

## AUTISM CRITERIA

The eligibility for special education and related services appropriate for students with autism shall be determined by the presence of at least two (2) behaviors from Group A, one (1) behavior from Group B, and one (1) behavior from Group C. Consider a criterion to be met only if the behavior is abnormal for the person's developmental level and is not caused by some other disability.

### Group A. Reciprocal Social Interaction

(The following are arranged so that those listed first are more likely to apply to younger or more disabled, and the latter ones to older or less disabled, persons with autism.)

(1) marked lack of awareness of the existence or feelings of others (e.g., treats a person as if he or she were a piece of furniture, toddler does not follow mother around house, does not notice another person's distress, intrudes on others' privacy without realizing it);

(2) absent or abnormal seeking of comfort at times of distress (e.g., does not come for comfort even when ill, hurt, or tired; seeks comfort in a stereotyped way, such as always wanting a bandage to be applied when in pain regardless of the cause);

(3) absent or impaired imitation (e.g., does not wave bye-bye, does not copy mother's domestic activities, mechanical imitation of others' actions out of context);

(4) absent or abnormal social play (e.g., does not actively participate in simple games, prefers solitary play activities, involves other children in play only as "mechanical aids");

(5) gross impairment in ability to make peer friendships (e.g., no interest in making friends; demonstrates lack of understanding of conventions of social interactions, for example, by inviting children home but then disappearing to own room).

### Group B. Qualitative Impairment of Communication, Language and Symbolic Development

(The following are arranged so that those listed first are more likely to apply to younger or more disabled, and the latter ones to older or less disabled, persons with autism.)

(1) no mode of communication, such as communicative babbling, pointing at objects with eyes, facial expression, gesture, mime, or spoken language;

(2) markedly abnormal nonverbal communication, as in the use of eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body posture, echopraxia, or gestures to initiate or modulate social interaction (e.g., does not anticipate being held, stiffens when held, does not look or smile when making a social approach, does not greet parents or visitors, has a fixed stare in social situations);

(3) absence of imaginative activity, such as play-acting or adult roles, fantasy characters, or animal; lack of interest in stories or imaginary events;

(4) marked abnormalities in the production of speech, including volume, pitch, stress, rate, rhythm, and intonation (e.g., monotonous tone, question-like melody, or high pitch);

(5) marked abnormalities in the form of content of speech, including stereotyped and repetitive use of speech (e.g., immediate echolalia or mechanical repetition of television commercial); use of "you" when "I" is meant (e.g., using "You want a cookie?" to mean "I want a cookie"); or idiosyncratic use of words or phrases (e.g., "Go to green riding" to mean "I want to go on the swing");

(6) marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others, despite adequate speech (e.g., indulging in lengthy monologues on one subject regardless of interjections from others).

### Group C. Markedly Restricted Repertoire of Activities and Interests, as manifested by the following:

(1) stereotyped body movements (e.g., hand-flicking or twisting, spinning, head-banging, rocking or complex whole-body movements);

(2) persistent preoccupation with parts of objects (e.g., sniffing or smelling objects, repetitive feeling of texture of materials, spinning wheels of toy cars) or attachment to unusual objects (e.g., insists on carrying around string);

(3) marked distress over changes in trivial aspects of environment (e.g., when a vase is moved from usual position);

(4) unreasonable insistence on following routines in precise detail (e.g., insisting that the same route always be followed when shopping);

(5) markedly restricted range of interests and preoccupation with one narrow interest (e.g., interested only in winding up objects, in amassing information about meteorology, or in pretending to be a fantasy character).