

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

1. Cover letter/Introduction



October 1, 2008

Dear Respondent,

The members of the Special Act No. 08-5 feasibility study group request your participation with a needs assessment survey project. The purpose of this survey collection is to solicit information from school personnel, colleges, universities and other educator preparation programs, Birth to Three staff, service providers, friends, families, and concerned citizens to identify statewide issues and potential solutions with regard to methods of teaching individuals with autism (ASD) and other developmental disabilities (DD). The intent of Special Act 08-5 is to address the training needs of those individuals in a teacher preparation program or those individuals identified by a school district, other approved education agency, or approved Birth to Three program as having the primary responsibility for implementing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) of infants, toddlers, children and youth with autism or other developmental disabilities. For the purposes of meeting the Act's requirements concerning the incorporation of teaching methodologies that support the unique needs of these learners, the state plan will concentrate on those individuals educating or preparing to educate students determined eligible to receive services under Part B or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 due to one or both of the following conditions:

- Classification of autism as described in Connecticut's Guidelines for Identification and Education of Children and Youth with Autism (2005) and/or
- Documented developmental disability as defined by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights of Act of 2000 in section 102 (8) who are eligible under Part B or Part C of the IDEA (2004).

For the purposes of this needs assessment, the term "Other Developmental Disabilities" (DD) will be defined according to the federal definition which is said to cover persons whose disability occurs before age 22 and includes a mental or physical impairment or a combination of both. There must be a substantial limitation in three or more of major life areas: self-care, expressive/receptive language, learning, mobility, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency, or self direction. Finally, for this survey, we are referring to those individuals who meet the federal definition and have qualified for special education services under IDEA.

This survey contains a variety of questions about the needs of school districts and service providers working with learners who meet the definition criteria for ASD and DD as described in the cover letter. We are asking you to look over the survey and, if you choose to do so, complete the questionnaire and send it back to us electronically by selecting the Done button at the end of the questionnaire. Your responses will not be identified with you personally, nor will anyone be able to determine which district you work for or with. This survey is voluntary and does not involve any personal risk and the benefits of your participation may impact Connecticut communities by increasing the knowledge of needs across the state concerning teaching methodologies. We hope you will take time to complete this survey which should take approximately 10-15 minutes. Without the help of people like you, needs and practices across Connecticut could not be identified easily. Through your participation, we hope to understand how to address the needs of organizations, families, service providers, and the community educating individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, you may contact Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher at (860) 713-6918 or jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov. If you have technical issues while completing this survey, please contact John Mercier at (860) 632-1485 ext. 386 or mercier@ctserc.org. Please complete this survey by October 23, 2008. Thank you in advance for your participation in this important study.

Sincerely,

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

[The Special Act 05 Designees](#)

2. Demographics

Please tell us about yourself.

1. Current Role (For purposes of this survey, please check only one option)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual with an ASD or a DD | <input type="checkbox"/> School Administrator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autism Specialist/Consultant | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational/Physical Therapist | <input type="checkbox"/> School Social Worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessional | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Educator (Birth – 5 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Primary Caregiver | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Language Pathologist/Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychologist/School Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Developer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Education Teacher | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

3. School Personnel Form

1. Please select the grade level you most frequently service (please choose one):

- Birth to Three
- Preschool
- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School
- Post-Secondary
- All grades/Central Office

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

4. School Form

1. Current place of employment (Please check one)

Birth-to-Three Program

Higher Education

Private Facility

Public School

Regional Education Service Center (RESC)

Self Employed

Other (please specify)

2. Years in Current Role (Please check one)

0 – 5

6 – 10

11 – 15

16 – 20

21 – 25

26 – 30

Over 30

3. Select the RESC/Connecticut region where you are currently employed:

CREC (Central)

EASTCONN (Northeast)

ACES (South Central)

EDUCATION CONNECTION (Northwestern)

CES (Southwestern)

LEARN (Southeastern)

Don't Know

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

4. Are you or staff in your district currently providing direct service to children with autism or other developmental disabilities? Please refer to the cover letter for terms and definitions as needed.

