Overview of the Eleven Considerations for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Objectives
1. Provide an overview of the Eleven Considerations for Students with Autism
2. Review the Public Education Department guidelines for each consideration
3. Explain how these considerations pertain to the IEP meeting

Background
- Director of Special Education Denise Koscielniak issued a guidance memo on January 18, 2011
- SB 314 passed both houses; Governor Martinez vetoed SB 314 in March, 2011
- In veto message, Governor said the considerations would be placed into rule
- Governor Susana Martinez signed into law on July 26, 2011
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Background
- New Mexico law based on Texas Education Agency rules
- Rules outline eleven considerations that need to be discussed at every IEP for students with a diagnosis of ASD
- New Mexico Public Education Department provides districts with a Yes/No checklist
- New Mexico Register: Subparagraphs (a-k) of Paragraph (5) of Subsection (D) of 6.31.2.11 New Mexico Administrative Code

Overview of Eleven Considerations
1. Extended educational programming
2. Daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities
3. In-home and community-based training (or viable alternatives) that assist with acquisition of social/behavioral skills
4. Positive behavior supports
5. Futures/transition planning
6. Parent/family training and support
7. Staff-to-student ratio
8. Communication interventions
9. Social skills supports
10. Professional educator/staff support
11. Teaching strategies based in peer-reviewed and/or research-based practices
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Overview of Eleven Considerations

- Eleven considerations are based on best practice guidelines.
- Need to be discussed at every IEP for students with ASD.
- Not all children will require implementation of all considerations.
- Most of these strategies are likely already included in the IEPs.
- Not a mandate to implement specific interventions.
- Every consideration, adopted or not, needs documentation in the IEP and Prior Written Notice.

1. Extended Educational Programming

- Does a review of data:
  - Show that the student experiences significant regression in adaptive behaviors or learned skills over regularly scheduled school breaks during the year?
  - Show that the student requires a significant amount of time and effort to recoup previously learned skills?
  - Indicate benefits to be derived from extended educational program outweigh the positive benefits of a summer vacation?
- Did the IEP team determine that Extended School Year would best meet the needs of the student? Why or why not?

2. Daily Schedules

- Does the student:
  - Need assistance to adapt to daily schedule changes such as transitioning from one environment to the other?
  - React to changes in noise level within the same environment or transitioning to another setting?
  - Need visual or physical cues to adjust to changes within the daily schedule?
  - Need adult supervision for school drills?
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3. In-home and Community-based training

- Does the child need a specific schedule and cues to adjust socially at home with family members?
- Does the parent/family have access to adequate resources to implement appropriate strategies to foster social/behavioral skills?
- Does the family need assistance to support transition process from home to school or school to home?
  If yes, what agency was the parent referred to?

4. Positive Behavior Support Strategies

- Is the student unable to follow school-wide rules and discipline plan?
- Is the student unable to follow classroom rules?
- Does the student:
  - Have a difficult time understanding the consequences of his/her behavior?
  - Require consistent implementation of reinforcement strategies to achieve specific social behavior?
  - Display a pattern of socially inappropriate behaviors within a specific time of day or environment?
  - Display a pattern of positive behaviors after the implementation of specific behavior modification strategies?
- Does a Functional Behavior Assessment need to be developed to address the behaviors in question?
- Does a Behavior Intervention Plan need to be developed based upon the FBA?

5. Futures Planning

- Does the student need assistance with resources to transition to postsecondary environments and/or daily living skills within the community?
- Does the family have access to resources regarding transition from daily home life to daily life within the community?
6. Parent/Family Training and Support

- Does the family have access to a qualified organization with qualified staff to assist with the acquisition of appropriate social/behavioral skills?
- Are the resources provided diversified in nature to foster consistent implementation of appropriate strategies to address social/behavioral skills?
- Does the training provide for consistency between environments?

7. Staff-to-Student Ratio

- Is the student participating in a research-based program that requires intensive interventions from the school personnel?
- Does the student:
  - Need assistance to adapt to daily schedule changes such as transitioning from one environment to another?
  - React to changes in noise levels within the same environment or transitioning to another environment?
  - Need visual or physical cues, including those initiated by educational staff to adjust to changes within the daily schedule?
  - Need adult supervision for school drills?

8. Communication Interventions

- Does the student:
  - Need access to assistive technology?
  - Behavior improve with the use of assistive technology?
  - Behavior worsen with the use of assistive technology?
  - Require speech/language services?
- Is the use of assistive technology necessary across settings?
- Has the student tried a picture-based system?
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9. Social Skills
- Does the student:
  - Have a difficult time interacting with peers or joining a play group or game?
  - Have trouble working with peers in a small group or group of peers in the classroom?
  - Have difficulty generalizing appropriate social behavior from one setting to another?
  - Prefer to be by themselves in a social setting or classroom?
- Could the student benefit from a social skills curriculum?

10 & 11. Professional Educator/Staff Support and Teaching Strategies based on research
- Do the staff working with the student have general training about autism and strategies to implement the IEP?
- Does the teaching and support staff have access to research-based practices to support the implementation of a student’s IEP?
- Does the teaching and support staff have access to assistive technologies to support the implementation of a student’s IEP?
- Does the school site have access to research-based practices and teaching strategies to support the implementation of positive behavioral systems/social skills training?

Review
- IEP team is not required to institute all these suggestions, only discuss each one.
- Not a mandate to adopt specific strategies.
- Most of these should be covered in the IEP already.
- Whether a consideration is followed or not, it needs to be documented.
- Be prepared to advocate!
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Additional Resources

- Public Education Department Website (www.ped.state.nm.us)
- Texas Project First (texasprojectfirst.org/AutismStrategies.html)
- Autism Internet Modules (autismininternetmodules.org)
- Center for Development and Disability (cdd.unm.edu)
- Center for Development and Disability Library and Information Network (cdd.unm.edu/infonet)

Questions?

- Mike Courtois, Autism Programs, Center for Development and Disability, University of New Mexico: courtois@salud.unm.edu

Thanks to:
- Pat Osbourn, Autism Programs, Center for Development and Disability, University of New Mexico (Best Practices to Consider When Developing IEPs for Students with ASD)
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- Texas Project First for parent advocacy tools