

Autism Supplement Guidance Document

Questions and Answers, Key Points, and Examples to Help
Implement the Commissioner's Rule Related to Autism



Texas Commissioner's Rule Related to Autism

In recognition of the unique learning needs of students with autism, Texas commissioner rule [19 TAC § 89.1055\(g\) and \(h\)](#) requires that 11 specific strategies be considered and addressed, as needed, in the individualized education program (IEP). These strategies are addressed in a portion of the IEP commonly referred to as the Autism Supplement. Texas Education Agency (TEA) has provided this guidance document to help ensure that all educators understand the requirements and expectations for creating consistent, effective, and legally compliant IEPs.

The Autism Supplement is part of a student's IEP and documentation must be included on all 11 strategies throughout the IEP. Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees must consider strategies based on [peer-reviewed, research-based educational practices to the extent practicable](#). Some information on identified evidence-based practices (EBPs) for autism is included near the end of this document.

This guidance document includes:

- » Answers to frequently asked questions about each section of the autism supplement.
- » Examples of compliant versus noncompliant documentation for each of the 11 strategies, whether or not a strategy is determined to be needed.
- » Additional information to help ARD committee meetings accurately follow the Commissioner's Rule and complete the Autism Supplement during ARD committee.
- » Links in lowercase, like this, that will take you to a related website, resource, or document that supports the information that you are reading.
- » Links with all capital letters, LIKE THIS, that will take you to a legal citation and definition.
- » A resource page that provides links to additional resources on evidence-based practices, research articles, and additional optional tools to assist in the effective completion of the Autism Supplement.

What is the meaning of **"for example"** in the [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\)](#) pertaining to the Autism Supplement?

The phrase **"for example"** is used to denote examples of potential strategies rather than a requirement to use a specific methodology.

The phrase also indicates that what follows are some of the specific strategies/processes that are effective with individuals having autism and that the examples are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. While it is the responsibility of an ARD committee to make decisions regarding the appropriateness of interventions based on assessments and data that show the current, unique needs of an individual student, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to providing services to students with autism, and research alone does not make a strategy most effective. In many situations, several intervention strategies may be implemented at the same time.

Copyright © 2025 Texas Education Agency. All Rights Reserved.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the right to reproduce the copyrighted work is granted to Texas public school districts, Texas charter schools, and Texas education service centers for non-profit educational use within the state of Texas, and to residents of the state of Texas for their own personal, non-profit educational use, and provided further that no charge is made for such reproduced materials other than to cover the out-of-pocket cost of reproduction and distribution. No other rights, expressed or implied, are granted hereby.

For more information, please contact Copyrights@tea.texas.gov.

The Texas Education Agency has developed this document to provide technical assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and parents/guardians. The intention of this document is to provide helpful, general information. It does not constitute legal advice nor is it a substitute for consulting with a licensed attorney. The information should not be relied upon as a comprehensive or definitive response to a specific legal situation. This document may not include a complete rendition of state or federal law.

Throughout this guide when the term “parent” or “parents” is used, the term includes the definition of parent found in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at [34 CFR § 300.30](#). That definition includes biological or adoptive parent, foster parent, guardian, an individual acting in the place of a biological parent with whom the child lives or is legally responsible for the child’s welfare, or a surrogate parent as defined in [34 CFR § 300.519](#).



Table of Contents

Introduction	5
---------------------	--------------------------

11 Strategies from the Autism Supplement

1. Extended Educational Programming	6
2. Daily Schedule	8
3. In-Home and Community-Based Training	10
4. Positive Behavior Support Strategies	12
5. Futures Planning	14
6. Parent/Family Training and Support	16
7. Suitable Staff-to-Student Ratios	18
8. Communication Interventions	20
9. Social Skills Supports and Strategies	22
10. Professional Educator/Staff Supports	23
11. Teaching Strategies	25

Conclusion	27
-------------------	---------------------------

Evidence-Based Practices Resources	28
---	---------------------------

Additional Optional Tools	29
----------------------------------	---------------------------

Introduction

TAC89.1055

(g)

Rule

For students with autism eligible under **§89.1040(c)(1)** of this title (relating to Eligibility Criteria), the strategies described in this subsection must be considered, at least annually based on peer-reviewed, research-based educational programming practices to the extent practicable, and, when needed, addressed in the IEP.

Guidance

Consideration of these strategies in no way implies a requirement to implement any strategy. It is the responsibility of the ARD committee to determine which of the strategies, if any, should be included in a student's IEP. The emphasis an ARD committee places on each consideration should be contingent on the needs of the individual student. To make informed decisions regarding these strategies, ARD committees require accurate and detailed evaluations and/or up-to-date data from a variety of sources.

What should schools do if unable to locate a peer-reviewed, research-based practice for a particular consideration?

Schools are required to consider strategies based on peer-reviewed, research-based educational practices to the extent practicable.

Key Points

- » Each strategy discussion should begin by reviewing current assessments and data, as all considerations and decisions should be data-driven; furthermore, if an intervention has already been attempted, analyzing the data on progress can be particularly beneficial.
- » Decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of each strategy are made by an ARD committee during the ARD committee meeting, rather than by any one individual at the meeting.
- » Data about the strategies can be prepared before the ARD committee meeting to facilitate the discussion.
- » Documentation that the ARD committee considered the need for each of the 11 strategies should be included in the IEP, and for each strategy that is needed, the ARD committee must address it in the IEP, including the basis for each decision.



