My Child’s Doctor Diagnosed Him with Autism—Doesn’t he Qualify for Special Education?

By Wendy Overturf

One of the first places parents often turn when they are concerned about their child’s development is the child’s pediatrician. This was the case when the parents of a five-year-old child consulted with their physician as they believed that their child was delayed in social interactions and language development. Upon several examinations and analyses, the pediatrician determined that the child met the medical criteria for a diagnosis of autism. More information on the medical criteria for an autism diagnosis can be found in the DSM-5. In addition to the many recommendations given to the parents, the physician suggested that they contact their local school district because with a medical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), does not automatically entitle a student to special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Eligibility for special education services is based on an educational determination of a disability, which includes meeting not just the criteria for autism, but also finding that a student needs special services.

Educational eligibility for special education in the area of autism is decided by an IEP team comprised of various school professionals and a student’s parents. The IEP team makes special education eligibility determinations from the evaluations they conduct. The IEP team must determine whether the student meets the educational impairment criteria and, as a result, needs special education services. While the medical diagnosis did not determine eligibility for school-based special education services, it was still important that the parents shared this information with the IEP team. It should be also noted that a medical diagnosis of autism is not required for parents to initiate a school-based evaluation for autism.

In this particular case, the IEP team did determine that the child qualified using the eligibility criteria for autism as set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and an IEP was developed and special education services provided.

Questions about autism: Jessica Nichols, WI DPI Educational Consultant, Autism, Emotional Behavioral Disabilities, Mental Health & Trauma, (608) 266-1218, jessica.nichols@dpi.wi.gov.
Upcoming Statewide Events

2017 Wisconsin Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Conference
The Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) promotes the social and emotional well-being of Wisconsin children from birth through age five by supporting families and professionals across disciplines. WI-AIMH efforts focus on weaving relationship-based infant mental health practices and principles into the everyday activities of all individuals who touch the lives of infants, young children, and their families.

Date: June 12-14, 2017
Location: Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake, WI
Information and Registration Link

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2017
Sponsored by IndependenceFirst & WI FACETS

Who: For high school students with disabilities who are interested in becoming leaders and advocates for themselves and others with disabilities.

What: A FREE summit all about leadership, advocacy, college, careers, and healthy relationships. Meet other teens and learn how to plan for your future.

5-day summit, 10-4 daily.
Application must be accepted. Limited to 20 students for each date.

When/Where:
June 19-23, 2017 Milwaukee location
At Independence First
July 10-14, 2017, Mequon location
Mequon Nature Preserve
Information and Application—contact: mzeller@wifacets.org
Or 414-374-4645, ext. 203

Wisconsin Summer Inclusion Institute
Offering a variety of information on Best Practices in Inclusion, this Institute is co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Inclusion Institute, Inc. Registration opening soon.

Date: July 24-26, 2017
Location: Wausau, WI
Information and Registration Link

Endless Possibilities Conference
Save the Date: August 3, 2017
Location: UW-Whitewater, WI

HOME-BASED LEARNING

Check out the April literacy calendar for children ages 0-5 and ages 6 and up. April has earth day, tell a story day and pretzel day!

Looking for iPhone or iPad apps to help your struggling reader but don’t know where to start with all the options available? This App Wheel will help you narrow it down according to your needs.

For your early learners, practice daily fun activities that will encourage those pre-literacy and pre-math skills!

Earth Day and nice weather give us plenty of inspiration to take our learning outdoors. Reading is Fundamental curated this list of fun nature activities to keep your child’s gears turning.

Batter up! Baseball fans look forward to opening day in April, but you might not be thinking about how math-rich baseball is when you’re watching your first game of the season. Check out PBS’s tips for baseball math.

In celebration of Earth Day, check out these activities about finding math in nature.

Check out this free math calendar which offers a problem a day for grades K-2 and 3-5.

Talking about math with your kids and not showing that math makes you anxious can have positive effects on your children’s math outcomes! Learn more about "math talk.”

Spanish Telephone Workshops

Discapacidades de Aprendizaje (SLD) y Respuesta a la Intervencion (Rtl)
Date: May 11, 2017
Presenter: Martha Lechuga, WI FACETS

Los Derechos del Padre en El Programa de Nacimiento A 3
Date: May 25, 2017
Presenter: Martha Lechuga, WI FACETS

Latino Autism Support Group

Grupo de Autismo: Educacion Especial en Palabras Sensillas
Date: April 22, 2017

Grupo de Autismo: Como Colaborar con la Escuela de su Hijo para Apoyar una Conducta Positiva
Date: May 20, 2017

Location: WI FACETS, 600 W. Virginia St. Suite 501, Milwaukee, WI
Contact: Martha Lechuga
414) 374-4645, ext 224
Online Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Center for Parent Information and Resources
Fact sheet and Information about Autism Spectrum Disorders, tips for parents and teachers, resource links. Information also available in Spanish. [CPIR website]

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
This website has the eligibility criteria for autism, information about trainings, and links to archived webinars. There is also a link to sign up for the email autism newsletter which contains resources and updates relating to autism. Extensive links to additional resources are also provided. [DPI website]

Autism Source
The Autism Source™ Resource Database, is the most comprehensive database of its kind. The Autism Society strives to offer only credible and reliable resources to its constituents, therefore they have employed a nationwide network of affiliates and collaborated with other autism organizations and professionals throughout the U.S. It is because of these collaborative relationships that the database continues to grow and is kept current with comprehensive resource listings. [Autism Source website]

Autism Speaks
Autism Speaks is one of the world’s leading autism science and advocacy organizations. It is dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism, increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. [Autism Speaks website]

My Autism Team
MyAutismTeam is a social network and online support group for parents who have children with autism. [MyAutismTeam website]

MAPP Services
MAPP Services is a non-profit organization that provides information, networking, referrals and printed materials for individuals, families and professionals concerned with autism spectrum disorders. The website has an online forum and links to newsletters, articles, and books related to autism spectrum disorders. [MAAP website]

Autism Risk and Safety Management
Autism training & resources for law enforcement, emergency first responders, parents, educators, care providers & the autism community. [Autism Risk Management website]

Interacting with Law Enforcement
A brief list of tips and considerations when assisting individuals with autism to interact with law enforcement.

