



ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA

10.16.3011 CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT AS HAVING AUTISM

- (1) The student may be identified as having autism if the results of a comprehensive evaluation document significant difficulties in social communication; social interaction; and in restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests. A student must have at least one characteristic in each of these three areas and a total of eight or more characteristics to be identified as a student with autism.
- (2) The characteristics below are those which most frequently occur with the student but may not occur in every situation.
 - (a) Significant difficulties in social communication must be documented for at least one of the following characteristics:
 - (i) initiating or maintaining eye contact while interacting with others;
 - (ii) use of facial expressions to communicate with others;
 - (iii) identifying and/or understanding the communicative intent of another person's facial expressions;
 - (iv) using gestures to direct attention to an object (for example, showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest);
 - (v) using gestures for communication;
 - (vi) responding to or interpreting other's use of gestures;
 - (vii) noticing or interpreting other's use of body language;
 - (viii) use of own body language for communication;
 - (ix) expressive verbal or alternative communication;
 - (x) receptive verbal communication or;
 - (xi) interpretation of other's verbal communication (often concrete and literal; for example: does not understand idioms or sarcasm).
 - (b) Significant difficulties in social interaction must be documented for at least one of the following characteristics:
 - (i) seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with others;
 - (ii) initiating social interaction unless seeking preferred items or help;
 - (iii) responding to social interactions initiated by others;

- (iv) initiating a conversation on non-preferred topics;
 - (v) sustaining a conversation on non-preferred topics;
 - (vi) explaining another person's perspective. (for example, what other people are thinking or feeling);
 - (vii) joining play activities of others (solitary play preferred);
 - (viii) play lacks elements of make-believe (for example, using blocks or other objects as food, a car, a phone or an animal);
 - (ix) participating in make-believe play with others;
 - (x) engaging in social imitative play (for example, playacting, fantasy characters, animals, pretending adult role).
- (c) Significant difficulties resulting from restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests must be documented for at least one of the following characteristics:
- (i) makes repeated vocalizations or verbalizations (for example, repeats same word, phrase, or sound);
 - (ii) persistent preoccupation with specific objects or parts of objects;
 - (iii) engages in repeated, repetitive movements with objects such as sticks or string, lining up toys, flipping objects, spinning objects;
 - (iv) preoccupation with particular interests causes difficulties in social interaction and/or academic performance;
 - (v) resists when asked to discontinue preferred or special interest activity;
 - (vi) prefers consistency and resists expected and/or unexpected changes (for example: changing activities, leaving activity unfinished, changes in routine or daily schedule); or
 - (vii) engages in repetitive physical behaviors such as body rocking, spinning self, finger flicking, and/or hand flapping.

Authorizing statute(s): 20-7-402, MCA

Implementing statute(s): 20-7-401, 20-7-403, 20-7-414, MCA

History: NEW, 1999 MAR p. 69, Eff. 1/15/99; AMD & TRANS, 2000 MAR p. 1048, Eff. 7/1/00; AMD, 2019 MAR p. 1371, Eff. 8/24/19.