Evidence-based practices for students with autism have been identified by intervention science and decisions must be made on these peer-reviewed, research-based practices. Districts are responsible for accessing the information on peer-reviewed, research-based educational practices, which are made available by TEA. Additionally, The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice (NCAEP) published an updated report in 2020 to provide a systematic review of the intervention literature on articles published between 1990 and 2017. The [NCAEP Report: Evidence-Based Practices for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism](#) has identified interventions that have sufficient evidence to show they are effective for students with autism.

A resources section with additional links to reliable information on identifying, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based practices can be found at the end of this guide.

1. Extended Educational Programming

TAC89.1055
(g)(1)

Rule

extended educational programming (for example: extended day and/or extended school year services that consider the duration of programs/settings based on data collected related to behavior, social skills, communication, academics, and self-help skills);

Guidance

What should an ARD committee consider when determining whether Extended School Year (ESY) or Extended School Day (ESD) services is appropriate?

The need for ESY or ESD is based on an assessment of individual student needs. An ARD committee may consider a student's functional communication system, which may require instruction and intervention beyond the normal school schedule. The same may be said for interpersonal and behavioral skills, based on an assessment of individual student needs.

What is the process for planning for ESY/ESD services?

The need for ESY or ESD services must be documented from formal and/or informal evaluations provided by the LEA or the parents. If a student requires a significant amount of time to recoup acquired critical skills, then the ARD committee must discuss whether the student needs extended educational and/or related services during school breaks. If the loss of acquired critical skills would be particularly severe or substantial, or if such loss results, or reasonably may be expected to result, in immediate physical harm to the student or to others, ESY services may be justified without consideration of the period for recoupment of such skills. For more information on ESY, see [19 TAC §89.1065](#).

Key Points

- » No single procedure alone can determine the need for extended programming.
- » If the ARD committee determines that the student needs ESY services, then the IEP must identify which of the goals and objectives in the IEP will be addressed during ESY services.
- » Regression/recoupment data cannot be the only basis for a determination of the need for extended programming. Information on state and federal laws about ESY is available at [Texas Legal Framework](#).
- » The decision on the need for extended programming must be based on data from formal or informal assessments from a variety of sources.



Best Practice Tip

Analysis of the student's IEP and progress is critical to determining the need for extended educational programming.

1. Extended Educational Programming *cont.*

Examples when strategy IS needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Emerson requires continued instruction in the following critical areas: social communication and functional academic skills relevant to daily living. Based on data from (list formal and/or informal assessments), Emerson exhibits a need for extended educational programming. Considering Emerson's current performance levels, these areas are likely to result in a loss of skills. Emerson has shown documented regression/recoupment needs in the areas of self-care skills including dressing and toileting. Specific objectives from the current IEP to address these areas include: » By the end of the current IEP period, when given a chart of six visual steps showing how to wash his hands after using the restroom (1. turn on faucet, 2. wet hands, 3. pump soap into hands, 4. rub hands together and sing ABC song, 5. rinse hands in water, 6. turn off faucet), Emerson will independently wash his hands with two or less verbal prompts across 80% of trials over a two-week period for mastery. » By the end of the current IEP period, when given a chart of five visual steps showing how to use the bathroom (1. remove clothes, 2. urinate, 3. wipe, 4. dress yourself, 5. flush the toilet), Emerson will use the bathroom, completing at least 3 out of 5 steps with at least 100% accuracy over a two-week period for mastery.	Emerson's parents would like ESY. OR Emerson is in a life skills class. (Implying that all students in life skills classes automatically attend ESY programs. Placement is not an indication of need. The decision on the need for extended programming for the individual student must be based on current data from formal or informal assessments from a variety of sources.)
Examples when strategy is NOT needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
At this time, Emerson is making adequate progress in all critical areas. Based on collected regression/recoupment data from a variety of settings, he has not shown any significant regression after school breaks. OR An analysis of the progress reports on the IEP goals and objectives indicates that Emerson is making progress given his current educational programming.	Emerson is in a general education classroom.

2. Daily Schedule

TAC89.1055
(g)(2)

Rule

Daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities (for example: lunch, snack, and recess periods that provide flexibility within routines; adapt to individual skill levels; and assist with schedule changes, such as changes involving substitute teachers and pep rallies);

Guidance

What is the purpose of “daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time?”

Students with autism generally benefit from a routine; therefore, a daily schedule of listed activities in which the student is an active participant, along with an alternate schedule for exceptions to the regular schedule (e.g., field trips, substitute teachers, programs, pep rallies) provides important information to the student and those who work with the student.

What is meant by “unstructured time?”

Unstructured time in this context refers to those periods of the day that do not have instructional expectations or a defined routine for behavior. Some students with autism may engage in challenging, stereotypical, and repetitive behaviors during less structured times of the day.

Limiting unstructured time may increase the chances for meaningful benefit from the school day.

What is meant by “engagement?”