Organization for Autism Research
Online videos intended to give educators and others ideas to support students with autism in general education and other settings. [OAR Videos] Direct link to videos OAR web site with other resources and took kits

The Autism Society, the nation’s leading grassroots autism organization, founded in 1965, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. They do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing trusted and reliable information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy. The Autism Society spearheaded legislation resulting in the 2006 Combating Autism Act, the first federal autism-specific law.

The Autism Society’s website is one of the most visited websites on autism in the world and its journal, Autism Advocate, has a broad national readership. The Autism Society hosts the most comprehensive annual national conference on autism. Their Information and Referral team, program staff and state and local affiliates, annually reaches thousands of families and others.

Today, more than 120,000 members and supporters are connected through a working network of close to 100 affiliates nationwide. The Autism Society of WI, provides training and conferences, a quarterly e-newsletter, Yahoo Group (connecting over 1,000 parents and others) and Facebook page. There are seven Autism Society local affiliates in Wisconsin that support families and others.

ASW’s Updated Next Steps Resource Guide
EDUCATOR CORNER

RESEARCH TO READ


Abstract: Parenting programs are one of the best researched and most effective interventions for reducing child mental health problems. The success of such programs, however, is largely dependent on their reach and parental engagement. Rates of parental enrolment and attendance are highly variable, and in many cases very low; this is especially true of father involvement in parenting programs. This paper proposes a conceptual model of parental engagement in parenting programs—the CAPE model (Connect, Attend, Participate, Enact) that builds on recent models by elaborating on the interdependent stages of engagement, and its interparental or systemic context. That is, we argue that a comprehensive model of parental engagement will best entail a process from connection to enactment of learned strategies in the child’s environment, and involve consideration of individual parents (both mothers and fathers) as well as the dynamics of the parenting team. The model provides a framework for considering parent engagement as well as associated facilitators and mechanisms of parenting change such as parenting skills, self-efficacy, attributions, and the implementation context. Empirical investigation of the CAPE model could be used to further our understanding of parental engagement, its importance for program outcomes, and mechanisms of change. This will guide future intervention refinement and developments as well as change in clinical practice.


Abstract: An exploratory, observation-based study sought to strengthen understanding of the development of social communication skills that facilitate academic success, particularly within general education settings. Sixteen middle and high school students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), all of whom participated in at least one period per day of core academic instruction in a general education classroom, were observed over a period of one to three months each. Frequencies of five appropriate and three inappropriate social academic behaviors are described, in terms of their relative frequencies to one another, and their overall consistency over the course of observations. Students observed were more likely to engage in appropriate, facilitative behaviors within the classroom setting than they were to demonstrate communicative symptoms of ASD. Most social academic behaviors were demonstrated at consistent frequencies over time. Implications for educational decision-making, progress monitoring, and future research are discussed.

INSTRUCTIONAL TRENDS

Curriculum Playlists

Think of all the time you spend putting together the perfect playlist for different activities. Now, imagine putting together an instructional “playlist” for each student in a classroom, based upon that student’s progress in the curriculum the preceding day.

This new approach to personalized learning is being piloted with over 11,000 students. A program uses an algorithm based upon assessments done at the beginning of the school year. Then, the algorithm uses data to identify the sequence in which a specific child learns. Eventually, the algorithm will hopefully determine the best lesson type or content to help the child master a particular skill. Students spend 80-90 minutes per class working on the content created for them that day. At the end of the day, students complete a quiz to input data into the algorithm. The teacher of the class won’t know until the end of the day what the lesson plan will be for the next day for any particular student.

Some concerns related to this innovation are algorithmic bias towards African American students, logistics, teachers feeling limited by the technology, and the cost of implementation. Positives are that students with learning disabilities showed academic growth using this system. Read more about curriculum playlists from EdWeek.
Upcoming newsletter topics:
May: Mental Health  June: ADD/ADHD  July: Speech and Language

We want your family engagement success stories!

To submit contributions, you may use either the attached word document for contributing articles, events, or resources. Send submissions to woverturf@wifacets.org. If unable to access form, send you may send information in an email.

Deadline for submitting contributions to each month’s issue is by the 1st of each month. For time sensitive training advertisements, the information should be sent a minimum of two weeks prior to the event date; ideally a month ahead of time. Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to sources of family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles. Family engagement success or impact stories can be written at an individual or family level, classroom level, school building level, district level, county level, CESA level, etc. Your submittal may not be in the final copy of the upcoming month’s newsletter if it was in a previous month’s email, the event date has passed, the web link doesn’t work, or there is already an article in place. Articles and resources will be saved to be used for later newsletters. We reserve the right to edit contributions as needed.

This monthly update is provided by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement.

DISCLAIMER: Inclusion of information in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement by Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI FACETS), the Department of Public Instruction, the U.S. Department of Education, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

NOTE: If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, please go to http://www.servingongroups.org/newsletter-signup or contact: Wendy Overturf at woverturf@wifacets.org.

This document was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H323A070022-11. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or polices of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: