

Autism

Federal Definition

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal 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 unusually responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

State Definition

The Illinois definition is the same as the federal definition as stated above. In addition, autism shall include, but not limited to, any autism spectrum disorder that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Diagnostic Criteria

A diagnosis of Autism is arrived at when a child has impairments in each of three areas: social interaction, communication and behavior.

Impairments in Social Interaction:

- Marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors
- Failure to develop developmentally appropriate peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment
- Lack of social or emotional reciprocity

Impairments in Communication:

- Delay or lack of development of spoken language and compensatory gestures
- Marked impairment in the ability to initiate, reciprocate or sustain conversation with others
- Stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language
- Lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level

Impairments in Behavior and Sensory/Regulatory Differences:

- Stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest
- Inflexible adherence to specific nonfunctional routines or rituals
- Stereotyped and repetitive motor movements
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects or things that move

Optional:

- Abnormal sensitivity to sounds, light or touch
- Obsession with sensory effects
- Awkward and clumsy fine and gross motor development
- Difficulty with attention
- Difficulty shifting attention
- Oblivious to environment
- Avoidance of environmental stimuli
- Limited curiosity/imagination
- Limited desire to obtain information
- Limited use of "wh" questions
- Selective memory deficits rather than an all encompassing one
- Inability to recognize emotions at a level commensurate with intellectual level

Adverse Effect

- Inability to independently demonstrate acquisition of age/grade skills aligned to learning standards in the general classroom
- Inability to establish or maintain appropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Difficulty meeting the general behavior requirements in adaptive behavior of school settings (e.g: tantrums, change in routine, daily living skills, social/emotional regulation)

**TMCSEA
Autism Diagnostic Criteria
Checklist**

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