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**An Evaluation of Program and Personnel
Preparation Needs for Students with
Autism Spectrum Disorders**

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Introduction

The overall purpose of this project was to conduct a program evaluation of services provided to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) across all school divisions within the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (MERC). Two phases of the project occurred between the spring of 2007 - fall of 2009. During the first phase the MERC Policy and Planning Council identified Autism Spectrum Disorders as an area to target for investigation. A MERC Autism Study Team was formed with representatives from all school divisions within the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (MERC). After several meetings, the Autism Study Team identified the need for the development and validation of a program evaluation tool that could be used to self-evaluate their current services for students with ASD, and identify personnel preparation needs related to the provision of those services. The activities related to the first phase were completed in the fall of 2008. In the spring of 2009, the second phase of the study began. During this phase the MERC Autism Study Team targeted the goal of conducting a self-evaluation within each school division using the program evaluation tool developed in the first phase. The intent of the second phase was for school divisions to identify program strengths and gaps with the purpose of targeting areas for program improvement and personnel preparation development. The outcomes of both phases were presented to the MERC Policy and Planning Council in February 2010.

Background

Autism Spectrum Disorders is a neurodevelopmental disorder that manifests itself through the presence of impairments in social relationships, language and communication deficits, and display of repetitive and stereotyped behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). In 1992, Autism became a federal disability category included in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Since that time a rapid growth in the prevalence of students with ASD has occurred along with an increased attention for school divisions to meet the needs of the children and youth through the provision of free appropriate educational services as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A parallel trend to the increasing prevalence of students with ASD was the increased focus on the use of evidence-based practices to meet the needs of these children and youth and the utilization of highly qualified teachers to teach them (NCLB, 2001). Although a number of evidence-based instructional strategies are available to address the needs of children and youth with ASD, there has been disagreement between advocates, family members, educators and the scientific community regarding the most efficacious approach that meets the needs of all students with ASD (for a discussion, see Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, & Kincaid, 2003).

ASD represents a wide range of symptoms that are displayed along a continuum of severity. For instance, some individuals with ASD may be highly intelligent and verbal but demonstrate significant impairments in the

areas of social interactions and restricted interests. Whereas, other individuals with ASD may have significant intellectual impairments, limited communication abilities, and engage in repetitive, stereotypic behaviors. Although ASD is a life-long condition, these symptoms may change as individuals' progress through their lives and are provided high quality services that address their needs. Given the heterogeneity of ASD, many professionals have suggested that no single intervention approach or program can meet the needs of all students. However, there is agreement among many in the field that the program for students with ASD should include a number of core components including: (1) supportive and structured learning environments, (Dawson & Osterling, 1997; Hurth et al., 1999; Powers, 1992), (2) family involvement (Dawson & Osterling, 1997; Hurth et al., 1999; National Research Council, 2001; Powers, 1992), (3) early intervention (Hurth et al., 1999; National Research Council, 2001; Powers, 1992), (4) curricula focusing on communication and social interaction (Dawson & Osterling, 1997; Hurth et al., 1999; National Research Council, 2001; Powers, 1992), (5) integration with peers (Powers, 1992), (6) predictability and routines (Dawson & Osterling, 1997), (7) functional approach to problem solving (Dawson & Osterling, 1997), (8) planned transitions between preschool and primary grades (Dawson & Osterling, 1997), (9) individualized supports and services (NRC, 2001), (10) systematic, planned instruction (NRC, 2001), and (11) intensity of engagement (Hurth et al., 1999; NRC, 2001). (For a comprehensive review

of research in each of these areas, see Iovannone, R., Dunlap, G., Huber, H., & Kincaid, D., 2003).

One challenge for educators is communicating to family members and others the nature of their educational programs serving students with ASD. As required by IDEA, all students served under the eligibility category of Autism should receive a free appropriate educational program in the least restrictive environment. Additionally, their educational services should be individualized and outlined on their Individual Education Program (IEP). Evaluation of students' progress toward their individual educational goals and objectives is also an important part of their educational services. Through progress monitoring, educators can assure that students are making continual growth toward meeting their goals and objectives. Although some educational services for students with ASD may be provided in a self-contained school or classroom, many of these students receive their educational programming in general education classrooms along with their same age peers. Thus, programs for students with ASD vary according to the individual student's strengths and educational needs.

Due to the focus on individualized service provision for students with ASD, program-wide evaluation has not been emphasized within school divisions. Several states have developed program evaluation tools that have been used to examine individualized components of programs serving students with ASD. However, each of them has limitations. A comprehensive review of the literature and existing tools indicated that a

program-wide evaluation tool, that staff within school divisions can use to conduct self-evaluations of their programs, does not currently exist. Thus, with the increasing number of students with ASD served in schools, there was a need to develop a tool that examines program-wide services for students with ASD across the classroom, school, and district level. The purpose of this project was to develop a program evaluation tool to determine the usefulness and applicability for conducting self-evaluations of school-based programs serving students with ASD. Once validated, the tool was used with school division staff to conduct a program-wide self-evaluation of their services for students with ASD.

Method

This project occurred in two phases: development and implementation. The purpose of the first phase was to develop and evaluate the utility of a program-wide evaluation model for use by teachers and related service personnel working with students with ASD. In the second phase the researchers were charged with the task of facilitating self-evaluations of the services provided to students with ASD by school divisions and to identify program strengths and gaps and areas for program improvement and personnel training. The method implemented and findings are discussed below.

The Autism Program Evaluation Tool for the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium

The Autism Program Evaluation Tool for the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium was developed after a thorough literature review and review of other program evaluation tools during phase one of the project. The final tool is a three-part rubric where various indicators of program quality are rated as insufficient, emerging, and exemplary. The tool measures indicators of program quality across ten domains of educational practice.

- Behavior Change Elements
- Comprehensive Educational Programming
- Environmental Elements and Visual Supports
- Instruction
- Parent and Family Support
- Team Process
- Data Collection
- Functional Communication Systems
- Paraprofessional Support
- Social and Peer Relationships and Support (see Appendix A)

Each domain contained different numbers of indicators. Table 1 provides the descriptions of the domains and the number of indicators for each.

Table 1

The Autism Program Evaluation Tool for the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium by Domain and Indicators

Domain	Number of Indicators	Description of Domain
Behavior Change Elements	13	Essential elements of managing behavior in classrooms and for individual students
Comprehensive Educational Programming	8	Individualized planning related to the IEP and to individualized instruction on a daily basis
Environmental Elements and Visual Supports	11	Classroom design and the use of visual schedules and instructions
Instruction	8	Practice observed in the classroom while instruction is delivered
Parental and Family Support	4	Inclusion of parents and family members in the education of their child/family member with an autism spectrum disorder
Team Process	5	Development of interdisciplinary teaming for the program and for individual students
Data Collection	3	Collection of data to evaluate success of instruction and educational program
Functional Communication Systems	6	Instructional and environmental supports to assist individuals with ASD improve their ability to communicate
Paraprofessional Support	6	The use of collaboration with paraprofessionals as a part of the educational team
Social/Peer Relationships and Support	6	Educating typically developing peers about ASD and supporting them in peer tutoring and friendship development

Table 2 provides an example of the description of select indicators from the tool itself.

Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports

Table 2
*Sample Indicators from the Autism Program Evaluation Tool for the
 Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium*

Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports			
Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary
1. The environment is instructionally and visually organized and cues expected behavior.	Environmental arrangement does not cue expected behavior. The purpose for areas is not clear upon entering. Spacing does not accommodate individual needs or task requirements.	Environmental arrangement cues expected behavior and the purpose of most areas is obvious. Spacing is determined by group needs and instructional task.	Areas are clearly defined and readily apparent upon entry. Environment maximizes student focus through arrangement, which emphasizes instructional or leisure purposes and cues expected behavior. Spacing is appropriate for individual needs and instructional task.

Once developed, the tool was presented to the MERC Autism Study Team Members for input and to finalize the indicators.

Distribution of the Program-wide Evaluation Tool

During the second phase of the project the program-wide evaluation tool was distributed to the MERC Autism Study Team Members for dissemination in two formats. In May 2009, a print version of the tool was

distributed via the members of the MERC Autism Study Team to teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, and administrators who are involved in programs for individuals with ASD in their school divisions. This resulted in a very low response rate. Thus, the distribution was reformatted to an online version via the online survey tool Survey Monkey. The online version was distributed again to the MERC Autism Study Team via e-mail. The MERC Autism Study Team then forwarded the link to their teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, and administrators who are involved in programs for individuals with ASD. This method resulted in a significantly higher response. The final response resulted in the completion of 119 tools. Information regarding the total number of tools distributed in comparison to the total number returned is unavailable; thus, it is impossible to calculate a response rate.

Findings - Results

Respondents

The respondents for this report were professionals and paraprofessionals from each of the school districts who participate in the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium. Specifically, personnel from the following school districts participated in this project:

- Chesterfield County Public Schools
- Colonial Heights Public Schools
- Hanover County Public Schools
- Henrico County Public Schools

- Hopewell Public Schools
- Powhatan County Public Schools
- Richmond City Public Schools

These school districts are diverse and represent urban, suburban, and rural schools. The majority of respondents for this particular project were special education teachers (69.6%), currently certified to teach (61.5%), part of an educational team serving a person with ASD (91%), teaching in an elementary school setting, (41.6%), teaching in a self-contained classroom (58.6%), teaching in a classroom designed to serve students with ASD, (56.4%) and teaching students with classical autism (72.3%). Table 3 provides the actual percentages describing the respondents to this study.

Table 3
Respondents

Professional Role of Respondent	Actual Percentage
General Education Teacher	4.4
Special Education Teacher	63.7
Paraprofessional	1.8
Related Services Personnel	19.9
Other (School Psychologist, Mentor Teacher, School Social Worker, etc.)	10.6
Grade Level Represented in Respondents	Actual Percentage
Preschool/Kindergarten	14.5
Elementary School	41.6
Middle/High School	31.9
Other (Multiple Grades)	12.4
Type of Classroom Represented in Respondents	Actual Percentage
Self Contained Special Education Classroom	58.6
Resource Special Education Classroom	11.7
General Education Classroom	9.9
Other (All settings described, individualized therapy room)	19.8
Characteristics of Students with ASD Served	Actual Percentage
PDD-NOS	30.4
Asperger Disorder	42.9
High Functioning Autism	45.5
Classical Autism	72.3
Other (Autism and Intellectual Disability, Severe Disabilities, and Other Disorders)	8.0

In order to complete the program-wide evaluation tool, respondents self-rated their performance or program on each indicator. Consequently, these findings are limited by the nature of self-report. There was no effort to verify the self-ratings of the respondents.

Results across Domains

In order to report the findings from this instrument the researchers tabulated the total scores from each domain and calculated an average score for each domain. Table 4 lists the results of that calculation.

Table 4
Average Scores from Each Domain

Domain	Average Score
Behavior Change Elements	2.23
Comprehensive Educational Programming	2.50
Environmental Elements/Visual Supports	2.82
Instruction	2.63
Parental and Family Support	3.00
Team Process	1.80
Data Collection	2.00
Functional Communication Systems	2.67
Paraprofessional Support	2.50
Social/Peer Relationships and Supports	2.16

These findings suggest that the respondents indicated relative strengths in the delivery of programs for individuals with ASD. Those areas were Parental and Family Support, Environmental Elements and Visual Supports, Functional Communication Systems, and Instruction. Specifically, respondents rated themselves highest in the following indicators:

- Parent and Family Support
 - Parents are notified/invited to meetings
 - Information is shared with family members daily
 - Families are valued and respected

- Environmental Elements and Visual Supports
 - The environment is maximized for student focus
 - Instructional materials are available to students
 - Group and individual schedules are available
 - Adults communicate respect
- Functional Communication Systems
 - Thorough evaluations are conducted on individual students to identify communication supports and systems
 - A variety of strategies are used to teach communication
 - Students are expected to communicate across settings, staff, and day
- Instruction
 - Student attention captured and maintained during instruction
 - Instructional materials are concrete and visual
 - Instruction maximizes hands-on, active learning
 - Adult affect demonstrates enthusiasm and the expectancy of success

These areas are all very important to the success of students with ASD. They also indicate that the professionals and paraprofessionals serving students with ASD have relative strengths upon which to build when attempting to improve program quality for students with ASD.

There were also relative weaknesses noted by the respondents on this tool. The domains where respondents scored themselves lowest were team

process, data collection, social and peer relationships and supports, and behavior change elements. The specific indicators that the majority of respondents rated low were:

- Team Process
 - Teams meet inconsistently
 - Students are not invited to participate
 - Teams inconsistently hold each other responsible for decisions
- Data Collection
 - *Some* data are available to document student progress
 - Data is shared only when problems arise
- Social and Peer Relationships and Supports
 - Information about ASD is not shared with peers
 - Adults explain social situations once they become problematic
 - Peer buddies and partners receive little follow-up and follow along support
- Behavior Change Elements
 - Students are provided *some* opportunities for self management
 - *Some* adults use too much verbal language and demonstrate feelings of frustration toward the student
 - Behavior change plans include few strategies for teaching new skills based on the function of the behavior
 - Staff and families do not receive training and support in implementing the BIP

- Plans are implemented inconsistently

These domains and indicators present a picture of how the teachers, related services staff, and paraprofessionals view their own strengths and professional development needs in their own classrooms and programs.

Discussion

These findings provide important information for the school districts involved. The relative strengths and training needs provided by this project can be viewed as areas where professional preparation and program plans can be developed. Specifically, the researchers were able to identify key areas where the school districts involved can improve their program. Those areas include increasing the consistent application of evidence-based practice. Most respondents indicated inconsistency with implementation. This relates to the fidelity with which teams implement practices. Most respondents indicated inconsistency with implementation.

Schools could improve programming for individuals with ASD by emphasizing the team process in training and in scheduling. This particular area requires training and systems change. That is because this domain requires skill on the part of team leaders and time for meetings. Thus, a skilled team leader may be able to facilitate their team and accomplish tasks, but only if there is time in the school day to accomplish such facilitation.

School personnel identified training needs in the area of data collection to measure the effectiveness of instruction and program design.

This is a critical aspect of evidence-based practice for individuals with ASD. School districts should increase training regarding data collection and assure consistent implementation of data monitoring as a regular part of their programming.

