Assessing Program Quality
with the Autism Program Environment Rating Scale

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What are the elements of a high quality program for students with ASD?

* Designed to assess quality indicators of programs for children and youth with ASD
* Purposes of the APERS

Autism Program Environment Rating Scale (APERS)
Coaching & Consultation

- Purpose: to provide focused, direct feedback
- Process example:
  - Collaboratively develop goals from report
  - Define plan for change/coaching
  - Define timeline for change/coaching

Professional Development

- Purpose: to expand understanding of quality programs for students who have ASD
- Process example:
  - Share APERS content
  - Broad self-evaluation
  - Incorporate peer/mentor coaching

Program Evaluation

- Purpose: to evaluate the quality of a program for purposes other than professional development
- Not an aspect of the NPDC’s use of the instrument
- Not for comparison between programs
- Psychometric properties not yet established
Features of APERS

- Two APERS formats: PE, MHS (2013 revised)
- Organized by domains and subdomains (10)
- Applicable in self-contained and inclusive programs
- Scored on a five-point scale with behavioral anchors at three points
- Results can be summarized by scores or graphs
- Self-assessment for PE and MHS versions
- Developing APERS – IT (Infant/Toddler)

APERS Domains

- **Learning Environments**
  - Safety
  - Classroom Design
  - Visual Schedules and Transition

- **Positive Learning Climate**
  - Respect
  - Engagement
  - Diversity

- **Assessment & IEP Development**
  - Data
  - IEP Process
  - Assessment
  - Transition

- **Curriculum & Instruction**
  - Appropriate Child Specific Curriculum & Instruction
  - Transition

- **Communication**
  - Planning
  - Access to Communication
  - Instruction Individualized
  -Responsive

- **Social Competence**
  - Planning
  - Instruction
  - Peer Interactions

- **Personal Independence & Competence**
  - Accommodations & Self-management
  - Strategies

- **Functional Behavior**
  - Proactive strategies
  - Assessment
  - Plan
  - Implementation
**APERS Domains**

- **Family Involvement**
  - Relationship
  - Communication

- **Teaming**
  - Training
  - Multidisciplinary
  - Roles & Responsibilities
  - Meetings
  - Communication

**Summary**
- Learning Environments
- Whole Learning Environments
- Assessment & IEP Development
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Social Competence
- Personal Independence & Competence
- Functional Behavior
- Family Involvement
- Teaming

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**Self-Assessment: Overview & Scoring**

- Locate the example on page 1
- Take a moment to think about your program
- Begin by reading the middle box
- If your program meets the criteria circle that section. Then read the box to the right, circle the right box if appropriate
- If your program does not meet the criteria for the center square, circle the box to the left
- Do not give half scores

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**Self-Assessment: Scoring**

- Be mindful of key words: Team member vs. team members; Regularly vs. always; Sometimes vs. routinely; At least two vs. three or more, etc.
- These differences will help you determine where to score your program.
Activity
* Complete the self-assessment with your team
* You will have 45 minutes to complete the activity
* Turn in one self-assessment per team

Discussion
* What are some things that your team determined are going well in your program?
* What are some areas of improvement?
* Were there any surprises in your results?

Wrap Up: Where do we go from here?
* Be thinking of your programs over the course of the next two days
* During the “Action Planning” session at the end of day two you will be asked to reflect upon the results of this self-assessment and use any new found knowledge to create an action plan
Parents

- Homework: Individual Family Stressor Tool 2.0
- What is it?
- Why is it useful?