In this context, engagement refers to active involvement. For individual students, it may be expressed differently and should be determined by the ARD committee.

Key Points

- » Classroom routines may impact a student's learning by establishing and reinforcing patterns of positive behaviors.
- » Students with autism benefit when there are consistent and predictable routines in place. Unstructured time or sudden changes may result in students experiencing feelings of anxiety or frustration, which have the potential to be expressed as challenging behavior.
- » The format of the schedule should be individualized.
- » An individualized schedule can be implemented concurrently with the whole-class schedule.



2. Daily Schedule *cont.*

Best Practice Tip

Consistent routines benefit students with autism by supporting active engagement throughout the school day. Unstructured time that has no specific rules or activities can be challenging for students with autism. Examples of unstructured time that may need additional structure include:

- » Waiting for and/or riding the school bus
- » Before and after school time
- » Transitions throughout the day (place to place, person to person, topic to topic)
- » Lunch/cafeteria and recess.

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement

Based on the analysis of event/frequency data collected, Kai displays the behavior of falling to the floor repeatedly in the cafeteria classroom during transitions between lunch time activities. Data also indicates that Kai requires staff assistance to initiate a new task after a transition in activity or location during recess time.

Based on the analysis of event/frequency data collected, Kai displays increased self-stimulatory behaviors in unstructured settings, has difficulty transitioning within the classroom, and does not independently initiate tasks when there is a substitute teacher in the classroom. A daily schedule reflecting minimal unstructured time is needed. An example of the schedule is attached.

Noncompliant IEP Statement

Kai engages in self-stimulatory behavior.

Examples when strategy is NOT needed

Compliant IEP Statement

Based on the analysis of event/frequency data collected, Kai can transition appropriately throughout the school day and complete assigned academic tasks independently.

OR

Based on the analysis of event/frequency data collected, Kai does not exhibit behavioral difficulty in unstructured settings. He can effectively transition within and between classrooms and can independently initiate tasks or do so with minor prompting from the teacher. A daily schedule reflecting minimal unstructured time is not needed. Kai can follow the regular schedule of the day with natural environmental cues.

Noncompliant IEP Statement

Kai does not need daily schedules at this time. (This statement does not provide information on the basis upon which the determination was made, as required by 19 TAC § 89.1055 (h).)

3. In-Home Training (IHT) and Community-Based Training (CBT)

TAC89.1055

Rule

(g)(3)

in-home and community-based training or viable alternatives that assist the student with acquisition of social, behavioral, communication, and self-help skills (for example: strategies that facilitate maintenance and generalization of such skills from home to school, school to home, home to community, and school to community);

Guidance

What is the purpose of IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives?

A student with autism may have difficulty generalizing skills from one environment to another. IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives are options that an ARD committee may choose for a student with autism for the student to learn or reinforce social/behavioral skills in a variety of settings.

What may be considered as “viable alternatives?”

Viable alternatives are those strategies or methods that are practical and workable. These may include, if appropriate for the individual student, but are not limited to:

- » Working with daycares, respite care, foster families, siblings, or grandparents
- » Parent observations at school, if allowed
- » Making a video of the teacher, if agreeable, working with the student
- » Helping parents obtain/make materials
- » Making a video of the child demonstrating the skills, if allowed
- » Schedules and manipulatives
- » School or outing visits to observe the student using strategies
- » Articles related to strategies used with students along with examples of child-specific materials
- » Visual supports for the home
- » Communication notebooks
- » Conferences regarding issues in the home

Should all students with autism be provided with IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives?

IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives must be considered by the ARD committee. Not every student with autism may require these trainings. The decision should be based on data provided by multiple sources (observation, IEP objectives, information from parents, IHT assessments, educational staff, etc., and/or checklists).

Who can provide the IHT?

ARD committees determine the necessary training based on the needs of the student. LEAs are responsible for training teachers and paraprofessionals to effectively implement the training programs for students with autism. Training may include a foundation of scientifically-based interventions/strategies. Considerations may include the trainer's knowledge about autism and knowledge of specific interventions including implementation and data collection. Refer to the strategy “Professional Educator/Staff Support,” as this may also apply to an in-home trainer.

Is IHT considered a direct or indirect service?

IHT may be either a direct or indirect service, depending on how the ARD committee and LEA address the service.

Is IHT a related service?

IHT is a related service. Related services are supportive services that assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, such as transportation and developmental, corrective, or evaluative services. For further clarification see [34 CFR §300.34, Related Services.](#)

How are goals addressed in the IEP?

Goals for IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives should be based on annual IEP goals that have been established for the student in the school setting. The ARD committee may determine that the student needs IHT to learn or reinforce the skills targeted by those goals in a variety of settings.

How is IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives coded in Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)?

There is no PEIMS code for IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives. For tracking purposes, it is categorized under related services.

3. In-Home Training (IHT) and Community-Based Training (CBT) *cont.*

Key Points

- » When determining the need for IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives, start with an assessment.
- » IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives must be considered by the ARD committee. Not every student with autism may qualify for this strategy.
- » IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives may be used to address needs such as learning and/or reinforcing social behavior skills in a variety of settings.



Best Practice Tip

Goals for IHT, CBT, or viable alternatives should be based on annual IEP goals that have been established for the student in the school setting.

