

Using the Autism Supplement as a measure of program effectiveness

Jan Opella, LSSP
Texas Association of School Psychologist

The Autism Supplement

- ▶ You should use the Autism Supplement to summarize your program
- ▶ If your program addresses all the needed areas of the Autism Supplement, you have a legally defensible program
 - It will meet requirements for FAPE and “educational benefit”
- ▶ The supplement can document the rationale for you IEP

U.S. Supreme Court Board of Educ. V Rowley

- ▶ Established a two-prong test for determining whether a district provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
 - **Did the district comply with IDEA procedural requirements?**
 - **Is the student's education program reasonably calculated to confer an educational benefit?**



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Courts have said...

- ▶ Required education is “**personalized instruction with sufficient services to permit the child to benefit educationally from that instruction**”
- ▶ The educational benefit from the IEP must be **meaningful** and likely to **produce progress**, rather than regression or trivial advancement
- ▶ Although the benefit must be meaningful, schools are not required to maximize a child's potential or provide the best program.

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Four Indicators of benefit from the 5th Circuit Court Cy-Fair ISD v. Michael F.

- ▶ Is the educational program individualized on the basis of the student's assessment and performance?
- ▶ Is the program administered in the least restrictive environment?
- ▶ Are the services provided in a coordinated and collaborative manner by the key stakeholders?
- ▶ Are positive academic and non-academic benefits demonstrated?

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Is the educational program individualized on the basis of the student's assessment and performance?


- ▶ Do you have documentation of the student's present level of performance that you are using to identify goals & objectives?
 - Use some form of data collection or evaluation as a basis for the student's goals and objectives, even for in-home training
- ▶ Are your IEPs individualized?
 - The student's IEP should reflect the student's unique needs
 - You can have some of the same objectives for different students, but the services should not be identical



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Is the program administered in the least restrictive environment?

- ▶ For students with Autism, there should be opportunities to generalize skills to a variety of environments with the use of supplemental aids and services
 - These should be documented on the Autism Supplement
- ▶ LRE includes discussions about the use of a range of services that promote the inclusion of students with Autism into general education settings (both academic and non-academic)



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Are the services provided in a coordinated and collaborative manner by the key stakeholders?

- ▶ Are the parents actively involved in their student's education?
 - Include parent information on PLAAF
- ▶ Are the IEPs integrated between disciplines?
 - Communication objectives in class for a student with Speech Therapy
 - AT devices used appropriately across settings
 - Use of Sensory Diet activities in the classroom
- ▶ Do you have **evidence** of collaboration with staff and parents?
 - Document "consult" time with therapists
 - Keep copies of parent communication
 - Inform Special Ed. Office of parent concerns/comments
 - Are general education teachers informed of disability and modifications/accommodations?

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Are the services provided in a coordinated and collaborative manner by the key stakeholders?

- ▶ Do you have plans for changes in routine or schedule?
 - Back-up aides in case of absences, have a formal plan and follow it
 - Are the back-up aides trained?
 - They should be knowledgeable of the student and her program
- ▶ Do you have plans for students to learn strategies for coping with changes?
 - Use of visual schedules—even if they know their schedule!
 - Aides should prompt student to learn new ways to respond
 - Aides should be teaching the students, not just accompanying them to class

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Are positive academic and non-academic benefits demonstrated?

- ▶ Do progress notes reflect progress on goals and objectives?
 - You have to state in progress note whether the progress is such that the IEP goal will be met in the year
- ▶ Do you have data to back up your progress notes?
 - Data includes documentation of trials, percentages, specific data—not anecdotal



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Are positive academic and non-academic benefits demonstrated?

- ▶ Non-academic benefits are usually demonstrated by access and progress in general education routines and activities
 - You should have objectives related to non-academic skills
 - Social skills, coping skills, communication
- ▶ Academic benefits can be demonstrated by progress on core subject IEPs, state assessments, benchmarks, etc.
- ▶ *If your program is not showing progress, change the program*

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Are positive academic and non-academic benefits demonstrated?

