

Child Development, Autism and Other Disabilities: What to Know and How to Help

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Outline for Guardian Ad Litem

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Presentation for morning of October 23, 2018

NOTES per Todd's needs: "Deitra and I discussed the possibility of her presenting something on child development from an educator's perspective and maybe something addressing special needs children. We are seeing more and more cases of children with **autism**, from mild and high functioning to severely impaired. Knowing something about their **needs**, what reasonable **expectations** we should have **regarding communication and behavior** and appropriate **ways to communicate** with them can be helpful." (*Delete on final draft. Fit within ~1 hour.*)

1.0. Introduction (Deitra)

2.0. Child development (Quentin)

- 2.1. Overview from teacher and parent/guardian perspective
- 2.2. Checklists for developmental milestones (handouts)
- 2.3. Resources for developmental milestones, helpful online links, informal assessments (briefly, what to do if delays are observed[??]), books, etc.

3.0. Law & legal education documents (Deitra)

3.1. Laws

- 3.1.a. **IDEA** (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>) Ensures a *FAPE* (Free Appropriate Public Education) to individuals with disabilities, including special education and related services (PreK-12) [handout]
- 3.1.b. **Person-first language** – being respectful and inclusive, 'see' the *person first*, not the disability (**Say**: 'child *with* autism'; 'little boy *with* behavior problems'; 'children *with* special needs'. **Don't say**: 'autistic child'; 'ADHD boy'; 'special needs children'. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/pdf/disabilityposter_photos.pdf) [handout]
- 3.1.c. **Rights & Responsibilities (Parent Guide)** (https://www.isbe.net/Documents/parent_guide_english.pdf)
- 3.1.d. **Section 504** of the Rehabilitation Act (age 3-22) (<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Civil-Rights.aspx>) Ensures a continuum of services, without discrimination, for those who may have impairments that *substantially* interferes with self-care of major life activities that do not require extensive support, compared to those who qualify under IDEA (Examples may include: asthma, allergies, recovery from surgery, mental health challenges, those with Attention Deficit Disorder or Level I Autism who are high functioning, epilepsy, etc.). [handout]
- 3.1.e. **State of IL Laws** (<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Regulations-Legislation.aspx>)
- 3.1.f. **Confidentiality & your rights to review the child's educational program** – To the best of my knowledge, you have the right and are encouraged to be involved in the child's IEP and or EIFSP. There may be limitations, however, so be sure to double-check. The goal is to provide a continuum of support and services.

3.2. Legal education documents & state of IL Department of Education links

Department of Education

(<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Individualized-Education-Program.aspx>)

Early Childhood Special Education

(<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Early-Childhood-Special-Education-Services.aspx>)

- 3.2.a. **BSP** (*Individual Behavior Support Plan* and is required for all children with an IEP whose behavior *interferes with ability to be successful in school*, accompanied by goals/objectives to improve behavior as part of the child's IEP.)
- 3.2.b. **EIFSP** (Early Intervention Family Service Plan; birth-3)
(<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/ifsp/>)
- 3.2.c. **FBA** (*Functional Behavior Assessment*) [required for all Behavior Support Plans & **requires parent / guardian approval prior to** completing the assessment]
(http://www.ideapartnership.org/documents/ASD-Collection/asd-dg_Brief_FBA.pdf)
Additional FBA source: (<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/discipl.fba.jordan.pdf>)
- 3.2.d. **IEP** (Individual Education Program; PreK-12)
(<https://ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>)
State of IL explanation resource for IEP (<https://www.isbe.net/documents/ch6-iep.pdf>)
- 3.2.e. **ITP** (Individual Transition Plan [required age 14+ and part of IEP])
State of IL source for secondary transition planning
(https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ch8-secondary_transition.pdf)
State of IL requirement to include child in his/her own post-secondary transition planning
(<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Indicator-13.aspx>)

4.0. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (Sensory Processing Disorder) (Deitra)** (handouts)

