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# Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities

Amended **September 2019**



North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
Exceptional Children Division

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**(1) Behavioral assessment related to Autism Spectrum Disorder:**

**An assessment conducted by trained and knowledgeable personnel using behavior rating tools measuring the range of characteristics associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, yielding information of the child's functioning across environments. This assessment may also include individually administered instruments that assesses the range of characteristics associated with autism spectrum disorder.**

**(2) Social/Developmental History**

A social history documents normal and abnormal developmental and/or medical events and includes a review of information gathered during the screening process. For preschool children, a social history must include an assessment of family composition, support systems, stressors, and environment as they correlate with the child's need or special services. The history also must include the family's or caregiver's perspective about the child and the need for special services. The history may be obtained by a licensed social worker, special educator, school psychologist, counselor, nurse, teacher or other appropriate persons.

**(3) Sensory processing evaluation**

Sensory evaluations are performed by occupational therapists. A sensory processing evaluation collects, organizes, and analyzes information specific to how a student's current level of sensory processing impacts occupational performance and participation at school. This information may be gathered through: review of educational and medical records; interviews with the student, teachers, parents, and others; detailed, in-context observations; and, the administration of formal testing instruments, procedures, and techniques. A sensory processing evaluation should include, but is not limited to, as many of the areas listed below as may be appropriate:

**(i) intensity of response to various sensory experiences, including**

- (a) visual stimuli**
- (b) auditory stimuli**
- (c) olfactory stimuli**
- (d) tactile stimuli**
- (e) taste stimuli**
- (f) vestibular stimuli**
- (g) proprioceptive stimuli**

**(ii) sensory-motor coordination**

- (a) sensory-motor skills**
- (b) praxis/motor planning skills;**

**(4) Speech-Language Screening**

Speech-language screening quickly and reliably provides information in the areas of articulation, expressive and receptive language, voice and fluency for determining which students have communication within normal limits and which ones need to be referred for further evaluation.

**(5) Speech-Language/Communication Evaluation**

A speech-language evaluation includes the following aspects of speech-language: articulation, fluency, voice, and language (form, content, and function). A screening of areas not addressed in depth, including: hearing, articulation, language, voice, and fluency should be completed during every evaluation. A variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information must be used. Assessment instruments may include: interviews; curriculum-based dynamic assessment tools or criterion referenced tests; and norm referenced tests. Areas of assessment may also include augmentative communication and pragmatics, as appropriate. For a student to be considered for intervention, the student's speech, language, voice, or fluency must be determined to have an adverse effect on educational performance. A speech-language evaluation is conducted by a speech-language pathologist licensed by the State Department of Public Instruction and/or

licensed by the State of North Carolina.

(6) Vocational Evaluation

Vocational evaluation is a process involving an interdisciplinary team approach in assessing an individual's vocational potential, training and work placement needs.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)—(c); 34 CFR 300.15)

- (i) communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;
  - (ii) Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;
  - (iii) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and
  - (iv) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.
- (1) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
  - (2) Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).
  - (3) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;
  - (4) Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one LEA to another LEA in the same school year are coordinated with those children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with NC 1503-2.1(d)(2) and (e), to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations.
  - (5) In evaluating each child with a disability NC 1503-2.4 through NC 1503-2.6, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified.
  - (6) Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided.
- (a) Required screenings and evaluation for eligibility determination.  
 A full and individualized evaluation of a child's needs must be conducted before any action is taken with respect to determining eligibility for special education. Required screenings and evaluation to determine eligibility in each area of disability are as follows:
- (1) Autism Spectrum Disorder.
    - (i) Required screenings and evaluations:
      - (A) Hearing screening;
      - (B) Vision screening;
      - (C) Motor screen
      - (D) Observation across settings, to assess academic and functional skills;
      - (E) Summary of conference(s) with parents or documentation of attempts to conference with parents;
      - (F) Social/developmental history; to include an examination of characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder present during the early developmental period
      - (G) Educational evaluation;
      - (H) Adaptive behavior evaluation;
      - (I) Psychological evaluation; the yielding of an overall intellectual score is not required and should be considered on a case-by-case basis
      - (J) Sensory processing evaluation

- (K) Speech-language evaluation which includes, but is not limited to, measures of language semantics and pragmatics;
- (L) An assessment using an appropriate behavior rating tool or an alternative assessment instrument that identifies characteristics associated with autism spectrum disorder. Behavioral assessment related to Autism Spectrum Disorder: **An assessment using behavior rating tools measuring the range of characteristics associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, yielding information of the child's functioning across environments. This assessment may also include an individually administered instrument that assesses the range of characteristics associated with autism spectrum disorder.**
- (ii) To be determined eligible in the disability category of autism spectrum disorder, the following must be demonstrated **currently or by history**: a child must demonstrate at least three of the four characteristics listed below:
- (A) Impairment in communication;
- (B) Impairment in social interaction;
- (C) Unusual response to sensory experiences;
- (D) Restricted, repetitive, or stereotypic patterns of behavior, interests, and/or activities.
- (A) Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, manifested by ALL THREE of the following:
- 1) Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
  - 2) Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors
  - 3) Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships
- AND
- (B) Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities, manifested by **AT LEAST 2 ONE OR MORE** of the following:
- 1) Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech
  - 2) Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior
  - 3) Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
  - 4) **Significantly** Atypical responses to sensory input *or significantly* atypical interests in sensory aspects of the environment.
- AND
- (C) **Above** Symptoms **generally** present in the early developmental period, (but may not manifest until social demands exceed coping capacities **or may be masked by learned strategies in later life**) . **A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism spectrum disorder if the criteria in (A) and (B) are satisfied.**
- (iii) The disability must:
- (A) Have an adverse effect on educational (academic and/or functional) performance, and
- (B) Require specially designed instruction.
- (2) Deaf-blindness.
- (i) Required screenings and evaluations:
- (A) Motor screening;
  - (B) Observation across settings, to assess academic and functional skills;
  - (C) Summary of conference(s) with parents or documentation of attempts to conference with parents;
  - (D) Social/developmental history;
  - (E) Educational evaluation;
  - (F) Adaptive behavior evaluation;

- (G) Psychological evaluation;
- (H) Communication evaluation, including receptive, expressive, and augmentative communication skills;
- (I) Audiological evaluation, followed by an otological evaluation when appropriate;
- (J) Medical evaluation, including health history, precautions, and medications; and
- (K) Ophthalmological or optometric evaluation;
- (ii) To be determined eligible in the disability category of deaf-blindness, a child must demonstrate:
  - (A) A visual impairment, in combination with a hearing impairment,
  - (B) Resulting in severe communication, developmental, and educational needs, and