Yes - ASD

Yes - Other DD

Yes - Both

No

Not sure

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

5. Parent Form

1. If you are a parent of a child with an ASD or other DD, indicate your child's age. If you are unclear about how these terms are defined, please refer to the cover letter.

0 – 3

4 – 6

7 – 12

13 – 17

18 – 21

2. What is your child's primary disability category? Please refer to the cover letter for definitions as needed. (Check one)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Other Developmental Disability (DD)

3. Select the RESC/Connecticut region where your child receives the majority of his or her program and services:

CREC (Central)

EASTCONN (Northeast)

ACES (South Central)

EDUCATION CONNECTION (Northwestern)

CES (Southwestern)

LEARN (Southeastern)

Don't Know

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

6. Directions for completing survey:

Please share your opinion concerning training needs of those educating children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other developmental disability (DD) in the school or program where you currently provide or receive services. Rate the need for training using the rating key described below. Additionally, please indicate if this topic area should be a priority for the school or program by selecting either the Yes, No, or Don't Know option. You may choose to answer for one category or both disability categories. Remember that you are providing your opinion so that the study group can examine the extent to which training is needed across topic areas and if respondents feel certain areas have priority over others.

Rating Code:

- 0 No need
- 1 Very low need
- 2 Low need
- 3 Moderate low need
- 4 Need
- 5 Priority need
- 6 High priority need
- 7 Very high priority need

NA Not Applicable

1. In my school or program, there is knowledge of...

	ASD Rating	DD Rating	Should training in this area be a priority?
1. The range of general communication, social and behavioral characteristics and co-existing conditions of ASD/DD.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. The legal issues that impact educational practice.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Early indicators in infants/toddlers, preschoolers and school age individuals.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Possible courses of development and outcomes.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Evidenced based research supported instructional methods and promising practices.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. Principles and application of applied behavioral analysis and positive behavioral supports as used in education.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. Methods and strategies specific to managing behavior.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. Associated factors such as mental health, sensory issues, diet, medication and their possible relationship to behavior.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
9. Perspective taking difficulties and the impact this difficulty may have on behavior and social competence and strategies to address this difficulty.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
10. Functions of behavior and possible communicative intent or purpose.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
11. Instruction to promote communicative and social alternatives to undesirable behaviors for both non-verbal and verbal students.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12. Evidenced based instructional strategies that increase play and leisure skills.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
13. Strategies/methods to improve social reciprocity and verbal interaction among peers.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
14. Evidenced based strategies to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

15. Strengths and limitations of instruments and procedures used to screen and evaluate individuals with suspected ASD/DD.

16. CT State criteria for eligibility determinations and comprehensive evaluations.

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

7. Directions for completing survey:

Please share your opinion concerning training needs of those educating children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other developmental disability (DD) in the school or program where you currently provide or receive services. Rate the need for training using the rating key described below. Additionally, please indicate if this topic area should be a priority for the school or program by selecting either the Yes, No, or Don't Know option. You may choose to answer for one category or both disability categories. Remember that you are providing your opinion so that the study group can examine the extent to which training is needed across topic areas and if respondents feel certain areas have priority over others.

Rating Code:

- 0 No need
- 1 Very low need
- 2 Low need
- 3 Moderate low need
- 4 Need
- 5 Priority need
- 6 High priority need
- 7 Very high priority need

