Autism Spectrum Disorder
NC Policy Changes

Approved by the NC State Board of Education: September 5, 2019
Purpose of the Changes:

In order to improve alignment of NC Policies with effective practices, policy changes are needed in the evaluation and identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
4th Most Prevalent IDEA Classification in NC

- Autism 11.1%
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability 8.1%
- Multiple Disabilities

- Orthopedic Impairment 17.5%
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability 35.4%
- Speech/Language Impairment 14.1%
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Serious Emotional Disability
The Goal

Consistent Identification Practices

Community Providers

School Providers
Outline:

- Federal and State Definition
- NC Screenings and Evaluations
- NC Eligibility Criteria
Definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (Federal and NC)

- A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and social interaction.
  - Adversely affects a child’s educational performance.
  - Generally evident before age three.

- Other characteristics are engagement in repetitive activities, restricted interests, resistance to external changes, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

- ASD does not apply if a child’s educational performance is primarily affected by an emotional disability.
Observable Features of ASD

Persistent deficits in social communication and interaction

Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities

Symptoms present in the early developmental period
NC Required Screenings/Evaluations

**ADD**
- Motor screening
- Sensory processing evaluation

**MODIFY**
- Social/developmental history
- Psychological evaluation
- Behavioral assessment related to ASD
Added Definition: 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.
Exceptional Children Division

Added Definition: 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;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODIFIED</th>
<th>Social/developmental history; to include an examination of characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder present during the early developmental period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODIFIED</td>
<td>Psychological evaluation; the yielding of an overall intellectual score is not required and should be considered on a case-by-case basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODIFIED</td>
<td>Behavioral assessment related to Autism Spectrum Disorder:</td>
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Eligibility Decisions

Prong 1: Meets Criteria

Prong 2: Adverse Effect

Prong 3: Need for Specially Designed Instruction
Existing Eligibility Criteria for Prong 1

To be determined eligible, 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.
New Criteria: Prong 1

Social Communication & Interaction

- Social Emotional Reciprocity
- Nonverbal Communicative Behaviors
- Relationships

Deficits in all 3

Currently or by history

(A) Impairment in communication;
(B) Impairment in social interaction;
New Criteria: Prong 1

Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests, or Activities

1 or more

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior
- Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
- Atypical responses to sensory input or atypical interests in sensory aspects of the environment

Currently or by history

(C) Unusual response to sensory experiences;
(D) Restricted, repetitive, or stereotypic patterns of behavior, interests, and/or activities.
New Criteria: Prong 1

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.

This prong is implied in the definition, but was not explicit in the existing criteria.
Prong 2: Adverse Effect

The disability must: (A) Have an adverse effect on educational (academic and/or functional) performance.

Prong 3: Need for Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction means *adapting*, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, *the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction* - To address the **unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability**; and To ensure **access** of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.
ASD Policy Implementation Timeline

9/2019 SBE Approval

9/2019 Begin Embedding Content into Existing Trainings

10/2019 presented at Autism Support Team Meetings

11/2019 Present at EC Fall Conference

9/2019 presented at Regional EC Directors’ Meetings

9/2019 presented at Related Service Lead Meetings

10/2019 Guidance Document Complete

1/2020 Implementation of New Policy