



**WEST METRO  
LEARNING CONNECTIONS, INC.**

*A Center for Social Skills Development & Support*

*Serving Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Related Conditions*



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*Serving Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Related Conditions*

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***Autism Spectrum Disorder:  
Evaluations  
and  
Strategies and Supports for Success***

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**Autism Spectrum Disorder:  
Evaluation**



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## Autism Spectrum Disorder Evaluation/Strategies/Supports Agenda

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Evaluation
  - Definition of Autism Spectrum Disorders
  - Minnesota Eligibility Criteria
- Options for Tests, Protocols, and Procedures
- Three Core Features and Related Issues
- Environmental Conditions and Supports to Support Success
  - Characteristics
  - Visual Supports
  - Sensory Supports
- Proactive Instruction and Strategies to Support Success



## MN State Definition of an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) means a range of pervasive developmental disorders, with the onset in childhood, that adversely affects a pupil's functioning and result in the need for special education instruction and related services. ASD is a disability category characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in several areas of development, including social interaction communication, or presence of restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities. These core features may present themselves in a wide variety of combinations that range from mild to severe, and a number of behavioral indicators present may vary. ASD may include Autistic Disorder, Childhood Autism, Atypical Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder not Otherwise Specified, Asperger Syndrome, or other related pervasive developmental disorders.



## MN State Eligibility Criteria for an Autism Spectrum Disorder

According to the Minnesota State criteria for identification of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a multidisciplinary team shall determine that a student is eligible and in need of special education instruction and related services if the student demonstrates patterns of behavior consistent with those in item A and fulfills the requirements in item B. In order to qualify for services, student must fulfill requirements in both items A and B.

- A. An educational evaluation must address all three core features listed below. For eligibility purposes, a student must meet criteria in Core Feature 1 (Social Interaction) with at least two behavioral indicators AND either Core Feature 2 (Communication) or Core Feature 3 (Restricted, Repetitive, Stereotyped Patterns of Behavior and/or Interest) with at least one behavioral indicator. A student may meet criteria in all three Core Features.
- B. A multidisciplinary team shall verify that the Autism Spectrum Disorder adversely affects the student's present educational level of performance and that the student is in need of special education instruction and related services. The team must identify the specific needs that require special education instruction and related services.
- Documentation must include:
  - Evaluation of the student's present levels of performance and educational needs in each core feature identified in sub-item A. In addition, the team must consider all other areas of educational concern related to the suspected disability
  - Observations of the student in two different settings on two different days
  - A summary of the student's developmental history and behavior patterns



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## Evaluation Process

See Evaluations and Reevaluations 3525.2710

- Referral
- IEP team convenes to plan the evaluation/Provide notice to the parents of the pupil
- Evaluation – “use a variety of evaluation tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information” to determine whether pupil has a disability and the content of the individualized education program
- Include more than one single procedure; use technically sound instruments that assess cognitive and behavioral factors, as well as physical and developmental factors: developmental information, patterns of behaviors, observations, procedures, checklists, interviews, etc.
- IEP team that includes qualified professionals and parents convenes to share results
- ASD Specialist (ASD qualified professional) leads team in applying MN State Eligibility Criteria for ASD (Team consensus based on evaluation results)
- Conclusion—Summary of Developmental Findings and Observations and Identify Present Levels of Performance and Educational Need
- Provide copy of evaluation report and documentation of eligibility determination to parents



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# Evaluation Planning Sheet

WMLC EVALUATION PLANNING SHEET      Consent Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_      DOB: \_\_\_\_\_      School: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Mgr.: \_\_\_\_\_      Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_      Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Eval.    Re-Eval.    Annual IEP    FA    Other

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_      Contact Info \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_      Contact Info \_\_\_\_\_

Stepmother / Stepfather \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

To Do	Parents		Parent / Sp. Ed. Teacher		Mainstream Teacher	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Observation 1 Date _____						
Observation 2 Date _____						
Developmental Interview/Questionnaire for Suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder						
Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale (ADOS) Date _____						
Gilliam Asperger's Diagnostic Scale (GADS)						
Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS-3)						
Student Stress Survey—Gooden or Gurn						
Structured Interview for Individuals with AS						
Krug Asperger's Reading Index (KARI)						
Workshop Interview Guidelines for Diagnosing Asperger Syndrome (WIGDAS) Date _____						
Social Skills Checklist _____						
Social Skills Solutions—Social Skills Checklist						
Social Skills Interview—Parent, Teacher, Child						
Social Skills Profile—Adult: Parent						
Social Skills Checklist Project DATA: Parent, Teacher _____						
School Social Behavior Scale: Social						
Home and Community Social Behavior Scales						
Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS)						
Social Communication Scale (SCS) For severely impaired?						
Dyspraxia Rating Scale (DRS)						
Asperger Syndrome Diagnostic Scale (ASDS)						
Reinforcement Survey						
Metropolitan Assessment Scale (MAS)						
MIN Criteria for Autism Spectrum						
Complete at Team Meeting with Parents!						

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## Autism Spectrum Disorder Three Core Features

- Social Interaction
- Communication — Semantic and/or Pragmatic
- Stereotyped or Repetitive Patterns of Behavior and Interests



## MN State Eligibility Criteria: Three Core Features—Behavioral Indicators

**Core Feature 1.** Qualitative impairment of reciprocal social interactions: as documented by two or more behavioral indicators, such as:

- \_\_\_ limited use of facial expressions towards others
- \_\_\_ gross impairment in ability to make friends
- \_\_\_ appears to prefer isolated or solitary activities
- \_\_\_ misinterprets other's behaviors and social cues
- \_\_\_ significant vulnerability and safety issues due to social naiveté
- \_\_\_ does not show or bring things to others on indicate interest in activity
- \_\_\_ limited joint attention
- \_\_\_ difficulty relating to people

**Core Feature 2.** Qualitative impairment in communication: as documented by one or more behavioral indicators, such as:

- \_\_\_ not using finger to point or request
- \_\_\_ inability to initiate or maintain conversation
- \_\_\_ odd production of speech (intonation, rhythm, rate)
- \_\_\_ showing lack of spontaneous imitations of lack of varied imaginative play
- \_\_\_ limited understanding of non-verbal communication skills (gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice)
- \_\_\_ using others' hand or body as a tool
- \_\_\_ absence or delay of spoken language
- \_\_\_ repetitive, idiosyncratic language

**Core Feature 3.** Qualitative impairment in restricted, repetitive, stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities

- \_\_\_ repetitive hand or finger mannerisms
- \_\_\_ lack of true imaginative play vs. reenactment
- \_\_\_ demonstrating distress or resistance to change
- \_\_\_ over-reaction or under-reaction to sensory stimuli
- \_\_\_ intense, focused preoccupation with a limited range, interests, or conversation topics
- \_\_\_ rigid, rule-bound thinking
- \_\_\_ insistence on following routines or rituals



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## Qualitative Impairment in Social Interaction

- Lack of emotional or social reciprocity
- Limited insight into social relationships
- Limited empathy/comments on others' emotions
- Unusual eye contact; limited shared enjoyment in interaction
- Reduced quality of social overtures and responses
- Lack of social smiling; impairment in group play with peers
- Reduced imitative social play
- Lack of interest in or response to other children
- Doesn't give affectionate responses (e.g., hugs and kisses)
- Looks through people (i.e., shows no recognition that a person is present)



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## Qualitative Impairment in Communication

- Reduced amount of social communication
- Limited frequency of vocalization directed to others
- Echolalia—delayed or immediate
- Inappropriate questions or statements
- Pronominal reversal
- Repeats words or phrases over and over
- Looks away or avoids looking at speaker when name is called
- Avoids asking for things he or she wants
- Fails to initiate conversations with peers or adults
- Repeats unintelligible sounds (babbling) over and over



## Restricted, Repetitive, or Stereotyped Patterns of Behavior and/or Interests

- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects
- Excessive interest in highly specific topics or objects
- Compulsions/rituals
- Licks, smells, or sniffs inedible objects (e.g., person's hand, toys, books)
- Spins objects not designed for spinning (e.g., saucers, cups, glasses)
- Rocks back and forth while seated or standing
- Makes rapid lunging, darting movement when moving from place to place
- Flaps hands or fingers in front of face or at sides
- Responds negatively or with temper tantrums when given commands, request, or directions
- Lines up objects in precise, orderly fashion and becomes upset when the order is disturbed



## Related Issues to Consider

- Cognitive and Learning Issues & Styles  
(Concrete vs. Abstract, Visual vs. Auditory, Flexibility – Static vs. Fluid, Facts vs. Social, Thinking and Reasoning vs. Feeling)
- Motor Issues — Gross and Fine
- Sensory Issues — Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Olfactory, Taste
- Anxiety
- ADHD — Distractibility, Inattention, Impulsivity, Hyperactivity
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Tourette Syndrome



## Autism Spectrum Disorder: Instruction, Accommodations, Strategies, and Supports



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## Key Areas for Social Skills Development

