

**Education: Assessing Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**Resource:** *Assessing Autism Spectrum Disorders: Guidelines for Parents and Educators*. Aspy, Ruth, & Grossman, Barry G, (2007). Third Edition. Autism Advocate. pp. 11-14. Available at <http://www.texasautism.com/WorkshopFiles/AdvocateAssessingAutism.pdf>

**Reaction Questions:**

1. Why is it important to seek early identification of ASD?
  - a. What early signs would be evident to warrant consideration for an initial evaluation?
  - b. Why is there sometimes a delay in obtaining an early identification?
2. From your perspective, what are the most important qualifications, expertise, and experience of interdisciplinary assessment team members? How does one determine this?
3. What factors (i.e. race, attitudes, or gender issues) need to be sorted out to make an informed identification?
4. Why is there fear of a label? How can we address these concerns?
5. From your viewpoint, why is interdisciplinary assessment important to your stakeholders?
6. How might assumptions in your school/district/state affect the assessment process?
7. Describe your state's criterion for determining eligibility for ASD.
8. What is the legal process for obtaining an assessment within your school/district/state?
9. In your view, what is the impact of a misdiagnosis?

### **Application Questions:**

1. How does your district/school help families and or school personnel understand and navigate through the assessment process?
2. What procedures does your school/district use to guide the ability to find a child eligible for special education services under the category of autism? What changes, if any, would you suggest to these procedures?
3. In your opinion, what processes/practices can your school/district put into place to promote trust of the team?
4. From your experience, how do you frame assessment questions to ensure you are creating a comprehensive assessment?
5. What steps can your school/district take to develop a more effective interdisciplinary model?
6. Does your state/district/school have guidelines that address interdisciplinary versus multidisciplinary teams? What are those guidelines?
7. How might the district/state/school ensure teachers, related service personnel, and families, who do not have access to accurate information, are provided with the necessary resources and expertise?
8. What can your state/district/school do to ensure that assessment, specifically for ASD, is delivered by highly qualified personnel?
9. How can we train those in our district/school/team to have the knowledge and experience to accurately interpret the assessment instruments?
10. How do we capture the viewpoints, experience and expertise of all team members to create informed consensus?
11. What guidelines might be used within your school/district/state to address eligibility versus diagnosis?

**The following stakeholders worked together within the IDEA Partnership and the Autism Community of Practice to create this dialogue starter.**

Role: Regional Technical Assistance Provider  
Location: Arizona

Role: State Parent Technical Assistance Provider  
Location: California

Role: Related Service Personnel  
Location: Connecticut

Role: Parent/Professional Development Specialist  
Location: New York

Role: State Technical Assistance Provider  
Location: Ohio

Role: Special Education Administrator  
Location: Wisconsin



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