

December 13, 2011

RE: Autism Eligibility: Prior Medical and Developmental History

As part of the evaluation for determining student eligibility for special education service under the autism classification of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the student's prior medical and developmental history from a qualified health professional must be on record regarding specific syndromes, health concerns, medication, and any information deemed necessary for planning the student's education program. While a health or medical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is not specifically required, and depending on the type of information that is needed for the evaluation, the LEA may determine that information from a variety of professionals should be gathered.

**Prior Medical History:** The student's prior medical history regarding specific syndromes, health concerns, and medication must be obtained from the student's health provider. Well-baby check-up records may provide the necessary information. Immunization records or an immunization waiver that is on record with the school could be part of the prior medical history. If the team determines that additional medical information such as a seizure disorder, allergies or other bio-sensory information, co-morbid conditions, can only be provided by a physician, the LEA must ensure that the information is acquired in a timely manner. A medical information release forms such as the one found at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/> can be used to request the necessary information from the child's health professional.

**Qualified Health Professional:** A qualified health professional is an individual who has the requisite training and functions in the role of providing medical information to the school evaluation team. This person could be the student's physician, nurse, or other health professional.

**Developmental History:** A developmental history is often best gathered from the child's parent or caregiver who has information about the child's characteristics and developmental milestones in areas such as communication, social engagement, and skills and interests.

A school professional such as a school nurse, school psychologist or other qualified school professional who has training in gathering case history information may conduct a parent interview to gather information that is not provided in the existing medical records. For example, if language development milestones are needed, a speech-language pathologist may be enlisted to interview the parents. If social developmental information is needed, a social worker or other professional may interview the parents for this information. Emotional regulation or behavior developmental milestones may be gathered through a parent interview by a school psychologist or other qualified school professionals. For further information regarding IDEA autism classification eligibility see the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules located at: <http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/Laws,-State-Rules-and-Policies/Rules-and-Regulations.aspx>

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