

# §89.1055 Content of the of the Individualized Education Program Frequently Asked Questions

## Assessment

- 1. What should an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee consider when determining test accommodations for a student on a state- or district-wide assessment of achievement?**

Schools are encouraged to select [accommodations](#) that are appropriate to the needs of each student and that accurately reflect student achievement/performance. It is unnecessary to address accommodations for functional performance if the assessment does not evaluate functional performance.

Schools are encouraged to consider the conditions under which the student best learns in a normal learning environment, including level of support, presence of an aide and presentation of material (auditory; visual).

- 2. What documentation should an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee include in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if the committee determines that an alternative assessment is appropriate for a student?**

Schools must state in the IEP the reason a student is unable to participate in a regular assessment and why an [alternative assessment](#) is appropriate for the student.

The ARD committee should also include in the IEP, if appropriate, documentation regarding a student's current interpersonal skills levels and preferred functional communication system/modes (i.e. sign, oral language, picture exchange system, etc.) when considering alternate assessments and accommodations.

## Considerations

- 3. For a student with autism who is eligible for special education and related services under 89.1040(c)(1), which of the 11 strategies should be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

Schools must consider all eleven strategies in 89.1055(e) for students eligible under §89.1040(c)(1). Consideration of these strategies in no way implies a requirement to implement any particular 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. A student with limited or no functional communication system should have that area addressed as a priority. Addressing vocational and transition needs is likely to be more important for higher functioning individuals entering high school than it is for pre-school age students. In order to make informed decisions regarding these strategies, ARD committees require accurate and detailed evaluations.

- 4. 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.

**5. What should an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee consider when determining whether Extended School Year (ESY) services are appropriate?**

Extended educational programming (extended day or [extended school year services](#)) should be based on an assessment of individual student need.

An ARD committee should 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 need.

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

Students with autism generally benefit from a regular routine; therefore, a daily schedule which lists activities in which the student is an active participant throughout the day as well as alternate schedules for exceptions to the regular routine (i.e. field trips, substitute teachers, programs, pep rallies, etc.) provides important information to the student and those who work with the student.

**7. What is the purpose of in-home and community-based training?**

A student with autism may have difficulty generalizing skills from one environment to another. In-home/community-based training is an option an ARD committee may choose for a student with autism in order for the student to learn or reinforce social skills in a variety of settings.

**8. What is the meaning of “for example” in the phrase “positive behavior support strategies based on relevant information; for example:...”?**

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 have been shown to be effective with individuals having an Autism Spectrum Disorder, and that the examples are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. While it is the responsibility of an ARD committee to make decisions regarding appropriateness of interventions based on the unique needs of an individual student, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to providing services to students with autism. In many situations several intervention strategies may be implemented at the same time

**9. What is meant by the term “futures planning”?**

“Futures planning” refers to transition services, which generally begin by age 16, but may begin at an earlier age on an individual basis as determined by an ARD committee.

**10. What is the school’s responsibility for providing information and resources 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, videos, conferences and materials designed to increase parent knowledge of specific teaching and/or management techniques related to the child’s IEP.

**11. What is the school’s responsibility regarding in-home training and communication training across all settings?**

Schools should offer parent training that fosters continuity across settings for a student with autism. Training should focus on generalization of IEP-related skills and include areas such as behavior management, interpersonal skills, communication training and/or structured environments across all settings.

An ARD committee may determine that in-home training should consist of a person with training in the area of disability meeting face-to-face with parents and/or the student with autism. It may also determine that in-home training consists of a videotape made available for use by the family to teach/learn specific skills. An ARD committee should consider providing in-home training based on the individual needs of the student.

**12. 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 level of competence in each area of instruction.

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 should be less adult supervision, more self-monitoring and therefore, a higher staff to student ratio.

**13. What types of communication strategies should teachers 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.

**14. What types of social skills supports should teachers consider for students with autism?**

Teachers may wish to consider social skills supports such as trained peer facilitators, video modeling, social stories or role playing.

**15. 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 research interventions/strategies.

**16. What is meant by the phrase "teaching strategies based on peer reviewed, research-based practices for students with ASD"?**

Strategies listed in TAC 89.1055(e)(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 TAC 89.1055(e)(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, structured learning, augmentative communication or social skills training. While it is the responsibility of an ARD committee to make decisions regarding 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.

## Statement

- 17. What action must the ARD committee take if the committee determines services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified in TAC 89.1055(e)?**

When the ARD committee determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified in 89.1055(e)(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.