School personnel also indicated a need for increased social and peer relationships and supports. In this particular domain, schools could improve their programming by developing age reference modules that educate peers about ASD and increase the use of peer mentoring and other peer-based interventions. This would require providing additional supports to peer buddies as well. In this particular area, public schools have a strength over private special education programs. Because of the ready availability of typically developing peers, school districts could lead development and verification of evidence-based practice in the area of peer mentoring and social skills training through peer modeling.

Finally, school districts should increase teacher access to professionals who are skilled in the implementation of applied behavior analysis in school settings, especially related to the functional assessment of problem behavior. This is a specialized area of knowledge and skills that take intensive training and professional preparation to acquire. Consequently, it may be in the best interest of school teams to have designated trained professionals available to teams when they support individuals with ASD who display challenging behavior.

Limitations

These recommendations are the result of teacher and other school personnel self-report on The Autism Program Evaluation Tool for the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium. While these findings can be helpful to school systems desiring to improve the quality of their programs for students with ASD, they are limited in several ways. First, approximately 40% of those who started the tool did not finish it. This may limit the applicability of findings from the indicators that are toward the end of the tool. The tool is quite lengthy and could be improved by completing it in sections. Second, there may be differences in the responses from the paper and pencil version and on-line version of this instrument. There were not enough responses from the paper and pencil version to allow any comparison. The researchers were unable to test if any difference existed between the two versions of the tool, though this is likely a minimal concern because the text was identical on both versions. Third, while there were respondents in every category of professional and paraprofessional in school districts, the respondents for this project were overwhelmingly special education teachers. Thus, these findings may not generalize to other professionals in the school system. Finally, this tool was a self-report tool. As mentioned earlier, there may be a difference between self-report and actual practice. It is possible that these results would be different if they were correlated with actual practice by an outside observer.

Conclusions

The purpose of this project was three fold: (1) to develop and evaluate the utility of a program evaluation model for use by teachers and related service personnel working with students with ASD; (2) to conduct self-evaluations of the services provided to students with ASD; and (3) to identify program strengths and gaps and areas for program improvement and personnel training. To that end, this project was successful in achieving those aims. In the future, this tool could be used for program evaluation and planning, as it was in this case. Additionally, select sections could be used by supervisors and program evaluators during classroom observations, to assist professional development teams in identifying priorities for inservice training, and to assist professional and paraprofessional staff in developing their own staff development plans.

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Appendix A:

MERC Autism Program Evaluation Tool

Autism Program Evaluation Tool

Metropolitan Education Research Consortium (MERC) Autism Project
Virginia Commonwealth University

The Autism Program Evaluation Tool was developed by the Metropolitan Education Research Consortium (MERC) at Virginia Commonwealth University in collaboration with participating school districts in the Greater Richmond Area to develop a comprehensive program evaluation tool for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve across instructional settings. The tool consists of evidence-based supports and strategies demonstrated to be highly effective practices in teaching and programming for students with ASD.

The tool is **NOT** designed as a measure to evaluate teachers but is intended to assist teachers and teams in creating programs using evidence-based strategies and supports. The tool will assist in the identification of areas that require further development and training among existing programs and will promote program cohesiveness throughout school divisions.

The Autism Program Evaluation Tool is divided into ten (10) sections. The sections may be considered individually or as a whole based on the needs of the teacher or team completing the tool. Each item is rated as "Insufficient," "Emerging," or "Exemplary" with detailed examples highlighting each rating scale. The ten sections are as follows:

1. Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide	6. Team Process
2. Comprehensive Educational Programming	7. Data Collection
3. Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	8. Functional Communication Systems
4. Instruction	9. Paraprofessional Support
5. Parental and Family Support and Involvement	10. Social/ Peer Relationships and Supports

Team Member:	Position/Title:	School/Program:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Directions: As an individual teacher or with a team, complete the autism program evaluation tool by marking the level of current performance (Insufficient=1, Emerging = 2, and Exemplary =3) for each skill, indicator, and support area in each of the ten sections. Use the detailed examples to provide a frame of reference for rating. Items marked as insufficient and emerging signify an area of weakness to be addressed by the teacher/team for program enhancement. Develop steps toward improvement in the column titled “Action Plan.” The “Summary of Target Areas for Improvement” page at the end of the tool may be used as a working document to monitor areas in need of improvement.

