

# Advocating for Students with ASD

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Presented by  
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While we are waiting...

Hi,

In the Q & A box, please share with me your **role** as it relates to students with Autism (caregiver, teacher, etc.).

Please also share the **ages** of the students you would most like to hear about.

Thanks!

# Outline

- Introduction and general disclaimer
- Evaluations, Early Childhood and Early Intervention
- Backwards planning
- Research-based methodology
- Communication
- Functional Behavior Assessments/Behavior intervention Plans
- Generalization
- Resources

# Intro and General Disclaimer

- Elizabeth Hooper background
- Disclaimer: There are a broad range of needs and profiles for students with autism
  - Range of functioning in relation to intellectual, communication and behavioral functioning.
  - Range of co-morbid conditions
  - *In addition to all the things that make each child unique... “Once you’ve met one child with Autism....you have met one child with Autism3*
  - Presentation will not attempt to cover all needs for all children with autism.

# Evaluations, EI/ECE

## • Evaluations

- Put request in writing; school has 14 days to respond
  - Schools may not focus predominantly or exclusively on academics in their evaluations but must consider all areas of the child's functioning at school (20 USC 1414(c)(1))
    - This includes social, emotional, behavioral functioning, and executive functioning skills (plan, organize, manage impulsivity, etc.)
    - Should include observations (may ask for multiple observations across time, activity, and locations)
  - Must meet to consider "information about the child provided to or by the parents" ((20 USC 1414(d)(4)(A)(ii)(III)), including their private clinicians

## • Early Intervention and Early Childhood

- Efficacy of getting help early

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/0WedKRi7-KDBMLF8JtH2Mm1RtFJeu1E1BeBYM2K3Rlk7djOU5Bti31hHAN6DvzSYzPdIxALIVCkGEXgG.bEi\\_optll3lZH1fg?continueMode=true](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/0WedKRi7-KDBMLF8JtH2Mm1RtFJeu1E1BeBYM2K3Rlk7djOU5Bti31hHAN6DvzSYzPdIxALIVCkGEXgG.bEi_optll3lZH1fg?continueMode=true).

# Backwards planning

“need to learn skills to meet post-secondary goals as it relates to...” *see Transition part of IEPs 14 ½ yrs and older*

## 1.) Independent living

- Hard skills: self-care, hygiene, cooking, budgeting.
- Soft skills-safe relationships, self-advocacy/functional communication, and executive functioning skills –such as use resources.

## 2.) Further education

- Hard skills: tracking and turning work in on time, written expression
- Soft skills-positive relationships, self-advocacy/functional communication, and executive functioning skills –such as planning.

## 3.) Future employment

- Hard skills: job-specific tasks
- Soft skills-positive relationships, self-advocacy/functional communication, and executive functioning skills –such as planning

# Research-based methodology

- a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, **based on peer-reviewed research** to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child (20 USC 1414 (d) (1) (A))
- Check the intended population for the program(s) should include students with autism
- Check on the training required to implement the program appropriately
- Check that the minutes and the programming components are “provided with fidelity”
- Ask clinician to give concrete and clear recommendations, such as, the curriculum (scope and sequence + instructional methods), number of minutes of services, setting, size of group, and training for the implementer.
- A few research-based methodologies for that may be appropriate for students with autism
  - **ABA** –for behavior, adaptive learning needs, and an approach to learning
  - **Visualizing and Verbalizing** (Lindamood Bell) –reading comprehension
  - **Michelle Garcia Winner** materials-social and emotional development
  - **Dawson & Guare** materials-executive functioning skills



# Communication

- Social communication
  - Establish need and baseline- **peers** across settings and activities.
  - Adult facilitation is hard but not impossible-can ask for: push in minutes, preview social plan, structured peer groups.
    - Request direct speech minutes (may co-treat with social worker)
  - High and low tech-Assistive Technology(AT)-included in **Special Factors & Autism Consideration** portions of the IEP

# Communication, continued...

- Functional communication
  - Focus on “Communicative intent”
  - Removing barriers
  - Proactive/often visual supports
    - how are staff **anticipating** communication needs
    - what supports are provided **in the moment** that works for the student
  - Again, look for high and low tech supports
  - Help staff see the connection between possible behavior challenges and functional communication needs.

# Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluation

(20 U.S.C. [1412](#)(a)(1), [1412](#)(a)(12)(B)(i))

- “I am requesting an AT evaluation...”
  - Put your request in writing
  - Feature match (cognitive, motoric, social)
  - Trial in context
  - Training and monitoring
  - Within the Special Factors, section.
    - All students need to be considered for Assistive Technology

# Functional Behavior Assessments(FBA) & Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)

(20 USC 1414(b)(2)(c))

- All behavior is communication, **what** is the child doing and **why**.
- **BCBA** and/or autism specialist
- **Operationally define behaviors**
- Interest inventories
- Be proactive about plan, training, and documentation of **restraint & seclusion**

# How to Promote Generalization

- Written instructional plans —included in **Supports for School Personnel** section of the IEP
- **Observation** –see school/district policy
  - Parent and/or Clinician observation –ask for an IEP meeting to consider information
- **Home/school communication**
  - **Systems** for communication with home –can ask to note in: accommodations, BIP, and/or notes sections of the IEP, research-based ideas include:
    - Monthly team meetings
    - Weekly summaries
    - Daily, targeted communication
  - **Collaborating**
    - Advocate that private clinicians regularly communicate with school staff

## Resources

- ISBE's "The Parent Guide"

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf>

- Council of Parent Advocates and Attorneys

<https://www.copaa.org/>

- Equip for Equality

<https://www.equipforequality.org/issues/special-education/>

- See if your district has a special education PTA

- Assistive Technology resources for Illinois

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Assistive-Technology.aspx>.

- "A Guide to Special Education Advocacy" by Matt Cohen, 2009.

# Upcoming MCA Webinars

- Part 1: Understanding Your Rights and Recognizing Red Flags (free)  
September 28  
12:00 – 1:30 PM  
REGISTER: <http://ow.ly/UiST50KuXri>

Part 2: Advanced Advocacy Strategies (\$50)  
October 12  
12:00 – 2:00 PM  
REGISTER: <http://ow.ly/2uos50KBGIJ>