### Basic Social Skills

- Joint Attention
- Attention-shifting
- Turn-taking, sharing
- Give and take (social reciprocity)
- Waiting
- Play and interaction skills
- Seeking peer attention in appropriate ways
- Using play and other materials for imaginative purposes
- Greetings
- Manners
- Approaching others
- Asking for permission
- Introductions
- Simple Conversations
- Apologies
- Recognizing needs and sharing
- Offering to help
- Accepting “no’s” and refusals
- Compliments



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## ASD: Key Areas for Instruction, Accommodation, and Support

- **Perspective-Taking (Theory of Mind)**
  - How people view each other
  - Components of making an impression and establishing a reputation
  - Identifying others' possible perceptions
  - Impact of verbal and nonverbal behaviors (and lack thereof) on social interactions and relationships
  - Identifying personal characteristics to keep or change
- **Cognitive Flexibility**
  - View situations in novel ways
  - Solve problems
  - Get “unstuck,” i.e., avoid/stop perseverations
  - Accept changes
  - Adjust to new situations, methods, plans
  - Consider new ideas, plans, methods
- **Conversations**
- **Eye Contact, Checking in with Eyes, Social and Visual Referencing**
- **Social Cues and Nonverbal Language, e.g., facial expression, eye gaze, gestures, body posture**
- **Social Expression and Abstract Language**



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## More Key Areas for Instruction, Accommodation, and Support

- **Appropriate Responses**
  - Assertive language (as opposed to aggressive language)
  - Conflict management and negotiation skills
  - “Serenity to accept the things I cannot change”
  - Apologies—a basic social skill
  - Thinking first to plan responses
  - Managing and responding to difficult feelings
  - Humor
  - Taking a break and walking away
  - Sensory strategies to manage anger and stress
  - Frustration management skills
- **Classroom Behaviors that Help Social and Academic Success**
- **Basic Frustration Management**



## Structuring and Managing Environments to Support Success and Progress

### The Environment

“ Since students without Asperger Syndrome can learn in pretty much any type of environment and students with Asperger Syndrome can only really learn in certain types of environments, I don’t understand why teachers can’t just design school environments based on what kids with Asperger Syndrome need.”

*Mason Green, Fall of 2001*



## Structuring and Managing Environments

### Setting

- Simple, “clean,” clutter-free space
- Controlled visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli
- Pleasant visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli
- Convenient organization for teachers and clients
- An observing break area
- A separate break away area (separate “safe” area or room with maximum safety and comfort and minimal stimulation and danger)



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## Visual Strategies and Supports

- Visual Schedule
- Visual Procedures
- Five-Point Scales
- T-Charts
- Behavioral Reminders (eyes, boot it, kiss it, love it)
- Visuals of Lessons
- Reinforcers
- Social Stories
- Power Cards
- Conversation Colors
- Mirror
- Photos
- TV with DVD's and Videos
- Scales of Justice Visuals
- Communication Meters—anger, anxiety, over- and under-reaction, stress, maturity wheel
- Social Autopsy Sheets
- Role Plays
- Video and Digital Cameras
- Audio Recorder/Player
- Puppets
- Stuffed Animals



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## Sensory Strategies and Supports

- Weighted blankets
- Lap buddies
- Neuroprene vests
- Pull, stretch, squeeze, push, lift, resist
- Bounce
- Lean, tip
- Gum, mints
- Hand fidgets
- Vanilla
- Lighting
- Sound



## Schedules and Routines

- **“Normal” Routine** (cont)
  - o Friendship room... friendship table
  - o Visual schedule
  - o Check-in (always in the same way at first)
  - o Fidgets/Chairs/Weighted things (maybe)
  - o Mouth fidgets (maybe)
  - o Video (optional)
  - o Snack (optional)
  - o Interactive lesson (e.g., How to Give a Compliment)
    - Establish set, meaning, and motivation
    - visual of skill steps
    - teach each step in isolation
    - teach steps in sequence
  - o Dramatic play/Role plays (practice, practice, practice)
  - o Clean up together



## Schedules and Routines

- **“Normal” Routine** (cont)
  - o Guided play and reinforcement
    - room or place other than friendship room
    - games and activities to
      - reinforce skills
      - practice and demonstrate new and previously learned skills
      - learn new skills
  - o Marble time
  - o Non-contingent prize
  - o Support circle
  - o Good-bye song



## Promote Skill Transfer and Generalization

- Role Plays
- Varying Settings and People
- Guided Play and Recreation
  - o observe, discuss, and demonstrate skills under new conditions
  - o integrate new skills into old routines and activities
- Feedback Sheets with “Skills to Practice”
  - o verbal and written descriptions of “skills to practice”
  - o visuals of skill steps
  - o simple visual of the skill
  - o list of the skill steps
  - o power card