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement

Based on data from Salim's IHT and CBT evaluation, parent interview, and IEP progress reporting, Salim needs IHT/CBT to address the following goal from his IEP:

By the end of the IEP period, given a visual of the steps to ask for help and presented with various pre-planned trials where the student needs to ask for help (e.g., student given an uncharged device, broken or missing materials, unclear directions), the student will independently follow the steps and verbally ask for help across 5 consecutive documented trials for mastery.

(See attached IHT/CBT assessment results from April 2023.)

Noncompliant IEP Statement

Salim's parent is requesting IHT.

Examples when strategy is NOT needed

Compliant IEP Statement

IHT/CBT is not needed for Salim. Progress on IEP goals and objectives is consistent across settings. Parents report that they implement strategies with fidelity in the home and community settings. Results of Salim's IHT and CBT evaluation, parent interview, and IEP progress reporting indicate that there is not a need for IHT/CBT at this time.

Noncompliant IEP Statement

Salim's parent does not want IHT/CBT services.

4. Positive Behavior Support Strategies

TAC89.1055 (g)(4)	Rule positive behavior support strategies based on relevant information, for example: (A) antecedent manipulation, replacement behaviors, reinforcement strategies, and data-based decisions; and (B) a behavioral intervention plan developed from a functional behavioral assessment that uses current data related to target behaviors and addresses behavioral programming across home, school, and community-based settings and is implemented and reviewed in accordance with subsection (i) of this section;
-----------------------------	---

Guidance

When is a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) required?

As a general rule, an FBA is not required to be completed prior to developing a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) as part of the IEP. However, the information from the FBA may provide valuable information for the formation of a BIP and may be needed to determine whether a BIP, in conjunction with the IEP, will provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires an FBA in the following instances:

- » When, at a manifestation determination review (MDR), it is determined that a student's behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability (unless the LEA had conducted an FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred).
- » When, at an MDR, it is determined that a student's conduct is not a manifestation of the disability, but the ARD committee determines that an FBA is necessary.
- » When a student is placed in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for not more than 45 school days for behavior involving a dangerous weapon, illegal drugs, or infliction of serious bodily injury (unless the LEA had conducted an FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred).

However, [STATE LAW](#) also requires that whenever a disciplinary action results in a [CHANGE OF PLACEMENT](#) the LEA must no later than the 10th school day after the change of placement:

- » Seek parental consent to conduct an FBA of the student if an FBA has never been conducted on the student or the student's most recent FBA is more than one year old; and
- » Review any previously conducted FBA of the student and any BIP developed for the student based on that assessment; and as necessary
- » Develop a BIP for the student if the student does not have a plan; or
- » If the student has a BIP, revise the student's plan.

Is parental consent required before completing the FBA?

If an FBA is used to evaluate an individual student to assist in [DETERMINING](#) whether the student is a student with a disability and the nature and extent of special education and related services that the student needs; it is considered an [EVALUATION](#).

It is also considered an evaluation under IDEA for a student who has already been determined to be a student with a disability if it focuses on the educational and behavioral needs of the student. Parent or guardian [CONSENT](#) is required for an FBA conducted as an individual evaluation or reevaluation. Likewise, Texas state law requires that the LEA seek parental consent to conduct an FBA within 10 school days after a change in placement if one has never been conducted on the student or the current one is older than a year.

4. Positive Behavior Support Strategies *cont.*

OSERS noted in the November 2024 guidance document, [Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments](#), that consent “would be required, for a particular child, if the FBA is one of the assessment tools and strategies conducted as part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation that meets the IDEA requirements, or if the FBA is used, along with a review of additional data, as an initial evaluation or reevaluation that meets the IDEA requirements.”

Key Point

» The end of this guide gives information regarding [Evidence-Based Practices Resources](#) on strategies that research has shown to be effective with students with autism.



Best Practice Tip

There are no “one-size-fits-all” strategies for supporting the behavior needs of students with autism. An FBA will help determine the function or functions of behavior, and function-based interventions are most effective to target any skill deficits which may be impacting student behavior.

Examples when strategy IS needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Kayden has a BIP, which was developed from data gathered as part of an FBA and addresses antecedents, replacement behavior(s), and reinforcement strategies. Currently, Kayden has a behavior goal to address initiating non-preferred tasks or activities. When Kayden initiates the task or activity within 1 minute without engaging in problem behavior, he earns verbal praise paired with a preferred activity. School-wide systems and class-wide interventions are in place in addition to the BIP.	Kayden hits and kicks peers and staff.
Examples when strategy is NOT needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Kayden currently adheres to school-wide and classroom rules at an age-appropriate level and individualized support is not needed. Kayden is able to meet all student behavior expectations with the support of school-wide and classroom Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). OR Teachers report that Kayden is polite, follows directions, and gets along with his peers. Kayden enjoys using the current classroom token economy system to earn time to play with sensory blocks after completing a given task.	Kayden behaves well.

5. Futures Planning

TAC89.1055
(g)(5)

Rule

beginning at any age, consistent with subsection (l) of this section, futures planning for integrated learning and training, living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments, including self-determination and self-advocacy skills;

Guidance

What is meant by the term “futures planning?”

