PROGRAM GUIDANCE: AUTISM

BETTER TOGETHER

Program Guidance: Autism

Definition and Overview

Definition

Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance and significantly affects developmental rates and sequences, verbal and non-verbal communication, and social interaction and participation. Other characteristics often associated with autism spectrum disorder are unusual responses to sensory experiences, engagement in repetitive activities, and stereotypical movements and resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines. Children with autism spectrum disorder vary widely in their abilities and behavior. [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(1)(i)]

Eligibility and Placement

Autism eligibility will be based on an assessment of the characteristic areas associated with Autism spectrum disorder. The assessments should address each of the characteristic areas of (1) developmental rates and sequences, (2) social interaction and participation, and (3) verbal and non-verbal communication are affected.

Autism Adapted Curriculum

The Autism Adapted Curriculum (AUT AC) self-contained class is an adapted curriculum program that serves students with a diagnosis or eligibility of autism in the moderate intellectual functioning Intellectual Quotient (IQ) range between 40 -55. The self-contained program provides direct and indirect support to schools in the instruction of students who are accessing grade-level standards on an adapted curriculum. Special education services are designed for students with low incidence disabilities who exhibit moderate to significant delays in the areas of language, communication, cognition, socialization, and adaptive functioning that impact their ability to demonstrate progress in the general curriculum. Students served in this program class should require supports or interventions for at least 80% or more of their school day.

The academic instructional program for students on an adapted curriculum is guided by the general education curriculum and provides instruction with an additional focus on life skills, communication, social skills, and sensory integration. The curriculum emphasizes skills necessary for and relevant to independent functioning, allowing each student to reach his or her highest possible level of independence.

- The focus of instructional programming is on developing core academic knowledge, improving social skills and adjustment, increasing appropriate behaviors.

- Visual strategies are often used to support communication and acquisition of content knowledge.

Evidence-based practices are used to address behavioral challenges and teach new skills. Evidence-based practices are research-based interventions that emphasize the importance of breaking skills down into small units through task analysis. New skills are taught through the use of reinforcement, shaping, prompting, and other specialized techniques.

Autism General Curriculum

The Autism General Curriculum (AUT GC) self-contained class is a small-group program that serves students with a diagnosis or eligibility of autism in the whose autism spectrum disorder and social deficits require targeted areas of support for more than 51% of their day. Students may also display language and communication impairments which present both receptively and expressively. Deficits in language, communication, and imagination may often create interfering behaviors that inhibit productive classroom participation. This program class offers direct and indirect support to students who require access to grade-level general curriculum standards in small-group for academic instruction or behavior intervention. The flexible classroom model provides ongoing supports and interventions, as noted in the IEP, by the assigned autism GC case manager.

- Visual strategies are often used to support communication and acquisition of content knowledge.

- Evidence-based practices are used to address behavioral challenges and teach new skills. Evidence-based practices are research-based interventions that emphasize the importance of breaking skills down into small units through task analysis. New skills are taught through the use of reinforcement, shaping, prompting, and other specialized techniques.

Instructional Expectation

Adapted Curriculum			
	Elementary Expectations	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
Curriculum	TeachTown enCore – a standards-based curriculum research-based and specially designed for students with significant disabilities. All subjects included.	enCore should be taught throughout the whole day – ELA, math, science, and social studies.	Data collection should be both electronic and work samples.
	Secondary Expectations	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	Unique Learning System – a standards-based curriculum research-based and specially designed for students with significant disabilities. All subjects included.	Unique Learning should be taught throughout the whole day – ELA, math, science, and social studies.	Data collection should be collected through the completion of work samples and grade book.
Direct Teaching	**Elementary Expectations**	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	TeachTown Basics – a research-based Applied Behavioral Approach (ABA) to teaching and learning. Students work on specific skills in a one-to-one manner.	TeachTown Basics should have an allotted time of fifteen minutes, twice daily; once in the morning and again in the afternoon.	Data collection is in an electronic format only. As the students interact with the program, data is automatically collected and lessons are advanced using the data.
	Secondary Expectations	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	Students can participate in a rotation schedule in which one of the rotations include one-to-one teaching from classroom staff with the primary focus being on the student's IEP goals.	One-to-one direct instruction should have an allotted time of fifteen minutes, twice daily; once in the morning and again in the afternoon.	Data collection sheets and observational data should be used to collect student's work data.
Grading	Unique and enCore will be used as the standards-aligned curriculum in which grades shall be collected and input into Infinite Campus.	Grades should be collected on all subjects with a minimum of two grades weekly per subject.	Grades shall be collected when students complete work samples as aligned to the standards.
Communication & Social Skills	As a part of the Autism classroom, students shall have a mode of communication that is practiced daily. This can be communication through	Communication is lessons and opportunities to be included and taught throughout the entire day. Modes of communication should	Data should be collected through the development of Individual Education Plan goals and objectives.