- ▶ Does the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance reflect progress?
 - You should update PLAAF regularly, not just at the annual ARD
- ▶ Do you have specific information from general education teachers on student progress in their class?
 - Not just "their fine"
 - When in Gen. Ed. Classes the students are working on IEP objectives; they are not there for "socialization"

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The Autism Supplement

- ▶ 11 Areas must be considered for students with Autism/PDD
- ▶ The areas only have to be considered, and addressed if needed to confer a FAPE
 - "Consideration of these strategies in no way implies a requirement to implement any particular strategy. It is the responsibility of the ARD committee to determine which of the strategies, if any, should be included in a student's IEP. The emphasis an ARDC places on each consideration should be contingent on the needs of the individual student. In order to make informed decisions regarding these strategies, ARD committees require accurate and detailed evaluations."—TEA

If the ARDC determines that an area does not need to be addressed, it must include an **explanatory statement** to that effect.

Extended Educational Program

- ▶ Extended programming is a continuation of the school program or should be effectively coordinated with the school program. Is the student making adequate progress on their IEP?
- ▶ ESY
 - The determination should be data-based and continue specific areas of the IEP
 - Best practices would be to include an ESY IEP
 - Address the continuation of related services
 - Discuss continuation of use of AT devices
- ▶ Extended ESY
 - Consider this for students with severe needs
 - To provide shorter breaks from programming
- ▶ Extended School Day
 - During the school year, does the student need an extended day in order to progress on their IEP?
 - May address self-help and transition needs

Daily Schedule Reflecting Minimal Unstructured Time

- ▶ Is the student able to progress on their IEP with a typical school schedule?
 - Is he able to understand the typical schedule?
 - Document her ability to change classes independently
- ▶ Does the student need a minute to minute daily schedule to promote active engagement in activities?
 - Students who engage in self-stimulatory behavior often need a daily schedule
 - Some students need a schedule that is based on tasks, rather than minutes

Daily Schedule Reflecting Minimal Unstructured Time

- ▶ Is the student able to structure his/her own leisure time?
- ▶ Is the student able to tolerate changes to schedule? (identify any supports necessary, i.e.: written schedule, preparations for changes in schedule or teachers, special procedures for fire drills, field trips, pep rallies, etc.)

Daily Schedule

- ▶ If the student needs a specific schedule, attach it to the ARD
- ▶ The schedule should begin the minute the student arrives at school and end when they get on the bus
- ▶ Time increments should be small and match the students present ability to participate in a task
- ▶ Include therapy times
- ▶ Include routine activities in the daily schedule
 - Bathroom breaks, preparation activities, transitions

Daily Schedule



- ▶ If the student is unable to structure their own leisure time, they can still have leisure time on their schedule; but the activities need to be structured and have specific goals
- ▶ Include time in non-academic and general education routines in the schedule to document LRE
- ▶ Change the daily schedule as the needs of the student changes
- ▶ Make sure that every one who works with the student has a copy of the daily schedule

In-Home & Community-based Training or viable alternatives

- ▶ **Training of the child** in the home and/or community to promote the generalization of skills learned at school
- ▶ ARDC may request an In-Home Needs Assessment to adequately plan for training
 - The assessment should identify areas where the student has mastered a skill at school, but does not perform it at home or in the community

In-Home & Community-based Training or viable alternatives

- ▶ In home training should be coordinated with the school program. Goals and objectives for in-home training should be selected from or be related to the student's IEP
- ▶ In-home training should be documented as a related service, with the exact amount of time

In-Home & Community-based Training or viable alternatives

- ▶ Document community-based activities that provide opportunities for the student to generalize skills
 - Or document the student's behavior in different environments that is evidence that he/she does generalize skills
- ▶ An emphasis on functional skills may be the most appropriate in designing the IEP for In-home training

In-Home & Community-based Training or viable alternatives

- ▶ Document the need for In-home training and the recommendation for services, even if the parent says that they don't want In-home training
- ▶ The services must be offered in precise amounts of hours, as this documents the amount of services the ARDC believes is necessary to provide FAPE
- ▶ If the parent refuses, document their refusal and your attempts to explain the importance of the service

Positive Behavior Support Strategies

- ▶ This is more than a list of *Prioritized Behavioral Objectives or a BIP*
- ▶ The choice of behavioral methodologies is up to the district, but you must be able to show that your strategies confer benefit to the child
- ▶ TEA lists potential strategies that have been shown to be effective with individuals with Autism, stating "while it is the responsibility of an ARDC to make decisions regarding appropriateness of interventions based on the unique needs of an individual student, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to providing services for students with autism."
- ▶ Check out the National Autism Center's [National Standards Project](#) findings and conclusions and [Educator's Manual](#)
- ▶ <http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/learning->

