



## **ESE Program Information Sheet - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

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**Definition:** Autism Spectrum Disorder is defined to be a range of pervasive developmental disorders that adversely affect a student's functioning and result in the need for specially designed instruction and related services. Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in social interaction, communication, and the presence of restricted repetitive, and/or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. These characteristics may manifest in a variety of combinations and range from mild to severe. Autism Spectrum Disorder may include Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, Asperger's Disorder, or other related pervasive developmental disorders. The corresponding definition is found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03023, F.A.C.

**Overview:** According to the DSM-5, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and interaction and the presence of restricted, repetitive behaviors. Social communication deficits include impairments in aspects of joint attention and social reciprocity, as well as challenges in the use of verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors for social interaction. Restricted and repetitive behaviors, interests, or activities are manifested by stereotyped and repetitive speech, motor movement, or use of objects; inflexible adherence to routines; restricted interests; and hyper- and/or hypo-sensitivity to sensory input.

**State Laws and Regulations:** The rules referenced below are specific to ASD. Please refer to [Volume I-B: Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules, Excerpts Related to Exceptional Student Education](#) (PDF, 9MB) for a complete listing of laws and regulations applicable to exceptional student education.

- [6A-6.03023, F.A.C.: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder.](#)
- [6A-6.401796, F.A.C. - Specialization Requirements for Endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorders - Academic Class.](#)

[Section 627.6686, Florida Statutes - Steven A. Geller Autism Coverage Act](#)

**General Resources:** The following Resources will provide educators with information concerning ASD

[Administrator's Guide to Educational Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

**State Resources:**

- [Autism Florida,](#)

- [Autism Society of America: Florida Chapter](#)

#### **National Resources:**

- [Autism Internet Modules \(AIM\)](#),
- [Autism Distance Education Parent Training \(ADEPT\)](#),
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Autism Information](#),
- [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\): Autism](#),
- [IDEA Partnership Autism Spectrum Disorder Collection](#)
- [IES What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [National Autism Center: National Standards Project](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\): Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)
- [The National Center for Evidence-Based Practice in Communication Disorders: ASD Map](#)
- [National Center for Children with Disabilities \(NICHCY\): Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)

**Tips to support inclusion:** Although knowing the general characteristics of ASD is helpful, teaching strategies for students with ASD still need to be individualized. It is important for teachers to realize the wide range of abilities and characteristics students with ASD may exhibit.

- Have a predictable and structured classroom routine. Warn the student when there are upcoming changes to the daily routine.
- Use visual supports (for example, picture cards) to illustrate both the flow of the day and what is expected during each aspect of the day.
- Model (or have students model) appropriate behaviors/tasks.
- Proactively *teach* social skills in a variety of formats (lessons, social stories, video modeling, and use of visuals).
- Educate the other students about ASD. Protect the child from being teased. (There are presently some very good books available for the specific purpose of teaching young children about ASD and other disabilities.)
- Repeat instructions and check for understanding.
- Reduce choices to reduce confusion. Make the choices as concrete as possible (show two writing utensils and ask, “Do you want the pen or the pencil?”)
- Keep your language simple and concrete. Do not use idioms or sarcasm.
- Reduce distractors as much as possible.
- Call the student’s attention before giving group directions.
- Incorporate the student’s interests in instruction and classwork, as a motivator for the child to pay attention, complete work and/or stay on task.
- Don’t take anything the student says or does as directed at you personally.