Every child, no matter the age, has a future, and every IEP should address plans for their future. Futures planning focuses on the student's whole life and involves participation from those invited, such as family, caregivers, and friends. The focus is on the student's vision for the future and practical ways to reach those goals.

What is the purpose of futures planning?

To empower students with the skills necessary to live in future environments with purpose and independence.

When should futures planning begin?

When children enter the public school system, elements of self-advocacy, such as making choices, solving problems, and managing their behavior, should begin immediately.

How do futures planning and transition planning requirements relate to one another?

It is important to understand that futures planning and transition planning requirements are different. The futures planning information builds on the student's personal goals for the future and can inform the state transition requirements to be addressed by the student's 14th birthday. Transition activities must begin by age 14 but may begin at an earlier age on an individual basis as determined by an ARD committee.

Where can I find additional information on transition planning requirements and futures planning?

State transition planning requirements ([TEC § 29.0111](#))

Federal transition requirements ([34 CFR § 300.320\(b\)](#))

[Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#) - describes how families and students can plan for college, career, and community life with support from the school. It also includes connections to agencies that support individuals beyond graduation from high school, such as future medical needs and guardianship options.

[Texas SPED Support Transition Resources](#) – addresses topics such as vocational services, housing assistance, transportation assistance, and assistive technology services. Texas SPED Support offers a free online course on [Futures Planning](#) in English and Spanish.

5. Futures Planning *cont.*

Key Points

- » Futures planning is not the same as transition planning requirements. Futures planning as part of the Autism Supplement begins as soon as the student enters the school system at any age.
- » Futures planning informs a student's goals for the future. Transition planning incorporates these goals into requirements and is mandated by Texas state regulations to begin by age 14 but may begin at an earlier age on an individual basis as determined by an ARD committee.



Best Practice Tip

Futures planning should focus on a student's life and their vision for the future. It involves participation from family, caregivers, friends, and the student.

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Omar is 7 years old and in the second grade. Data indicates that Omar struggles with requesting breaks appropriately, leaving the classroom without permission, and maintaining appropriate personal space with others. Strategies to address futures planning for Omar are in place, and Omar has an IEP goal to request breaks or a designated calming space when needed. OR Omar takes part in a lunch time social group where students participate in collaborative projects and games. Group participation expectations are reviewed at each of these lunch time social groups. Provision of information to parents regarding agencies and community resources.	Omar is only 6 years old. N/A until 14 years old. The family has requested that the school focus on academic instruction.

NOTE: Examples for when futures planning is not needed are not included, as it is recommended to include this strategy as part of the IEP for all students eligible under 19 TAC §89.1040(c)(1).

6. Parent/Family Training and Support

TAC89.1055 (g)(6)	Rule parent/family training and support, provided by qualified personnel with experience in autism, that, for example: (A) provides a family with skills necessary for a student to succeed in the home/commu- nity setting; (B) includes information regarding resources (for example: parent support groups, workshops, videos, conferences, and materials designed to increase parent knowledge of specific teaching/management techniques related to the student’s curriculum); and (C) facilitates parental carryover of in-home training (for example: strategies for behav- ior management and developing structured home environments and/or communication training so that parents are active participants in promoting the continuity of interven- tions across all settings);
Guidance What information and resources should the school provide to parents/families of students with autism? A school should provide information regarding local resources available to parents/families of students with autism. Some resources to consider are parent support groups, workshops, online courses, videos, conferences, and materials designed to increase parent knowledge of specific teaching and/or management techniques related to the student’s IEP. What parent/family training should the school provide across all settings? Schools should offer parent/family training that fosters continuity across settings for a student with autism. Training could include areas such as behavior management, interpersonal skills, communication training, and/or structured environments across all settings. An ARD committee may determine that parent/family training should consist of a person with training in the area of disability meeting face-to-face with parents and/or the student. It may also determine that parent/family training consists of a videotape made available for use by the family to teach/learn specific skills. What is the focus of parent/family training and support? Parent/family training focuses on working with parents and/or families to help them acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work with their child with autism. This training and support may be provided in a variety of formats including, but not limited to, group training, individual training, and providing resources.	

6. Parent/Family Training and Support *cont.*

Key Points

- » It is important to recognize and understand the difference between Strategy 6, Parent/Family Training, and Strategy 3, IHT/CBT.
 - IHT/CBT is training for the student to generalize skills that were mastered at school to the home and community environments.
 - Parent/Family training is training for the family members of the student to support the student and the family.
- » Schools should provide information regarding local resources available to parents/families of students with autism.
- » Parent training focuses on working with parents and/or families to help them acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work with their child with autism.



Best Practice Tip

Training should focus on the generalization of IEP-related skills and may include areas such as behavior management, interpersonal skills, communication training, and/or structured environments across all settings.

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Based on the parent needs assessment completed by Talisha's parents, parent/family training and support are needed in the areas of: » Communication: including strategies such as visual supports and social communication skills » Behavior management: including positive behavior supports, and functional communication training » Daily living skills: including morning dressing routine and evening bedtime routine	Information provided to parents on Autism – Anxiety - Child Development

Examples when strategy is NOT needed

Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Based on the interview-informed assessment completed by Talisha's parents, the parent/family possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to assist in the student's educational programming. Parent/family training and support are not needed at this time.	Talisha's parents did not request it.