## Transfer and Generalization

- Facilitate skill practice in different settings and under various conditions
- Prompt and coach the participants in naturally occurring situations
- Monitor and provide reinforcement and feedback outside of friendship group for
  - o social skills
  - o evidence of social understanding and confusion
  - o social and relational behavior
- Compliment and reinforce all displays of the behavior
- Participants learn self-monitor and -assess their social skills and cognition to increase awareness and motivation
- Recognize and reward displays of positive social skills in everyday situations
- Train those who work with the participants



## Therapeutic Recreation Guided Play & Interaction

- Stand alone to meet goals
- Support goals of other social skills therapies and programs
- Social skill acquisition
- Social skill reinforcement
- Promote generalization of acquired social skills
- Enhance social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being
- Increase overall quality of relationships and life



## Games and Activities for Specific Purposes

- Perspective-Taking
  - o Play “Barrier” games to show that words can mean different things to different people and can be dependent on point of view. These also show that what someone says may NOT be what that person meant. (The aim of a barrier game is for one child to place/identify selected objects onto a game board while describing to a partner what he/she is doing. The partner follows the verbal instructions to replicate what is being done, sight unseen. At the end of the game the objects should be in identical positions on both game boards)
  - o Role plays/Dramatic Play



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## Games and Activities for Specific Purposes

- Cognitive Flexibility
  - o Play games that require set-shifting, that is games that require series of words and objects to be re-grouped into various sets
  - o Play games that allow for multiple possibilities in “right answers” and solutions
  - o Show figure-ground reversal illusions (hidden pictures) to provide opportunity for practicing thought flexibility
  - o Provide opportunities for Stroop-like tasks, e.g., Present LITTLE-little-big-LITTLE-BIG-big and direct respondent to identify the case of each word, so...big, little, little, big, big, little or presenting color words printed in different colors and directing respondents to do something as name all the words printed in green ink or tell me the color ins used only for the word green



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## Games and Activities for Specific Purposes

- Visual Referencing, Social Referencing, Eye Contact
  - o Play “follow my eyes to the prize”
  - o Reinforce visual referencing through joint attention to an object or game of interest



## Social Autopsies

### Social Autopsy

Going back over and analyzing a social problem that occurred to see what went wrong and determining what could be done differently if that or a similar situation arises again.



## Some Random Behavior Management Strategies

- Always—Daily Visual Schedule—easily visible to all
  - o Note Changes in Routines—star, highlight, etc.
  - o Verbally Present the Schedule each morning
  - o Refer to the Schedule throughout the Day
  - o Use the schedule to announce and initiate transitions
  - o Show breaks on the schedule
  - o **Put “special behaviors” on the schedule**
    - imagination time
    - video talk time
    - alone time



## More Random Behavior Management Strategies

- Communicate limits and expectations clearly and simply—visually whenever possible
- Use consistent language to communicate consistent limits and expectations. Post simple rules and review often—Take Turns, Stay in Room, Raise your Hand, etc.
- “Do Later” Folder—for work refusal—“Do you want to do this now or during break time?”
- Now/Later or First/Then laminated visuals



## More Random Behavior Management Strategies

- Relaxation/Break Opportunities
  - Sensory (specified types and techniques)
  - Soft music
  - Swinging
  - Walking
  - Drink
  - Choose from Calming Cap
  - Running in gym
  - Head down
- Quiet Count
- Visuals Available: Break, Stop, Help, Quiet Count, Breathe



## More Random Behavior Management Strategies

- Mix up the hard stuff with the easy stuff...Start with a lot of the easy stuff and move into the hard stuff
- Directly teach deficit skills
- Monitor student comprehension
- Have fun. Laugh. Play.
- Make mistakes. Enjoy the moments.
- Structure work and play periods as needed
- Give clear, simple directives; try to use the same words for directives each time they are given
- Create patterns for transitions—sing when it's time for English...or sing when you call for a transition



## More Random Behavior Management Strategies

- Give choices within your structure—teach children to decide/choose and then empower them to do so
- Teach the behavior you want—do not focus on the maladaptive behaviors
- Know your students' stressors and plan accordingly
- Teach self-management, relaxation, coping skills
- Choose your tone and demeanor—gentle, respectful, patient, tolerant, accepting, caring
- Walk (run) away from power struggles
- Identify situations for children—“This is a power struggle. I will be at my desk until we're ready to work together.”



**Thank You!**

Debra Schipper