4.1. **Definition & Facts**

- It is not a mental health disorder.
- It is a neurological disorder that may or may not also include cognitive delays.
- Impairments in 3 key areas: (a) communication, (b) social interaction, & (c) restricted interests & repetitive behavior
- Prevalence: 1 in 59 children (1 in 37 boys and 1 in 151 girls) (CDC, April 2018)

4.2. **Qualifying determination**

4.2.1. American Psychiatric Association levels of severity

- 4.2.1.a. Level I (formerly known as Asperger Syndrome; requires least amount of support, typically high functioning)
- 4.2.1.b. Level II (moderate support, typically able to communicate [with or without additional help])
- 4.2.1.c. Level III (most support, typically unable to communicate or with very limited ability)

4.3. **Typical challenges (NOTE: Autism is a spectrum. Abilities vary.) [insert a side-by-side chart for 'challenge' here's what to do 'intervention' to help them]**

- ✓ Adjusting and or adapting to change, routine interruptions, or new experiences (exposure to new/different things)
- ✓ Anxiety (typically associated with autism)
- ✓ Communication (verbal & nonverbal, Level III typically have minimal to none, difficult to have 'conversation' due to limited interests & inability to interpret nonverbal behavior)
- ✓ Emotions (interpreting, gauging, responding to, etc.)
- ✓ Executive functioning (adhering to schedules & timelines/deadlines)
- ✓ Eye contact (poor to none)
- ✓ Impulsive
- ✓ Impulsive
- ✓ Interests

Literal thinkers (difficulty understanding idioms [It's raining cats and dogs. A penny for your thoughts. Actions speak louder than words. Beat around the bush.]

- ✓ Loneliness
- ✓ Obsessive compulsive tendencies (difficult knowing when to stop)
- ✓ Organization
- ✓ Peer rejection
- ✓ Perspective taking (poor to none)
 - Resource for teaching on-the-job social skills: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/softskills.pdf>
 - Resource to help explain idioms: <http://www.smart-words.org/quotes-sayings/idioms-meaning.html>
- ✓ Seemingly too into themselves
- ✓ Sensory processing (smells, noises, tastes, textures, colors, lighting, sudden movement, motion, etc.)
- ✓ Social skills (difficulty with 'soft skills', nonverbal behavior, understanding & interpreting social rules/norms.)
- ✓ Stimming & other repetitive behaviors: flapping, rocking, humming, scripting, echolalia, self-injurious, fidgeting, impulsive, may appear assertive/aggressive [try to determine function of the behavior – they're communicating something, whether it's to get out of, escape, avoid, etc.]

4.4. **Strengths (NOTE: Autism is a spectrum. Abilities vary.)**

- ✓ Brilliant
- ✓ Dedicated
- ✓ Honest
- ✓ Routine-oriented
- ✓ Sense of humor
- ✓ STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- ✓ Strong memory (fact-oriented)
- ✓ Talented
- ✓ Visual learning
- ✓ Visual-spatial orientation (map reading, sense of direction, 3-D)

4.5. **Dos and Don'ts & what works**

- ✓ (Insert side-by-side 'if this, then do this' for: communication, sensory processing & stimulation, meltdowns & behavioral triggers, positive behavior supports)

4.6. **Resources for Autism**

- ✓ Adjusting and or adapting to change, routine interruptions, or new experiences (exposure to new/different things)

5.0. **Other exceptionalities (Quentin) (handouts)**

5.1. **Behavior disorders (Attention Deficit w/Hyperactivity, w/Impulsivity, combined)**

- 5.1.a. Characteristics
- 5.1.b. Side-by-side chart (challenges, what to do to help)

5.2. **Developmental (cognitive) delays**

- 5.2.a. Characteristics
- 5.2.b. Side-by-side chart (challenges, what to do to help)

5.3. **Specific learning disabilities (dyslexia)**

- 5.3.a. Characteristics
- 5.3.b. Side-by-side chart (challenges, what to do to help)

6.0. **Additional resources**