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide	1	2	3	
1. Classroom rules and expectations are posted and understandable.	1 Classroom rules are not posted, are inappropriate for students in the classroom, are not clear, or the majority are stated negatively (stating what not to do rather than telling the student what to do).	2 Classroom rules are posted but a few are negatively stated (e.g. don't...) rules are difficult for students to recognize/comprehend without constant redirection or support	3 Classroom rules are positively stated and posted. Rules are presented in a manner that is meaningful to the students. Visual supports accompany written rules. Expectations are explicitly taught.	
2. There is a balance of positive and negative feedback given to students in all environments.	1 The ratio of negative feedback to positive feedback is unbalanced. Attention is provided to challenging behaviors with little attention to positive behaviors.	2 The ratio of negative and positive feedback is balanced but inconsistent from day to day. Feedback is dependent on adult affect.	3 The ratio of positive and negative feedback is in balance consistently. Students are aware of expectations in all environments and can predict feedback responses based on behavior.	
3. Students are exposed to opportunities that increase their self determination and self management skills.	1 Students are not provided opportunities that promote self determination and self management skills. Adults lead and direct all activities.	2 Students are provided some opportunities for self determination and self management. These opportunities are controlled by the adults and adults intervene often. Students are not provided direct instruction or given feedback.	3 Students are provided opportunities for self determination and self management throughout their day. Skills are explicitly taught and feedback is provided for both positive and negative experiences.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide		1	2	3		
4. Staff and parents consistently use effective interaction strategies when challenging behaviors occur.	1	Interaction strategies vary across adults and settings. Staff uses too much verbal language, physically interacts with the student, and demonstrates frustration or anger in their actions.	2	Interaction strategies are fairly consistent. Some adults use too much verbal language and demonstrate feelings of frustration toward the student. Physical interactions are limited and only occur when safety is an issue.	3	Staff and parents are in agreement and have received training on effective interaction strategies to use when challenging behaviors occur. Verbal language is decreased, staff remains calm and ensures the students safety without physical engagement unless absolutely necessary as outlined by school standards and intervention plans.
	5. Effective strategies that prevent challenging behavior are implemented for all students with ASD: a. Functional communication Systems b. Visual Supports and Strategies c. Peer Supports d. Movement within activities e. Motivation Strategies f. Ordering of activities g. Pre-teaching/ Pre-corrects	1	Strategies may be in place for a few students but are delivered inconsistently on a daily basis.	2	Strategies are implemented for the majority of students on a consistent basis. Staff is trained in the strategies being used and understands the purpose of the strategy.	3
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide		1	2	3		
6. For students who have challenging behavior, a functional behavioral assessment, including direct and indirect methods with consideration to the function of the behavior, is used to assist in strategy development for behavior plans.	1	Functional behavior assessments are not used and there is no consideration of the function of the behavior when developing behavior intervention plans.	2	Functional behavior assessments are used but use limited methods of assessment. The function of the behavior is considered and is often addressed in strategies developed to reduce the challenging behavior.	3	Adults address inappropriate behavior based on function and systematically teach and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Strategies are developed for teaching replacement behaviors that serve the same function as the inappropriate behavior.
7. A collaborative team including parents and administration is established to conduct and analyze information gathered from the FBA and establish a behavior plan.	1	The team consists of professionals without, or with limited input, from the family. The FBA is analyzed and a behavior plan is written outside the context of the team.	2	Professionals and parents are members of the collaborative team. Professionals play the primary role in gathering and analyzing information and establishing a behavior plan. Parent contribution is limited to gathering of information on an as needed basis.	3	Professionals and parents work collaboratively to conduct and analyze the information gathered from the FBA.
8. Comprehensive intervention plans are developed based upon hypotheses that result from a current and appropriate functional behavior assessment.	1	Goals are based on previous hypotheses without data support and do not reflect the current situation. The plan is not comprehensive or based on an assessment.	2	Goals and strategies are based on the current assessment and not reflective of personal opinions of staff. The function of the behavior is addressed and replacement behaviors and strategies are sometimes incorporated into the plan.	3	The plan is comprehensive and addresses the function of the behavior and provides replacement behaviors for all targeted behaviors.
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide	1	2	3	3	
9. Developed behavior intervention plans include antecedent strategies (Proactive strategies intended to prevent behaviors from occurring), strategies for teaching and prompting new skills (e.g. communication, social skills, independence, choice making, etc.), and non-emotional, non-verbal, and non punitive strategies for responding to behavior when it occurs.	1	Interventions focus on reducing the challenging behavior without teaching appropriate alternatives. Little consideration is given to antecedents or setting events that may be linked to the function of the behavior. Consequences are punitive and global in nature.	2	Strategies for reducing challenging behaviors include some immediate antecedent or setting events and include a few strategies for teaching new skills based on the function of the behavior. Consequences are non punitive and punitive in nature.	Modification strategies include immediate antecedents and setting events that occur outside the classroom/school setting. Strategies are included that address the function of the behavior and provide for the teaching of alternative skills that serve the same function as the challenging behavior.
10. Staff and families implementing intervention plans are provided ongoing training and support regarding the implementation of strategies in the plan.	1	Staff and families do not receive training or support outside of the FBA/BIP team meetings. It is assumed staff or families will ask for help when they need it.	2	Training is offered to staff and sometimes includes families immediately following the development of an intervention plan. Follow up training or support is given as requested.	Ongoing training and support is offered equally to staff and families following the development of an intervention plan. Follow up training and support occurs on a scheduled basis. Additional support is provided as needed.
11. Developed plans are implemented consistently in all environments and with all adults.	1	Classroom staff and other members of the collaborative team are the only adults aware of the intervention plan. The student is subject to other methods of intervention and discipline in the school setting.	2	All staff are aware of the intervention plan and attempt to implement it but do so inconsistently across environments.	All staff is aware of the intervention plan and is supported in their implementation of the plan in all environments. The plan is implemented with consistency.
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide		1	2	3		
12. Reinforcement strategies are incorporated into the student's typical day and behavior plans to include contrived and natural reinforcement.	1	Positive reinforcers are not utilized, are not contingent upon appropriate student behavior, or do not function as reinforcement for the student. Adults use the same reinforcers even when their value is questionable (e.g. food right after a student finishes eating)	2	Positive reinforcers are used when the student is not motivated in order to elicit compliance. Adults tend to use the same reinforcers over and over.	3	Positive reinforcers are individually identified and used to maximize student motivation. Student's are provided frequent feedback on their appropriate behavior and high levels of reinforcement are present. Reinforcers are varied to prevent satiation. Factors that influence reinforcement are considered.
	13. Self-management strategies are proactively taught and reinforced in all educational settings	1	Behavior management plans do not consider independence and self management. Adults ignore minor misbehavior and hope that the students will pick up that the behavior is incorrect. Feedback is not directly given.	2	Behavior Management plans promotes independence and self management through some transfer of control. For example, when distractions occur, adults tell the student what to do to cope in the moment.	3

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary		Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
	1	2		3			
Comprehensive Educational Programming	1	2		3			

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. Academic goals are developed based on the general education curriculum and also address core deficit areas relating to ASD (i.e. attention, imitation, communication, social skills, play/leisure, independence, and cognitive flexibility)	1	Academic activities consist of meaningless readiness tasks or are not linked to the general education curriculum. There is no evidence of active instruction. Core deficit areas are not addressed.	2	Academic activities may be linked to the general education curriculum but promote splinter skills or consist of repetitious practice in related skills. Core deficits may be targeted but only in isolation	3	Academic activities are related to IEP goals that target skills important for immediate and long term independence. Instruction is based on the present level of student performance and embedded within the context of instruction on grade level state performance standards. Relevant and meaningful activities are emphasized	
2. Effective instructional practices are used to support skill development and are embedded into ongoing meaningful classroom activities and routines.	1	Instruction relies on one or two formats such as one to one or small group but does not employ other strategies.	2	Instruction is provided through several formats including one to one, small group instruction, play, and peer mediated interaction.	3	Instruction is provided through a full variety of formats and strategies to enhance skill development. Strategies such as pre teaching and task analysis are also embedded into routines and activities.	
3. Repeated, planned teaching opportunities are generally organized around relatively brief periods of time and alternate with student-directed opportunities and activities. Length of instructional period depends on age and ability of the student.	1	Only a few instructional activities occur during the day, often for extended periods of time. All activities are teacher directed. Most of the day is spent in meaningless activities or in waiting.	2	Most of the school day is spent on meaningful instruction and development of skills. Students spend part of the day (beyond earned break times) without structured activity and are not engaged in meaningful instruction.	3	The majority of the school day is devoted to meaningful instruction and development of skills. Students have ample opportunity to direct their learning with support. Instruction is designed with the abilities of the student in mind.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Comprehensive Educational Programming	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

4. Appropriate prompting procedures and consequences are embedded into ongoing meaningful classroom activities and routines	1	Instruction does not demonstrate intentional, systematic fading of prompts. Consequences are sporadic and inconsistent.	2	Some systematic fading of prompts occurs but prompts are not entirely removed. (e.g. 1:1 assistant continues to be present or adult continues to give verbal prompts.) Consequences are provided but do not hold meaning for the child.	3	Instruction demonstrates intentional, systematic fading of prompts. Consequences are provided consistently with meaning for the student.	
5. Appropriate criterion-referenced assessments/environmental inventories are used to determine target skills for the IEP.	1	The IEP is not individualized and relies on instruction that is provided to large groups rather than individualized. Target skills are randomly selected without the use of assessments.	2	Criterion-referenced assessments and environmental inventories are used but may not be appropriate. The IEP is individualized based on student needs using information obtained from assessments.	3	Appropriate criterion-referenced assessments and environmental inventories are used to determine target skills and individualize instructional goals for the IEP.	
6. Specific academic accommodations and modifications to the general education curriculum are selected and implemented based on individualized needs and reflected in the IEP goals.	1	If present, global accommodations/modifications are included in the IEP and are not based on individualized needs nor reflected in the IEP goals.	2	Academic accommodations and modifications are included in IEP goals. Some accommodations and modifications are individualized while others are global and not based on the student's individual needs.	3	Accommodations and modifications are individualized and implemented throughout the student's programs. A system is used to determine appropriate grading based on accommodations/modifications (ex. Grading matrix)	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Comprehensive Educational Programming	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

