs resulting from the disability and ensuring the child's access to the general curriculum so that he or she can meet the educational standards that apply to all children within jurisdiction of the public agency. 34 CFR 300.39 (b)(3).
- It involves providing instruction that is different from that provided to children without disabilities, based upon the eligible child's unique needs.

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To qualify as a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder, there must be evidence that the child cannot receive reasonable educational benefit from general education without specially designed instruction.

Essential Elements of an Evaluation

- **Developmental history**

- Age of first concern
- Adaptive skills
- Existence and establishment of routines
- Movement and motor skills including repetitive movements
- Ability to handle change
- Response to various types of sensory input

Guidance for the Educational Identification of Autism
Spectrum Disorders in Colorado

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Essential Elements of an Evaluation

- Medical history
- Family history
- Cognitive/developmental assessment
- Interview with teacher(s) and caregivers
- Observations by at least two people in at least two different environments (structured and unstructured) which includes engaging with the student in activities for social presses
- Administration of an assessment specifically developed to identify Autism Spectrum Disorders

Guidance for the Educational Identification of
Autism Spectrum Disorders in Colorado

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At least one assessment specific to the characteristics of ASD, such as the ADOS – 2 or ADI-R, must be administered to document the characteristics of the individual student.

To Be Eligible as ASD, the Child Must Meet All Three Conditions

1. There must be documented evidence of impairment in social, communication and restricted repetitive patterns of interests and/or activities.
2. The disability must be significant enough that educational performance is adversely affected.
3. The disability must create a need for specialized instruction.

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According to the School Law Bulletin (2002):

The term educational performance is not defined in IDEA or in the regulations, and OSEP has consistently chosen not to define it. Instead, OSEP directs school officials to consider both academic and nonacademic skills and progress in determining whether a child's impairment adversely affects his or her educational performance: "The assessment is more than the measurement of the child's academic performance as determined by standardized measures." (33. Letter to Lillie/Felton, 23 IDELR 714 OSEP 1994; in Grice, 2002).

Thank You!