Positive Behavior Support Strategies

- ▶ The behavioral interventions should be positive in nature
- ▶ Proven strategies should be used
- ▶ The BIP should be based on an FBA
- ▶ The BIP should identify target behaviors and replacement behaviors
- ▶ The BIP should address interventions across settings and document strategies and techniques to be used on a daily basis
- ▶ Behavioral objectives should be measurable and included on the IEP

Positive Behavior Support Strategies

- ▶ PBS Strategies may include:
 - Environment supports
 - Daily schedules
 - Reduction in stimulation
 - Use of legitimate avoidance strategies
 - Staff support
 - Staff supervision during problematic activities
 - Staff providing reminders & prompts
 - Related services
 - Counseling
 - Social skills instruction
 - Disability awareness

Futures Planning

- ▶ Beginning at any age, futures planning for integrated living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments
- ▶ This is also part of LRE for a student with Autism
 - Is your program geared to help the student be successful in less restrictive environments?
 - Make a statement regarding how your program teaches skills the student will need in future less restrictive environments

Futures Planning

- ▶ Futures planning also involves evaluating the pre-vocational, vocational and transitional needs of the student
- ▶ Document the results of any Person Centered Planning meetings or Vocational Interest and Aptitude surveys in this section
- ▶ For high functioning students, document services to help them access post-secondary education
 - DARS, taking SAT/ACT, help with applications, etc.

Parent/Family Training

- ▶ Parent Training consists of services, provided by personnel with experience, expertise, or training in Autism, that assists the parents in developing the skills necessary to improve their child's development and functioning in the home or community
 - Teaching specific skills to the parents or caregivers
 - Providing information on resources
 - To assist the parent in understanding the special needs of their child
 - To provide parents with information about child development
 - Providing services to facilitate parental carryover of in-home training

Parent/Family Training

- ▶ Use an In-Home Needs Assessment to determine the needs of the family
 - If the student needs a daily schedule at school, make sure to address this in the home
- ▶ The ARDC determines needs and offers the training to provide continuity of interventions from school to home
- ▶ The supplement should document the amount of time the district is willing to provide to the parent, even if they decline the service
- ▶ Sending the parent to conferences can be helpful, but is not a substitute for needed individual training

Suitable Staff-to-Student Ratio

- ▶ When determining staff-to-student ratios, an ARDC should consider the setting, a student's communication abilities and present level of competence in each area of instruction from the daily schedule
- ▶ When documenting ratio, remember that promoting independent on-task behaviors and independent life-skills is a valid education goal
- ▶ Indicate the amount of 1:1 instruction that the student receives

Communication Interventions

- ▶ This area should address the student's language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings
- ▶ All students with Autism have some communication differences that may affect behavior and/or social functioning
- ▶ Document speech therapy, IEP goals related to pragmatic language development and any AT devices here
- ▶ Include statements regarding the student's ability to communicate with peers

Social Skills Supports and Strategies

- ▶ Based on social skills assessment/curriculum and provided across settings
- ▶ Include social skills in your PLAAFP statements
- ▶ Social Skills supports may be included in the BIP
- ▶ Document social skills strategies that are successful for this student

Staff Support

- ▶ To assure the correct implementation of techniques and strategies described in the IEP
- ▶ Training should be for teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, and others working directly with the student
- ▶ If the ARDC determine that training is needed, the type of training should be documented here

Research-based Teaching Strategies

- ▶ Schools are required to consider strategies based on peer reviewed, research-based educational practices to the extent practicable
- ▶ USDOE "we decline to require all IEP team meeting to include a focused discussion on research-based methods or require public agencies to provide prior written notice when an IEP team refuses to provide documentation of research-based methods, as we believe such requirements are unnecessary and would be overly burdensome."

National Autism Center's National Standards Project: Established Treatments

- Antecedent package
- Behavioral package
- Comprehensive Behavior Treatment for Young Children
- Joint Attention Intervention
- Modeling
- Peer Training Package
- Pivotal Response Treatment
- Schedules
- Self-Management
- Story-based Intervention Package
- Naturalistic teaching strategies

Uses of the Autism Supplement

- ▶ Document the progression to less intrusive services
- ▶ Document past, successful services
- ▶ Document parent participation, information, and agreement to services
- ▶ Document staff information and training
- ▶ .