NA Not Applicable

1. In my school or program, there is ability to...

	ASD Rating	DD Rating	Should training in this area be a priority?
1. Plan and implement systematic instruction based on learner characteristics and previous on-going assessment.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Evaluate and implement assistive technology options.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Implement instructional programs that improve social skills and interactions between peers and adults.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Implement instructional programs that address transition needs between grades and schools and across all settings.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Collect and interpret data to document progress on outcomes and adjust programs as indicated by data.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. Provide training for parents and families to understand, work and interact more effectively.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. Provide environmental and structural accommodations across environments in order to ensure generalization of learning.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. Write specific behavioral plans based on a FBA.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
9. Foster social skill development through peer interactions, direct instruction, role playing, video modeling, etc.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
10. Implement evidenced based strategies that promote the development of self-help, independent living, transportation, community participation, safety and nutrition.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
11. Teach the unstated rules and customs that help regulate social behavior.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12. Assist in understanding of sexuality and sexual behavior at home, school and community.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
13. Design and implement instructional programs that promote effective communication skills using appropriate verbal, augmentative, and alternative communication systems.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

14. Use evidenced based assessment procedures and evidenced based instruments to screen and evaluate for ASD/DD.

15. Listen to families in a non-judgmental manner and incorporate the information they contribute into the overall assessment data.

16. Explain to students, parents and professionals the assessment results and their implication for program development.

17. Interpret assessment results and to design appropriate interventions.

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

8. Previous Training

1. How have you participated in or received training in the past three years related to ASD, DD or both? Select all that apply.

	ASD	DD
SERC Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring/Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In-District Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statewide Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College/University Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth to Three Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journals, newspapers, magazines, TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

2. If you participated in any of these opportunities, which topics were included?
(check all that apply)

- Academic Instruction
- Social Skills
- Assessment/Evaluation
- Discrete Trial Training
- Communication
- Assistive Technology
- Behavioral Strategies
- Inclusion Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction
- Transition
- Independent Living
- Community Collaboration
- Family-School Partnerships
- Other (please specify)

3. Do you have other training needs that this survey has not addressed? Please describe.

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

4. In your opinion, are there existing barriers to attending or receiving training in your school or program? (check all that apply)

- Time
- Travel
- Cost
- Scheduling/Days Offered
- Staff or class coverage
- Limited Technology
- Other (please specify)
- Expertise Unavailable
- Quality
- Location
- Communication of Opportunities
- Does not meet specific needs or interests
- None

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

9. Training

Describe training that you have access to in your school or program in the following areas. Please skip items if you do not know or have no response.

1. Communication:

2. Social Skills:

3. Behavior:

4. Academic instruction/assessment:

5. Describe strengths your school or program demonstrates in training opportunities for those educating children with an ASD or DD.

6. Is there anything else about school or program training that you would like to share with the feasibility study group at this time?

* 7. The remainder of this survey is for directors or primary coordinators of Special Education. Are you a Director of Special Education?

Yes

No

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

10. Directors of Special Education Only

1. How would you rate your capacity as a district to provide the following?

	Full	Partial	Minimum
Related Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outside consultant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paraprofessionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low student/teacher ration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On-going training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Where do you most frequently provide special education programming for students with an ASD and a DD enrolled in your district? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separate Autism or DD program | <input type="checkbox"/> Homebound/Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Education classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-contained classroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESC | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative school in-district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separate public or private school | <input type="checkbox"/> Community-based program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource room | <input type="checkbox"/> All of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

3. Which staff development providers typically give training for staff working with students with an ASD or other DD in your district?

	Yes	No
ASD specialist in your district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DD specialist in your district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private Consultant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent/Advocacy Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-District or Local School Personnel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None Available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Needs Assessment for Educating Children with Autism and Other

4. Do you have anyone in your district who has assigned lead responsibilities for students with ASD or DD?

Yes

No

If yes, what is that person's professional background?

5. What are the most common/frequent questions or issues you address from staff and/or parents regarding ASD or DD?

Identification/Evaluation

Transition Services

Behavior/Crisis Intervention

Due Process/Compliance

Programming

Skills for employment

Staffing Issues

After-school care

Social Skill Issues

Social Network Opportunities

Extended School Year

Other (please specify)

6. Do you currently have students with ASD/DD that meet criteria for excess cost grant reimbursement in your district?

Yes/No

How many

Excess cost grant
reimbursement?

7. Other comments, ideas, suggestions regarding staff training:

11. Thanks!

Thank you for participating in this needs assessment! Please click Done to submit your responses.