

Needs of the Field

When stakeholders from an array of roles were asked, “What is state of current practice around autism spectrum disorders (ASD)?” they replied:

1. A Vision for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum
 - Individuals on the spectrum maintaining a self-defined high quality of life
 - A common language and consistency of understanding
 - Seamless integration across all systems (e.g., health, mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation) and environments across the lifespan
 - Service provision based on and driven by individual strengths and needs
 - Sustained implementation of evidence-based practices leading to optimal quality of life outcomes
 - Quality professional development/training/support available to individuals with ASD and those who support them
 - State-of-the-art technology consistently available to enhance quality of life throughout the lifespan across all environments
 - High standard of service provision across all service providers in urban, suburban, rural and frontier areas
 - Integrated systems of data collection, decision making and services driven by the individual
 - Comprehensive program planning with seamless transitions across the lifespan
 - Differentiation of instruction and support

2. Identification Of Gaps In The Field
 - Information Gaps
 - Understanding ASD is a whole body condition and that intervention/supports/treatments must occur on multiple levels based on individual strengths and needs
 - Understanding skills and perspectives of all team members
 - Understanding the importance of preservice and ongoing professional development/training/ support for individuals with ASD and those who support them
 - Identifying evidence based practices that are driven by research conducted in home/school/community settings
 - Understanding the role of communication all service providers, family members, and individuals with ASD
 - Understanding eligibility, diagnosis, and identification criteria across agencies and services
 - Understanding that interventions must be matched with individual profiles

- Skill Gaps
 - Designing comprehensive programs based on the strengths and needs of individuals with ASD
 - Implementing person-centered planning to drive programs and support
 - Conducting functional behavior assessments based on underlying characteristics and developing positive support plans across all environments throughout the lifespan
 - Collecting and analyzing meaningful data as well as incorporating individual preferences to inform decision making
 - Coaching/mentoring for educators, service providers, and families
 - Developing and fostering partnerships among educators, service providers, families and community members
 - Implementing evidence based practices with fidelity
 - Using resources to support systems change using implementation and relationship science
 - Eliminating the gap between services in urban, suburban, rural and frontier areas
 - Matching interventions with individual profiles
 - Coordinating intervention/supports/treatments on multiple levels based on individual strengths, needs, and preferences
 - Developing and implementing methods of communicating and sharing information across all service providers and family members

- Processes to Support Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills
 - Seamless integration across all systems (e.g., health, mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation) and environments across the lifespan
 - Integrated systems of data collection, decision making and services driven by the individual
 - A common language and consistency of understanding
 - Cross-stakeholder dialogue at state, district, and local levels
 - Coordination and alignment of knowledge and practice
 - Support by administration across all levels of scale and agency
 - Quality professional development/training/support available to individuals with ASD and those who support them
 - Align eligibility, diagnosis, and identification criteria across agencies and services
 - Coaching/mentoring relationships across all levels of scale and agency

Input for the above document was gathered from an array of cross-stakeholders representing teachers, related service personnel, administrators, families, policymakers, technical assistance providers, higher education, and the US Department of Education.