pictures (Core words), devices, or a combination of both. Students should all have a picture supported schedule and a way to communicate basic wants and needs; ie. Bathroom.	travel with students no matter their location.	

General Curriculum

	Elementary Expectations	Teaching Time	Data Collection
Curriculum	Henry Teaching and Learning Standards should be taught daily for all subjects. Teachers are expected to differentiate tasks according to each students' needs. Students shall be assessed using MAP testing, GA Milestones, and any other assessments the school has implemented.	Standards should be taught daily, for all subjects throughout the entire day. Assessment schedules should follow your school's calendar of assessments.	Standards should be taught daily, for all subjects throughout the entire day. Assessment schedules should follow your school's calendar of assessments.
	Secondary Expectations	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	Henry Teaching and Learning Standards should be taught daily for all subjects. Teachers are expected to differentiate tasks according to each students' needs. Students shall be assessed using MAP testing, GA Milestones, and any other assessments the school has implemented.	Standards should be taught daily, for all subjects throughout the entire day. Assessment schedules should follow your school's calendar of assessments.	Standards should be taught daily, for all subjects throughout the entire day. Assessment schedules should follow your school's calendar of assessments.
Grading	As a standard is assessed, grades shall be entered into Infinite Campus.	Grades shall be collected as standards are being taught. Report cards outline the progression of how standards shall be taught. Grading should follow the policies put forth by the school.	Grades shall be collected when students complete work samples or assessments as aligned to the standards.
Social Skills	**Elementary Expectations**	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	TeachTown Social Skills is the curriculum used in the General Curriculum classrooms. This is an online program that teaches and models social skills for students.	TeachTown social skills should be taught daily for at least, but not limited to, fifteen minutes a day.	Data collection is done electronically as each lesson is being taught. Data will be reviewed by district staff bi-monthly.
	Secondary Expectations	**Teaching Time**	**Data Collection**
	Students shall participate in the school social skills programming.	Follow school protocols.	Follow school protocols.

Behavioral Supports and Resources

15 Behavior Strategies for Students with Autism

Prepare for the Day	Set Expectations	Positive Reinforcement	Earn and Learn	Offer Choices
Use visual support and timers to remind the student "what comes next" when following a daily routine.	Consistency is important. Remain consistent through the day and follow through with all classroom expectations	Provide continuous specific praise for compliance with directives and tasks completed throughout the day.	Have clear expectations and allow the student to earn preferred items or activities for their compliance during each academic session.	When facing adversity, avoid power struggles, and offer the student choices to deescalate the moment.
Remain Routine	**Visual Schedule**	**Clear and Quick**	**Transition Objects**	**Sensory Support**
Previewing an activity will increase the likeliness that the student will transition from one activity to the next with ease.	Students with Autism connect activities with pictures. Using a visual schedule is a great way to guide their day.	Make your directions clear, short, and concrete. Abstract thinking is a difficult concept for a student with Autism.	Allowing a student to carry or hold a preferred item between activities can often lead to a more efficient transition.	With guidance from your OT, individualize the sensory supports needed for each student.
Teachable Moments	**Sequencing**	**Distract and Redirect**	**Structured Tasks**	**Remain Calm**
Take advantage of teachable moments.	Inform students of all tasks and the order each task will be completed.	Direct the students to what they SHOULD do. Avoid NO and STOP statements.	Each lesson should include structured and hands-on activities. Avoid the down-time.	Always Stay Calm, Aware, and Respectful! Get in your C.A.R!

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Henry County Schools Learning Progressions

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