7. Suitable Staff-to-Student Ratios

TAC89.1055 (g)(7)	Rule suitable staff-to-student ratio appropriate to identified activities and as needed to achieve social/behavioral progress based on the student's developmental and learning level (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization) that encourages work towards individual independence as determined by, for example: (A) adaptive behavior evaluation results; (B) behavioral accommodation needs across settings; and (C) transitions within the school day;
Guidance	
What is the staff-to-student ratio for students with autism? Staff-to-student ratios are determined by ARD committees on an individual basis. When determining staff-to-student ratios, an ARD committee should consider the setting, a student's communication abilities, and present levels of competence in the areas of social and behavioral skills and adaptive behavior. What is meant by the student's "learning level?" The student may be in one of four learning levels: acquisition, fluency, maintenance, and generalization. » Acquisition is considered Level 1 learning. In acquisition, the student is beginning the learning process and is introduced to new skills and behaviors. During this level, significant assistance should be provided and a high rate of reinforcement is necessary. The goal of the acquisition is to establish a desired response/behavior. » Fluency is considered Level 2 learning. Fluency refers to the rate at which a response occurs. During fluency, assistance begins to decrease, and reinforcement is given only for demonstrating the response within a designated period. The goal of fluency is to establish a rate of responding that would be considered 'normal' for the student's age and skill level. » Maintenance is Level 3 learning. In maintenance, a response occurs in the absence of teaching. Adding reinforcement is no longer necessary for achieving independence. The goal of the maintenance level is to maintain responses/behaviors over time. » Generalization is Level 4 learning. At this level, a response occurs with different people, using different materials in a variety of locations. The student can follow different directions. The goal of the generalization level is to achieve independence. Typically, a student in the acquisition phase of development may need more direct intensive instruction relative to later phases. As a student moves through the phases, there may be less adult supervision necessary, more self-monitoring, and, therefore, a higher staff-to-student ratio. Is it possible for a student to be on one level in one activity and another level in another activity? Yes, the student may be in the acquisition level in initiating social greetings and the fluency level in transitioning between classrooms, for example.	

7. Suitable Staff-to-Student Ratios *cont.*

Key Points

- » Review the student's current daily schedule and levels of learning for each skill or objective.
- » Address staff-to-student ratios that are appropriate for each part of the student's day.
- » Consider setting, demands, and other influencing factors.



Best Practice Tip

Maintain and prioritize the goal of increased independence.

- » Example – A student may require the support of a one-to-one ratio in a setting such as art or music when a new skill is introduced or when participating in a team sport in PE (e.g., turn-taking, playing by the rules, good sportsmanship, communicating with teammates,) but it would be to the student's disadvantage to maintain a continuous one-to-one ratio for the student all day.

Example: How to document Levels of Learning

Collect data regarding students' levels of learning for each IEP objective.

Skill	Rate of Performance	Type of Prompt	Number of Prompts	Schedule/Type of Reinforcement	Level of Learning
Tie Shoes	10 minutes	Full and partial physical	20	Continuous	Acquisition
Greet Peer	Within 5 seconds of proximity	Visual	1	Natural	Fluency to Maintenance

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement

Analysis of progress reflects the need for a student-to-staff ratio of 1 to 1 for transitions between settings and activities, as well as when interacting socially during group activities. Maya is successful in small group settings (ratio of 1 to 10) for skills in maintenance or generalization phases.

Noncompliant IEP Statement

Maya needs a small teacher-to-student ratio when tying her shoes.

Examples when strategy is NOT needed

Compliant IEP Statement

Given Maya's developmental and learning levels, collected data on goals and objectives for social skills, and behavior and IEP progress reports, the current ratios identified in the student's schedule of services are appropriate for working toward individual independence.

Noncompliant IEP Statement

The student will be in an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classroom which has a small teacher-to-student ratio.

8. Communication Interventions

TAC89.1055
(g)(8)

Rule

communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings (for example: augmentative, incidental, and naturalistic teaching);

Guidance

What types of communication strategies should ARD committees consider for students with autism?

Teachers may wish to consider strategies such as augmentative, incidental, and naturalistic communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings.

Teachers should also consider a student's style of learning and the portability of a communication strategy.

See page 28 for a resource list of [Evidence-Based Practices](#), including those related to communication.

Are communication interventions limited to speech-language pathologists (SLPs)?

No, communication interventions may be addressed in a variety of environments and with a variety of people, including parents, teachers, siblings, peers, etc.

Should ARD committees consider assistive technology for students with autism?

The ARD committee must consider whether the student needs assistive technology devices and services. [34 § CFR 300.324\(a\)\(2\)\(v\)](#)

Key Points

- » Parents, siblings, and peers are encouraged to use the student's methods of communication in all settings.
- » ARD committees can consider aspects of communication strategies for students such as portability, continuous access, and the ability of any method to generalize to new communication partners.



8. Communication Interventions *cont.*

Best Practice Tip

Communication interventions may be provided by someone other than an SLP. Teachers and other staff should consult with an SLP and use the suggested interventions with the student throughout the school day.