7. Skills in the domain areas of play/leisure, daily living, and vocation are addressed in the IEP and embedded in the student's curriculum.	1	Students are not provided structured opportunities for leisure activities. Skills necessary for independent functioning are not taught as students are helped by an adult at all times and instruction provides limited benefit/use for post-school environments.	2	Students have opportunities to engage in leisure activities and are spontaneously instructed as adults are available. Functional and self-help skills are taught at specific times and are not embedded throughout the day. Specific skills useful in post school environments are taught but with a limited set of materials or fake materials.	3	Students are specifically taught how to spend leisure time and have opportunities to choose and engage in activities with instructional feedback. Functional and self-help skills are embedded in the curriculum and are explicitly taught as needed. Instruction reflects a clear vision for maximizing success in post-school environments.	
8. Individualized reinforcer assessment occurs regularly; reinforcers used are individualized and presented contingently.	1	The same reinforcers are used repeatedly with all students without consideration to their effectiveness and are not contingent on behavior. Most reinforcers are contrived and do not naturally occur.	2	Reinforcer assessments occur randomly after reinforcers have satiated. Adults alternate or pair contrived and natural reinforcers inconsistently. Reinforcers are usually contingent upon behaviors.	3	Reinforcer assessments occur on a regular basis to increase the pool of reinforcers that can be used by adults. Naturally occurring reinforcers are used as much as possible to increase student learning and performance (e.g. receive help when requested). Reinforcement is always contingent on behavior.	

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. The environment is instructionally and visually organized and cues expected behavior.	1	Environmental arrangement does not cue expected behavior. The purpose for areas is not clear upon entering. Spacing does not accommodate individual needs or task requirements.	2	Environmental arrangement cues expected behavior and the purpose of most areas is obvious. Spacing is determined by group needs and instructional task.	3	Areas are clearly defined and readily apparent upon entry. Environment maximizes student focus through arrangement which emphasizes instructional or leisure purposes and cues expected behavior. Spacing is appropriate for individual needs and instructional task.	
2. Students have access to instructional materials.	1	Instructional materials are inaccessible to students due to locks or other barriers placed by adults. Independence in the classroom is limited thus students rely on adult assistance in all activities.	2	Most instructional materials are accessible to students but some barriers exist. Moderate assistance is required to obtain most materials.	3	The majority of instructional materials are independently accessible to students. Minimal assistance may be required to obtain some materials due to location and safety issues (e.g. on a tall shelf).	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

3. A daily schedule of activities is used by students and staff: individual schedules are used as necessary.	1	Group and/or individual schedules are not available. If they are available, visual schedules are resented in formats meaningless to the students (e.g. text for nonreaders). Schedule changes are not conveyed to the students until they occur.	2	Group and/or individual schedules are in place and use a visual presentation that is meaningful to the students (objects, photos, icons, words). Sequencing concepts are taught and implemented intermittently. If possible, changes in the schedule are highlighted for advanced student preparation.	3	Group AND individual schedules are consistent, clear, predictable, and presented in a visual format that is meaningful to the student (objects, photos, icons, words). Students preview and review schedules periodically. Sequencing concepts are taught and implemented (first, next, last, start, finish etc). Changes in schedules are highlighted with as much advance notice as possible to prepare students for change.	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging			
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

4. Composition of daily schedule is meaningful and meets needs of students	1	Schedule does not reflect specific needs of students. Balance between work and leisure is not developmentally appropriate. Activities for students are repetitive, redundant, and unappealing. Students are expected to engage in activities longer than they are able. Activities may last too long or time spent waiting may be extensive.	2	The schedule addresses the needs of students as a group with some modification as necessary for individual students. Daily schedule usually reflects developmentally appropriate balance of work and leisure.	3	Expectations for each student's schedule accurately reflect his or her abilities (e.g. length of time spent working). Daily schedule reflects developmentally appropriate balance of work and leisure. Non-preferred activities are interspersed with highly preferred activities. Expectations for participation may vary by student (e.g. one student may leave group activity after a few minutes to return to individual work)	
5. Individual visual schedules require the student to interact with the schedule	1	Individual schedules are posted but not actively used by the student. Adults primarily interact with the schedule. Little reference to the schedule is provided to the student.	2	The individual schedule is located in a central position or is carried by the student. The student is required to change the schedule (e.g. remove pictures, cross out activities) although an adult often cues students with directions prior to them checking the schedule.	3	The individual schedule is always accessible to the student. Students check their own schedule between each activity. Students transition as independently as possible. Adults may cue students with a generic phrase such as "check your schedule" or "what's next?"	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

6. Sub/Mini schedules are used as needed	1	Classroom schedules or individual schedules that compose the entire school day are available. Activities are not broken down into smaller units for the student.	2	Some activities are broken down into smaller units with sub/mini schedules for the student but is not consistent across all environments.	3	Based on individual needs students are provided with sub/mini schedules in all environments to assist with participation in learning activities.	
7. Transition supports are used consistently	1	Adults tell students when to change activities. Warning is not provided prior to transition. Adults may cue transitions indirectly (e.g. "are you ready for PE?"). Adults may change the transition midway through and direct the student to a different activity. Students are told to transition before the adult/task is ready resulting in extended wait time.	2	Transitions are structured in a way that meets the needs of the group as a whole. Students typically have preparation before transitioning (e.g. verbal warning, "five more minutes"). Transition cues are sometimes ignored (e.g. timer goes off and nothing happens). Transitions may take too long to complete.	3	Transitions are suitably structured as determined by student's needs (e.g. transition item that represents next activity; verbal cue). Students are prepared for transitions through predictable activities/signals (e.g. timer, song). Transition cues are followed consistently (e.g. when timer goes off the students transition). Transitions occur quickly to minimize wait time. Unnecessary transitions are minimized.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

8. Visual supports and strategies are used to enhance predictability in the environment.	1	Visual supports are not used when making requests, giving directions, providing instruction, and encouraging participation despite a need for such support by one or more students. Adults rely on talking to convey information.	2	Visual supports are used to clarify requests, give directions, provide instruction, and encourage participation as determined by the needs of the whole group. Some modifications are made as needed for individual students. Adults tell them what to do to get ready for every activity instead of teaching them the skills to get ready.	3	Visual supports are used when making requests, giving directions, providing instruction, and encouraging participation. Visual supports are tailored to match student needs and include icon, written, and/or sign language formats. Students are supported in organizing themselves for activities with concrete reminders of what materials are needed/sequence should be followed.	
9. The environment considers sensory needs and provides a place for calming.	1	There is no place for private time to calm or meet sensory needs. If there is a place students are also directed to go there as punishment. Materials that could be used to address sensory needs are not apparent.	2	There is an area available for private time and sensory needs, but the space also serves another function. Students can access this space only as directed by an adult. Materials to address sensory needs are available but students may appear disinterested in the sensory materials.	3	There is a distinct place where students can have private time to calm themselves and engage in sensory based activities. Students can access this space as needed. Thoughtful consideration has been given to the materials and activities in the area. Student requests for sensory stimulation or calming are granted.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

10. Environments promote respect for the students and staff.	1	Adults talk at or about students/ other adults rather than to them and discuss problems within the students hearing. Adults are unkind in their interactions with students and other adults. Materials and activities associated with younger children are frequently used. Students may be asked to do things for adults' entertainment.	2	Adults communicate respectfully by interacting graciously most of the time. A few inappropriate materials are used. Adults talk to students and other adults instead of at or about them and discuss problems in private.	3	Adults communicate respectfully for students by interacting graciously, talking to them instead of about them, and providing chronologically age-appropriate materials and activities. Student successes are celebrated publicly and problems are discussed in private.	
11. Environments promote independence among students.	1	Adults "do" for students rather than encouraging them to perform tasks independently.	2	Students are encouraged to perform routine tasks independently, but are not expected to try new tasks independently.	3	Students are expected to perform routine tasks with minimal assistance. Appropriate supports are provided so that new tasks/expectations can be performed independently (e.g work system, jig, procedure list). Students are expected and encouraged to function as independently as possible.	

