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# COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM PLANNING SYSTEM (CAPS)

## CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input type="checkbox"/> PK	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> High Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/ Daily Living
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High		<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

## BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Planning System (CAPS) (Henry & Myles, 2007) provides an overview of a student's daily schedule by time and activity, as well as by the supports that the student needs during each period. The CAPS allows professionals and parents to answer the crucial question for students with autism: What supports does the student need for each activity?

## DESCRIPTION

CAPS is simply a list for recording a student's tasks and activities, the times they occur, and the supports needed to support student success. In addition, space is allowed for making notations about data collection and how skills are to be generalized to other settings (see next page).

**TARGET: TEXAS GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING  
COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM PLANNING SYSTEM (CAPS)**

<b>Comprehensive Autism Planning System</b>								
Time	Activity	Targeted Skills to Teach	Structure/ Modifications	Reinforcement	Sensory Strategies	Communication/ Social Skills	Data Collection	Generalization Plan
<p>From Henry, S., &amp; Myles, B. S. (2007). <i>The comprehensive autism planning system (CAPS) for individuals with Asperger Syndrome, autism, and related disabilities: Integrating best practices throughout the student's day</i>. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Used with permission.</p>								

CAPS consists of the following components, developed from evidence-based practices for students with autism:

- *Time*. This section indicates the clock time at which each of the student's activities takes place.
- *Activity*. Activities include *all* tasks and activities, throughout the day, in which the student requires support. Academic periods (e.g., reading, math), nonacademic times (e.g., recess, lunch), and transitions between classes are all considered to be activities.
- *Targeted Skills to Teach*. This may include IEP goals, state standards, and/or general skills that lead to school success.
- *Structure/Modifications*. This can encompass a wide variety of supports, including placement in the classroom, visual supports (e.g., choice boards, visual schedules), peer supports (e.g., circle of friends, peer buddies), and instructional strategies (e.g., priming, self-monitoring) (Odom, Brown, Frey, Karasu, Smith-Cantor, & Strain, 2003).
- *Reinforcement*. Student access to specific types of reinforcement, as well as a reinforcement schedule, is listed here.
- *Sensory Strategies*. Sensory supports and strategies identified by an occupational therapist are listed in this area of CAPS (Baranek, 2002).
- *Communication/Social Skills*. Specific communication goals or activities as well as supports are delineated here. Goals or activities may include (a) requesting help, (b) taking turns in conversation, or (c) protesting appropriately. Supports may also encompass (a) language boards (Cafiero, 2001); (b) PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems; Frost & Bondy, 2002); or (c) other augmentative communication systems (Millar, Light, & Schlosser, 2006).
- *Data Collection*. Data collection includes gathering information on behavior(s) to be documented during a specific activity. Typically, information in this section relates to IEP goals and objectives, behavioral issues, and state standards.
- *Generalization Plan*. Because individuals with autism often have problems generalizing information across settings, this section of the CAPS was developed to ensure that generalization of skills is built into the student's program.

CAPS can be used effectively alone, but it is strongest when utilized with the Ziggurat Model (see Ziggurat Model in this document) (Aspy & Grossman, 2007).

## SUMMARY

The CAPS is a multifaceted program that allows educational professionals to know, at a glance, the goals for an activity and what students with autism need in order to be successful.

Moreover, CAPS can facilitate student independence across settings, activities, and people. This groundbreaking tool not only supports compliance with the student’s IEP and special education legislation, it also reduces teacher workload. Thus, the structure of this programming tool gives it broad applicability for children and youth with autism by meeting their complex needs throughout the day in a consistent manner.

## RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
0				

*Note:* No studies have been conducted on this model. Studies have been conducted on the elements of the model. See interventions in this document.

## REFERENCES

- Aspy, R., & Grossman, B. G. (2007). *The Ziggurat model: A framework for designing comprehensive interventions for individuals with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Baranek, G. (2002). Efficacy of sensory and motor interventions for children with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 32, 397-422.
- Cafiero, J. (2001). The effect of an augmentative communication intervention on communication, behavior and academic program of an adolescent with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 16, 179-189.
- Frost, L., & Bondy, A. (2002). *PECS: The Picture Exchange Communication System training manual*. Newark, DE: Pyramid Educational Products, Inc.
- Henry, S. A., & Myles, B. S. (2007). *Integrating best practices throughout the student’s daily schedule: The Comprehensive Planning System (CAPS) for individuals with Asperger Syndrome, autism and related disabilities*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Millar, D., Light, J., & Schlosser, R. (2006). The impact of augmentative and alternative communication intervention on the speech production of individuals with developmental disabilities: A research review. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research, 49*, 248-264.

Odom, S. L., Brown, W. H., Frey, T., Karasu, N., Smith-Cantor, & Strain, P. (2003). Evidence-based practices for young children with autism: Contributions for single-subject design research. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 18*, 166-175.

## **RESOURCES AND MATERIALS**

- Henry, S. A., & Myles, B. S. (2007). *Integrating best practices throughout the student's daily schedule: The Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS) for individuals with Asperger Syndrome, autism and related disabilities*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company. This book details how to develop CAPS for students on the spectrum.