

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AUTISM

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Definition: Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. In addition, autism, shall include, but not be limited to, any Autism Spectrum Disorder that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

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## Checklist for Determining Eligibility:

### Medical Diagnosis

#### 1. Identification of Disability

Students with a medical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder must still meet all the eligibility criteria, including the disability having an adverse effect on educational performance in order to be eligible for special education services. The characteristics identified as significant enough to validate eligibility for ASD in the school setting must be so different from his/her generally accepted, age appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in such areas as self-care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work adjustment.

If identification of disability is checked, proceed to Criteria A, Criteria B, and Criteria C. Criteria A, Criteria B, and Criteria C must be reviewed.

### Eligibility Criteria

As outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – Fifth Edition (2013), the essential features of Autism Spectrum Disorder include a persistent impairment in reciprocal social communication and social interaction (Criterion A), and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (Criterion B). These symptoms are present from early childhood and limit or impair everyday functioning (Criteria C and D). The eligibility for special education and related services appropriate for student with autism shall be determined by the presence of all (3) behavior from Group A, two (2) behaviors from Group B and include Criteria C and D.

#### *Considerations:*

- The stage at which functional impairment become obvious will vary according to characteristics of the individual and his or her environment.
- Core diagnostic features may be evident in the developmental period, but intervention, compensation, and current supports may mask difficulties in at least some contexts.
- Manifestations of the disorder also vary greatly depending on the severity of the autistic condition, developmental level, and chronological age.

### Criterion A: Social Communication and Social Interaction

Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, as manifested by **all** of the following, currently or by history (examples are illustrative, not exhaustive).

Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, ranging, for example from abnormal social approach and failure of normal back-and-forth conversation; to reduced sharing of interests, emotion, or affect; to failure to initiate or respond to social interactions.

Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, ranging for example, from poorly integrated verbal and nonverbal communication; to abnormalities in eye contact and body language or deficits in understanding and use of gestures; to a total lack of facial expressions and nonverbal communication.

Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships, ranging, for example, from difficulties adjusting behavior to suit various social contexts; to difficulties sharing imaginative play or making friends; to absence of interest in peers.

**Criterion B: Qualitative Impairment of Communication, Language and Symbolic Development**

Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities, as manifested by at least two of the following, currently or by history (examples are illustrative, not exhaustive) unless medical diagnosis is checked yes. At least two must be checked.

Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech (e.g., simple motor stereotypes, lining up toys or flipping objects, echolalia, idiosyncratic phrases).

Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualizes patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior (e.g., extreme distress at small changes, difficulties with transitions, rigid thinking patterns, greeting rituals, need to take same routine or eat same food every day).

Highly restrictive, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus (e.g., strong attachment to or preoccupation with unusual objects, excessively circumscribed or perseverative interests).

Hyper or hypo reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment (e.g., apparent indifference to pain/temperature, adverse response to specific sounds or textures, excessive smelling or touching of object, visual fascination with lights or movement).

**Criterion C:**

Symptoms must be present in the early developmental period (but may not become fully manifested until social demands exceed limited capacities, or may be masked by learned strategies later in life).

**Criterion D:**

Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning.

**Exclusionary Criteria**

2. The team has determined that the student's difficulties are NOT due to the following:

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| Yes | No | Lack of scientifically-based instructional practices and programs that contain the essential components of reading instruction; |
| Yes | No | Lack of instruction in math;  |
| Yes | No | Limited English Proficiency.  |

**Decision Process**

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| 3. | Has the criteria been substantiated by convergent data?                        | Yes | No |
|    | Has the criteria been measured against identified standards and/or benchmarks? | Yes | No |
|    | Has the information been obtained from multiple sources?                       | Yes | No |
|    | Does a majority of the criteria support eligibility?                           | Yes | No |
| 4. | Determination of need for special education and related services               |     |    |
| 5. | Documentation of adverse effect on educational performance                     |     |    |
| 6. | <b>The student meets the educational criteria for Autism.</b>                  | Yes | No |