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Instruction	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. Verbal language is clear and concise.	1	Verbal language is the primary mode of conveying information without highlighting relevant information. Students are not given time to process the information. Extraneous auditory information is present.	2	Adults may use more words than necessary to convey relevant information. Some extraneous auditory information is present. Student processing time is inconsistent.	3	Adults use clear and concise verbal language paired with visual supports to convey essential information and allow sufficient processing time. Unnecessary auditory information (conversations between adults) is minimized.	
2. Selective focused attention is obtained and maintained throughout times of instruction.	1	Instruction is provided without first capturing student attention. No effort is made to sustain attention or adults yell to regain attention when there is not an emergency.	2	Student attention is most often captured and directed to instruction. Adults may not always attempt to regain student attention.	3	Student attention is consistently captured and directed to instruction. Adults incorporate strategies to maintain student attention (e.g. vary tone/cadence of presentation to heighten interest)	
3. Explicit teaching methods are used during instruction	1	Instruction includes abstract information that may not be understood or meaningful to the student. Concepts and expectations are inappropriate for the student's abilities.	2	Most concepts and expectations are taught using concrete materials to maximize student understanding. Most activities are presented in a clear, concrete manner. Instructional prompting occurs consistently	3	All instruction and materials are presented in a concrete manner to facilitate student understanding. Activities/tasks are structured to match student abilities. Instructional prompts are used effectively.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Instruction	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

4. Active learning	1	Instruction rarely includes opportunities for student engagement, hands-on active learning, or student responding.	2	Frequent opportunities are provided for student engagement and hands-on active learning. Opportunities for student responses occur intermittently after a period of adult instruction. Instructional pace may need to be improved. Students are not engaged while waiting for others to finish.	3	All instruction maximizes opportunities for student engagement and hands-on active learning. Differentiated instruction is used to promote frequent responding. Multiple strategies are used to enhance engagement. Students may begin another activity if they finish early.	
5. Student Interests	1	Student interests are not integrated into classroom instruction.	2	Student interests are integrated into classroom instruction in a few activities.	3	Student interests are purposefully integrated into classroom instruction across all activities and content areas/domains.	
6. Adult affect	1	Adult affect communicates disinterest or apathy. Praise is not given enthusiastically and instructions are in monotone. Adults talk too loud or too soft and may sound sarcastic or patronizing.	2	While inconsistent, adults appear to be enthusiastic about instruction. Adults use appropriate tone of voice and voice volume during most instruction.	3	As appropriate for students, adult affect demonstrates enthusiasm and expectancy of success. Adults use appropriate tone of voice and voice volume during instruction.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Instruction	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

7. Spontaneous learning	1	Student's spontaneous use of learned skills is rarely acknowledged, encouraged, or reinforced. Adults do not create opportunities outside of instruction for demonstration of skills.	2	Student's spontaneous use of learned skills is often acknowledged, encouraged, and reinforced. Demonstration of skills is sometimes encouraged, modeled, prompted, and expanded by adults outside of instruction.	3	Student's spontaneous use of learned skills is always acknowledged, encouraged, and reinforced. Adults create opportunities outside of instruction to encourage, model, prompt, and expand the demonstration of skills in a variety of contexts with a variety of adults and peers.	
8. Maintenance and generalization	1	No consideration is given to application of training outside the classroom. Individuals outside the classroom are not involved in promoting skills development. Instruction rarely includes opportunities for students to practice skills or use skills in novel settings or contexts.	2	Some opportunities are planned for the student to practice skills in other contexts and with other adults/peers. For example: parents may be asked to practice skills at home. As opportunities arise, others in the environment are directed to encourage students' demonstration of skills. Instruction sometimes includes opportunities for students to practice skills and use those skills in novel settings and contexts	3	Training is provided to others in the school environment so that they can recognize and support skill use. Instruction includes frequent opportunities for students to practice skills and use those skills in novel settings and contexts.	

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Parental and Family Support and Involvement	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. Families are supported as active participants in the education of their child.	1	Families are not notified of meetings in a timely manner and do not have the opportunity to provide input for goal development. Professional language is used and not explained to the family (jargon, technical terms etc).	2	Families are typically provided sufficient notice of meetings and are provided an opportunity to offer input into goal development and programming. Families are provided with information to assist them in understanding the nature of the educational team at their request. Some professional jargon is used but an effort is made to avoid it.	3	Families are always notified of meetings with as much notice as possible. They are provided information regarding the purpose of the meeting and an opportunity is afforded to them to provide input and gain clarification. Families are provided necessary information to assist them in being active participants of the team. Professional language is explained to the parents and attempts are made to avoid it if possible.	
2. Families are provided with information, resources, trainings, services, and other topics of interest to the family.	1	Information is not shared with families.	2	Information is shared with families only by request of the family.	3	Information is shared with families frequently. The information is useful and promotes collaboration between the school, family, and community.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Parental and Family Support and involvement	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

3. Family dynamics, needs, culture, language, values, and parenting style are respected and valued.	1	Families are blamed for the issues related to their child with ASD. Professional language is used and not explained to the family (jargon, technical terms etc).	2	Typically families are valued and respected as unique units. Adults will sometimes blame the family for problems or events that are challenging based on the dynamics, needs, culture, language, values, and parenting styles without gaining further clarification.	3	Families are valued and respected as unique units despite differences they may present. When problems arise, an open line of communication is developed and the family is considered instrumental in the education of their child.	
4. A system for regular communication that is individualized and appropriate is in place for every family.	1	On-going and reciprocal communication has not been established. Communication is confrontational and negative (focused on challenges and deficits). Jargon, acronyms, and technical terms are used without explanation.	2	On-going and reciprocal communication is established that primarily addresses challenges of the student. Families are not expected to respond. The format of communication is not consistent for sharing information.	3	Communication with families is provided daily in a consistent format that provides an opportunity for the family to respond. Accomplishments and challenges are highlighted.	

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Team Process	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. An interdisciplinary team (general education, special education, school social worker, school psychologist, speech pathologist, etc.) have regularly scheduled meetings (i.e. monthly/bimonthly) to address class/building wide issues as well as individual needs of students with ASD.	1	Teams meet inconsistently and without consistent participation.	2	The team meets on a regular basis but participation across disciplines is limited. The meetings are not structured or outcomes based. The majority of the conversation is negative in nature.	3	The team uses the meeting time effectively and efficiently by having a standard meeting format (facilitator, agenda, note taker, etc) and staying on task. A problem solving process with an action plan is used.	
2. Systems of follow-up for decisions made at team meetings, action plans, and problem solving process are in place.	1	There is little to no follow up regarding decisions made at team meetings. It is assumed people will complete tasks and follow through with decisions. There are no checks and balances.	2	There is some follow-up for decisions and action plans. The problem solving process is vague and not always utilized efficiently. Team members revisit decisions but take no further action based on results.	3	A concrete system for problem solving is in place and all members of the team are familiar with it and use it effectively. Decisions are routinely reviewed on a consistent and frequent basis. Revisions to decisions and new action plans are developed.	
3. Students are active and contributing members of the team.	1	Students are not invited to participate in the meeting and are not considered to be contributing members of the team.	2	Students are invited to meetings but may not be prepared or expected to participate.	3	Students are invited to all meetings. Proactive measures are in place to prepare the student for active participation and contribution during the meeting.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Team Process	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

<p>4. Administration plays an active part in the team process throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation at meetings • Support to ancillary staff • Review of student progress • Support to non-instructional staff 	<p>1</p> <p>Administration is present at meetings but does not actively participate. Administration is unfamiliar with issues surrounding the meeting and student progress. Support is only provided when sought by staff.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Administration participates during meetings when necessary. Administration has limited knowledge of student progress and other relevant issues. Administration is actively supportive of staff and regularly checks in with staff.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Administration is an active member of the team and regularly participates in meetings.</p>	
<p>5. Administration performs formal and informal observations and evaluations of the program.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Administration is unfamiliar with the type of programming needed for ASD does not perform observations or evaluations except those required for teacher employment. The teacher is provided ultimate responsibility of student success or failure.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Administration performs formal observations and evaluations as required by the school system for teacher employment. Informal observations occur when challenges or problems arise. They do not typically “drop in” to observe activities.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Administration completes formal and informal observations frequently to monitor the program for ASD. They are familiar with educational strategies and methods used in teaching students with ASD.</p>	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Data collection	1	2	3	
1. Data are collected on all IEP objectives regularly, i.e. at least weekly.	1 Data are sporadically collected and do not fully document student's progress. Data review, summary, and analysis are inconsistent and/or incomplete.	2 Some data are available to document student's progress. Data review, summary, and analysis are frequent, complete, and ongoing.	3 Sufficient data (permanent product or other systematic procedure) are collected to provide a complete picture of the student's progress including behavior and skill acquisition data. Data review, summary, and analysis are consistent, comprehensive, and ongoing.	
2. Data are summarized, analyzed, and used to make instructional decisions.	1 Data are not used in developing and refining student's objectives.	2 Data are used to modify student's objectives.	3 Data are used as the basis for decision making for modifying student's goals and objectives as well as making decisions about changes that may be needed in the program/classroom.	
3. Data summaries are shared with parents and IEP team members.	1 Data summaries and analyses are shared with parents and all team members only during IEP meetings. Information is not provided prior to meetings. Data may not be graphed.	2 Data summaries and analyses are shared with parents and all team members only when problems arise. Data summaries are shared with team members upon request prior to the IEP meeting. Some data is graphed.	3 Data summaries and analyses are shared with parents and all team members on a regular basis. Information is provided prior to meetings to enable team members to arrive at the meeting prepared for discussion. All data is graphed and easily understood.	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Functional Communication Systems	1	2	3	
1. A thorough evaluation of communication forms (PECS, visuals, gestures, etc) and functions (requests, protests, etc) are assessed for each student with ASD.	1 Evaluation measures are not used to identify the forms and functions of communication in all students with ASD. Different forms are randomly tried and adults guess to the function of the communicative intent.	2 Thorough evaluations are conducted on some students but not all. Generally the same communication form is used for a group of students without identifying individual needs.	3 Thorough evaluations are conducted on all students. Individual programs reflect individualized communicative forms and address the communicative functions. Systematic teaching methods are used to promote student use of communication and language.	
2. Functional communication systems that are appropriate for the environments and needs of the student are developed and available for each student with ASD.	1 Communication systems are not appropriate for the needs of the student or the environments in which they are used. The communication system is not readily available to the student nor is it used effectively by the student.	2 Communication systems are readily available to the student in the educational setting and meet the needs of the student. The student is unable to use the system without direct support. The communication system does not transfer across environments.	3 Communication systems are readily available to the student and meet the student's needs in all environments, including educational, home, and community settings. The student is able to effectively use the system with independence.	
3. Appropriate instructional strategies are used to teach the communication systems: a. Pairing b. Prompting c. Modeling d. Shaping e. Using preferences to motivate	1 Students do not receive direct training on how to use the communication system but are expected to learn it by trial and error.	2 Some strategies are used to directly teach the student to use the selected communication system. The strategies used may not be appropriate and are not modified based on student success/failure.	3 A variety of strategies are used to teach the communication system to the student. The strategies are assessed for success and modified as necessary to increase student learning and independence.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

Functional Communication Systems	1	2	3	3	
4. The communication systems are portable, available, and used in all environments (home and school).	1	Communication systems are unavailable to the student on a daily basis and are used only in select environments.	2	Communication systems are portable and often available to the student. The systems are used in multiple environments but without consistency.	Communication systems are portable, available at all times and used in all environments in a consistent manner. Alternate methods of communication are provided on the occasion the system is not available.
5. Communication opportunities are maximized, attempts are recognized, evaluated for intent, and shaped.	1	Students are not expected to communicate during daily activities, even though they may be capable. Adults have limited interaction with students unless they are giving directions or providing instruction. Adults ignore unconventional communication and do not shape conventional communication. Communicative intent is not analyzed.	2	Students are expected to use their existing vocabularies but vocabulary expansion is not systematically encouraged. Adults initiate opportunities for interactions but don't always wait for a response. Adults miss some opportunities for interaction (e.g. adults talking to each other). Adults inconsistently respond to attempts for communication. Opportunities to shape conventional communication are missed. Functional alternatives to inappropriate behavior may be taught but not consistently responded to.	Students are expected to use their existing vocabularies in daily activities and are encouraged to expand grammatical structure and sophistication. Opportunities for conversation are created and communication is encouraged throughout all contexts and activities. Adults consistently respond to student's verbal and nonverbal communication even if the form is unconventional. Unconventional communication is shaped and the student is systematically taught functional communicative equivalents.
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)

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Functional Communication Systems	1	2	3	
6. Communication skill data are collected regularly and used to guide programming.	1 Data is not collected on communication skills. Programming is not meaningful to the student and is inappropriate for the student's individual needs.	2	3 Communication skill data is collected primarily by speech and language staff in speech therapy. Data in other environments is inconsistent. The data is sometimes used to guide programming. Generally programming is designed for group instruction.	3 Individual communication skill data is collected on a regular basis in all environments and is used to guide individual programs. Speech pathologists and educators work collaboratively to design programs appropriate for individual needs.