Examples when strategy IS needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Communication goals and objectives in the areas of receptive and expressive communication are needed and are addressed in Koby’s IEP. Interventions for these objectives include, but are not limited to, a picture exchange system, choice boards, and discrete trial training for labeling/naming.	See Koby’s speech IEP. <i>OR</i> Koby is currently receiving speech therapy services.
Examples when strategy is NOT needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Koby can effectively communicate wants and needs verbally with both staff and peers. He can also comment on his environment and hold conversations at an age-appropriate level.	Not applicable. <i>OR</i> Koby does not receive speech therapy services.

9. Social Skills Supports and Strategies

TAC89.1055 (g)(9)	Rule social skills supports and strategies based on social skills assessment/curriculum and provided across settings (e.g., peer-based instruction and intervention, video modeling, social narratives, and role playing);
Guidance What types of social skills support should ARD committees consider for students with autism? Teachers may wish to consider social skills supports such as trained peer facilitators, video modeling, social narratives, or role-playing. The decision on what strategies and supports to implement must be individualized for each student and their unique needs. Who provides social skills support and strategies? Teachers, SLPs, related service providers, peers, parents, siblings, and any other person routinely interacting with the student in the school setting may provide social skills supports and strategies daily through modeling or a variety of other strategies.	

Key Points

- » Begin with an assessment of the student's needs in the area of social skills when determining whether social skills support and strategies are needed. Social skills needs are not always obvious without the use of a formal assessment that intentionally reviews critical dimensions of the broad subject of social skills.
- » Social behavior occurs in all environments and may be unique to certain environments.
- » This strategy should be considered in conjunction with any recommended positive behavior support strategies identified in the Strategy 4 section; particularly those that address behavioral services across home, school, and community-based settings.



Best Practice Tip

Social skills should be addressed in a variety of environments by a variety of persons who interact with the student. This will assist with generalization and maintenance of social skills.

Examples when strategy IS needed

Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Michael has goals to address needs with using words, pictures, or gestures to communicate a request for food, toys, activities, or the need for help. Michael has goals to address social play needs to improve his ability to engage with others and understand social cues. The strategies/supports used to address these needs will include positive reinforcement, most-to-least prompting hierarchy, and increased opportunities for practice.	See Michael's social skill goals addressed in the IEP.

Examples when strategy is NOT needed

Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Michael's social skills needs are being met through functional communication training addressed in the natural environment throughout the school day and through peer-mediated support arrangements which include activities such as academic skill acquisition, team building, and lunch groups.	Not needed OR Michael does not need any support.

10. Professional Educator/Staff Supports

TAC89.1055
(g)(10)

Rule

professional educator/staff support (for example: training provided to personnel who work with the student to assure the correct implementation of techniques and strategies described in the IEP);

Guidance

Will schools provide training for personnel working with students with autism?

Schools are responsible for training teachers and paraprofessionals to effectively implement programs for students with autism. Training may include a foundation of scientifically-based interventions/strategies.

Which professional educators and staff need training in peer-reviewed, research-based educational programming practices specific to autism?

Any LEA personnel who work with a student with autism may be determined to need training to assure the implementation of techniques and strategies described in the IEP.

Is the training required to be student specific?

Training may include a foundation of evidence-based practices, such as reinforcement, or it may be specific, such as how to implement differential reinforcement for a student who is learning a replacement behavior (e.g., appropriate requesting).

How much training is required?

ARD committees determine the amount of training based on need.

Is it necessary to document a professional's training related to autism?

It is best practice to keep documentation on all professional development. Staff development may include online training, face-to-face training, conferences, webinars, books, scholarly journals, etc. Consultation and coaching for staff may also be documented as training.

Key Points

- » Schools are responsible for training teachers and paraprofessionals to effectively implement programs for students with autism.
- » All autism training completed by any school personnel involved with a student with autism should be documented.
- » Training may include a foundation of evidence-based practices.



10. Professional Educator/Staff Supports *cont.*

Best Practice Tip
Ensure all relevant staff are included in the training plans, including transportation staff (e.g., bus driver, bus monitor), cafeteria staff, general education electives staff, etc.

Examples when strategy IS needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
The teacher and paraprofessional will receive training from the district behavior specialist on the implementation of antecedent-based interventions, such as visual schedules, priming, and providing choices, as outlined in Consuelo’s BIP.	Staff will attend training.
Examples when strategy is NOT needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
The supports currently listed in Consuelo’s IEP include accommodations and modifications in which school personnel are trained. Consuelo’s IEP does not include strategies that require an additional level of training for staff.	Staff have access to expert support personnel. Staff will attend training if requested or desired.

11. Teaching Strategies

TAC89.1055
(g)(11)

Rule

teaching strategies based on peer reviewed, research-based practices for students with autism (for example: those associated with discrete-trial training, visual supports, applied behavior analysis, structured learning, augmentative communication, or social skills training).

Guidance

What is meant by the phrase “teaching strategies based on peer-reviewed, research-based practices for students with autism?”

Strategies listed in 19 TAC §89.1055(g)(11) are among the many available instructional options an ARD committee may wish to consider when developing an IEP. The inclusion of a strategy in 19 TAC §89.1055(g)(11) should not be misinterpreted as an endorsement of any particular methodology.

Examples of such strategies may include:

- » discrete-trial training, visual supports
- » applied behavior analysis (ABA)
- » structured learning
- » augmentative communication;
- » or social skills training.

It is the responsibility of an ARD committee to make decisions regarding the appropriateness of strategies based on the unique needs of an individual student; there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to providing services to students with autism.

What is the definition of “peer-reviewed” and “research-based?”

[Section 9101\(37\)](#) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by No Child Left Behind (2002) and by [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA, 2015), defines scientifically based research as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.” The ESSA requires schools to find, evaluate, and implement effective [EBPs \(as defined by ESEA, pg. 393 Section 8101\(21\)\(A\)\)](#) that support high-quality learning for all students, including those with autism.

If a strategy is not effective, what are alternatives for an ARD Committee?

If progress is not being documented, some options that may be considered include providing a longer day or year, additional staff or parent training, modifying existing interventions, or changing interventions. The ARD committee makes this decision.

Key Points

- » ARD committees should consider the student’s current levels of performance and goals when selecting what strategies may be needed.
- » NCAEP (2020) has published their report identifying 28 focused evidenced-based practices for autism.
- » See page 28 for a resource list of Evidence-Based Practices for reliable information on teaching strategies.



11. Teaching Strategies *cont.*

Examples when strategy IS needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
The following teaching strategies will be used to implement Kenya’s IEP: direct instruction, differential reinforcement, and feedback. Based on current student data, assessments, and individual needs, these are possible interventions and supports to be implemented to help Kenya progress towards mastery of her written goals. As data is collected and analyzed, selected strategies may be adjusted or modified.	Kenya needs ABA.
Examples when strategy is NOT needed	
Compliant IEP Statement	Noncompliant IEP Statement
Kenya is making adequate progress in her IEP goals and objectives. The instructional strategies and accommodations used in the general education classroom setting are currently effective for the student to make progress at this time.	All teaching strategies are evidence-based practices.

Conclusion

(h)	Rule
	If the ARD committee determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified in subsection (g) of this section, the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made.
Guidance	
What action must the ARD committee take if the committee determines services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified in 19 TAC §89.1055(g)? When the ARD committee determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified in §89.1055(g)(1)-(11), the ARD committee must include in the IEP a statement indicating that the services are not needed and the basis upon which the determination was made. The statement may address the services collectively or individually. An ARD committee may wish to include specific examples of a student's current level of competency when addressing services.	

Key Points

- » An ARD committee must document not only that a strategy is not needed but also why it is not needed.
- » The ARD committee must document what information was used as the basis for its decision.



Best Practice Tip

Practice and document data-driven decision-making throughout the ARD meeting.

Evidence-Based Practices Resources

[Texas SPED Support](#)

Discover resources and learning opportunities from experts in the field.

- » A learning library that contains unique opportunities for educators to participate in online courses, workshops, events, and conferences.
- » Timely, meaningful, appropriate, and high-quality resources developed by educational researchers, leaders in the field, and the TEA.

[National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice](#)

The National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence & Practice (NCAEP) systematically reviews the current intervention literature targeting individuals with autism. NCAEP is a continuation of the evidence review that was completed by the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC). Access the published report of this review identifying 28 focused evidenced-based practices on this website.

[AFIRM Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules](#)

AFIRM Modules are designed to help you learn the step-by-step process of planning for, using, and monitoring an EBP with learners with autism from birth to 22 years of age. Supplemental materials and handouts are available for download.

AFIRM Team. (2019). Components of the Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM). Chapel Hill, NC: National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina.

[National Autism Center / National Standards Project](#)

National Autism Center. (2015) Findings and Conclusions: National Standards Project, Phase 2, Addressing the Need for Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines for Autism Spectrum Disorder. National Autism Center.

[TEA Technical Assistance: Behavior Supports and Guidance for Students with Disabilities](#)

This technical assistance guide covers ways to prevent challenging behavior, functional behavior assessment (FBA), behavior intervention plans (BIPs), manifestation determination review (MDR), and protections for students not yet determined eligible for special education. Additionally, this guide outlines state and federal requirements regarding prohibited aversive techniques, placement, and school discipline while also providing options for appealing a disciplinary decision.

[Resources on Evidence-Based Practices for Autism](#)

TEA resources on selecting evidence-based practices for students with autism.

Additional Optional Tools

These resources are for ARD committee members to use, when appropriate, to assist in effective completion of the Autism Supplement.

- » [Texas SPED Support Resource Library: 18+ Transition Assessment Matrix](#)
- » [AFIRM: Selecting an EBP](#)
- » [Texas SPED Support Resource Library: Person-Centered Planning](#)
- » [Texas SPED Support Resource Library: Classroom Schedule Template](#)
- » [Texas SPED Support Resource Library: Sample Data Collection Tool](#)
- » [Partners Resource Network Parent Training and Information Center](#)
- » [Texas SPED Support: A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education](#)
- » [TEA Effective Schools Framework](#)
- » [Texas Statewide Contact Information](#)
- » [TIER Progress Monitoring Tool](#)