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Paraprofessional Support	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. Paraprofessionals are only assigned when the student needs direct academic, behavioral, or social support.	1	The adult to student ratio is unbalanced. Adults are assigned to students without trying alternative methods.	2	Paraprofessionals are assigned as demonstrated through data collection methods after alternative methods have been attempted.	3	Paraprofessionals are assigned after alternative methods have been attempted and are used only when needed by the student to promote independence. Support is systematically faded as data demonstrates support is no longer necessary.	
2. Paraprofessionals are used to assist students in learning systems that allow for maximum levels of independence.	1	Adults "do" for the students rather than encouraging independence.	2	Adults allow students to do routine tasks but are not allowed to try new tasks or problem solve independently.	3	Students are expected to perform routine tasks with minimal assistance. Appropriate supports are provided for new tasks. Students are expected and encouraged to function as independently as possible.	
3. Paraprofessionals receive specific and direct instruction and supervision regarding their IEP responsibilities to the student(s).	1	Paraprofessionals are unfamiliar with the IEP and unaware of the expectations of the teacher to implement the IEP.	2	Paraprofessionals are familiar with the IEP and provided instruction/supervision upon request or when a problem arises.	3	Paraprofessionals are familiar with the IEP and receive direct instruction and supervision from the teacher and administrative staff regarding their IEP responsibilities to the student. There is open communication and ongoing learning opportunities provided.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Paraprofessional Support	1		2		3		

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

4. Paraprofessional training and mentoring are offered regularly and required for paraprofessionals working with students with ASD.	1	Paraprofessionals do not receive training regarding ASD and are expected to "just know" or learn on their own.	2	Paraprofessionals are offered classroom and system-wide training on an infrequent basis. Follow up to trainings is not provided.	3	Paraprofessionals are offered ongoing classroom and system wide trainings and are encouraged to seek additional training through local and state means. Follow up is provided after trainings on a regular basis.	
5. Paraprofessionals and teachers communicate on a daily basis regarding accomplishments and challenges of the student.	1	Communication between paraprofessionals and teachers is sporadic and focuses primarily on student challenges.	2	Teachers and paraprofessionals discuss student accomplishments and challenges occasionally.	3	Teachers and paraprofessionals communicate effectively at least once a day regarding student progress. Teachers and paraprofessionals work collaboratively in regard to the student's daily program.	
6. Paraprofessionals are considered part of the educational team and are valued for their participation.	1	Paraprofessionals do not attend meetings regarding students with whom they work. The educational team shares limited information with paraprofessionals. Input from paraprofessionals is not considered.	2	Paraprofessionals are invited to meetings but not always relieved of their duties so that they can attend. Input from paraprofessionals is often considered by the educational team. Information is typically shared with paraprofessionals and their input is valued.	3	Paraprofessionals are invited to and expected to attend educational team meetings. Their input is valued and all information is shared with them regarding the students with whom they work. Open lines of communication are established and maintained among the team members.	

Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Social/ Peer Relationships and Supports	1	2	3	

Adapted from Enhancing Instructional Contexts for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (EIC-ASD), PDA Center/Idaho Autism Strand Program Assessment, & Universal Supports Assessment and Planning Tool (USAPT).

1. Information about ASD and the students with ASD are provided to the typical students in the classroom/building in a way that respects parental preferences.	1	Information is not shared with typical students. If students ask about students with ASD generic and global responses are given.	2	Information is shared with students but only as requested by parents.	3	Information is shared with students using age appropriate and meaningful methods to assist the students in understanding the nature and impact of autism. Parents and staff collaborate to determine information to be shared. Parents are invited to be present at trainings and student privacy is maintained.	
2. Staff use a range of evidence based instructional strategies to plan daily opportunities for children with ASD to interact successfully with typically developing peers.	1	Social skills are not explicitly taught and students are not assisted in understanding social conventions and situations. Teachers assume the student "knows better".	2	Social skills are explicitly taught during the day (e.g. "social skills instruction"). Global social skills are typically the focus of instruction. Adults explain social situations as they become problematic and/or model correct responding. Individualized strategies are not assessed.	3	Students' social abilities are individually assessed and critical social skills are explicitly taught throughout the school day. Every interaction is treated as an opportunity to teach, practice, and reinforce social behavior. Social understanding may be taught using social stories, social autopsies, social review, social reading, social scripting, comic strip conversations, video modeling, modeling and practice.	
Skills, Indicators, and Supports		Insufficient		Emerging		Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Social/ Peer Relationships and Supports	1		2		3		

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3. Staff encourages, trains, and supports peer partners/buddies to interact appropriately and effectively with students with ASD.	1	Staff does not actively encourage interactions with peers and may act as a barrier to interactions. Peers do not receive training or support in their interaction attempts.	2	Peer partners/buddies are provided training but receive little follow up training and support. Interactions are sporadically monitored for effectiveness. Peer partners are not changed frequently.	3	Training is provided to peer partners/buddies on a scheduled and routine basis. Ongoing support is offered to peer partners and interactions are routinely monitored for effectiveness. Staff and peer partners have open communication and address successes as well as problems as they arise. Peer partners are interchanged frequently.	
4. Staff consider Mediums of Exchange (activities/events that link the student with ASD with typical students) to promote effective interactions with typical peers.	1	No consideration is given to activities or events prior to the occurrence. Interactions with typical peers are haphazard and often ineffective.	2	Mediums of Exchange are often considered. Selected activities and events may not be appropriate for effective interactions.	3	Consideration is always given to activities and events that will link the student with ASD to typical peers to promote effective interactions. Preplanning for possible interactions using social instruction strategies (e.g. role play, social stories, scripting). The appropriate use of adults as supportive agents is also considered.	

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Skills, Indicators, and Supports	Insufficient	Emerging	Exemplary	Action Plan (who, does what, by when)
Social/ Peer Relationships and Supports	1	2	3	
5. Staff provides positive feedback to promote and maintain social interactions and do not interfere with ongoing positive interactions.	1 Staff does not reflect upon or provide positive feedback for appropriate interactions because this is "what they should do." Staff intervene and "takes over" interactions with peers even when there is not a problem.	2 Staff frequently provides positive feedback to promote and maintain social interactions. Staff sometimes interferes with ongoing positive interactions.	3 Positive feedback for positive interactions is always provided to both students with ASD and typical peers. Staff actively refrains from interfering in ongoing positive interactions. Staff may step in to keep the interaction going but then removes themselves.	
6. Social interactions and positive social behaviors are recognized as important, facilitated, and supported school wide by all staff (administrators, teachers, custodial staff, etc).	1 Social interactions are not fostered or embedded in daily activities throughout the learning environment. Interactions are often inappropriate (e.g. talking to a middle school student in a sing song voice.)	2 Appropriate interactions are fostered by most staff in most environments. Some inappropriate interactions occur and are not routinely corrected. Staff sometimes recognizes the social value in daily activities but missed to foster positive social behaviors and interactions.	3 All staff across environments recognizes the importance of positive social interactions and behaviors. Staff recognizes and creates opportunities to foster interactions and positive social behaviors. Interactions are developmentally and age appropriate across settings.	

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Summary of Target Areas for Improvement

<i>Skill, Indicator, Support Area</i>	<i>Item numbers</i>												<i>Action Plan</i>
Behavior Change Elements: Classroom/School wide	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	13												
Comprehensive Educational Programming	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8					
Environmental Elements/ Visual Supports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8					
Parental and Family Support and Involvement	1	2	3	4									
Team Process	1	2	3	4	5								
Data Collection	1	2	3										

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