CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Skills</th>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>Cognitive Level</th>
<th>Areas Addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Nonverbal</td>
<td>□ PK</td>
<td>□ Classic</td>
<td>□ (Pre) Academic/Cognitive/Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mixed</td>
<td>□ Elementary</td>
<td>□ High Functioning</td>
<td>□ Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Verbal</td>
<td>□ Middle/High</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Communication/Speech</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Social/Emotional</td>
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</tbody>
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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).
### Comprehensive Autism Planning System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Targeted Skills to Teach</th>
<th>Structure/Modifications</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Sensory Strategies</th>
<th>Communication/Social Skills</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Generalization Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
<th>Ages (year)</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Area(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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


RESOURCES AND MATERIALS


GENERAL RESOURCES

- Autism Internet Modules (AIM) [www.autisminternetmodules.org](http://www.autisminternetmodules.org). The Autism Internet Modules were developed with one aim in mind: to make comprehensive, up-to-date, and usable information on autism accessible and applicable to educators, other professionals, and families who support individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Written by experts from across the U.S., all online modules are free, and are designed to promote understanding of, respect for, and equality of persons with ASD.

- Evidence-Based Practice Briefs [http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/briefs](http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/briefs)

- Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) [http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=32/](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=32/). The Indiana Resource Center for Autism staff’s efforts are focused on providing communities, organizations, agencies, and families with the knowledge and skills to support children and adults in typical early intervention, school, community, work, and home settings.

- Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism [www.txautism.net](http://www.txautism.net). The Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism in conjunction with the network of Texas Education Service center with a grant from the Texas Education Agency has developed a series of free online courses in autism. Please check the training page, [http://www.txautism.net/trainings](http://www.txautism.net/trainings), for updated lists of courses, course numbers, and registration information.
  - Current courses include the following:
    - Asperger Syndrome 101
    - Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the Autism Spectrum
    - Autism for the General Education Teacher
    - Autism 101: Top Ten Pieces to the Puzzle
    - Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with ASD
    - Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with ASD
    - Futures Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
    - Navigating the Social Maze: Supports and Interventions for Individuals with ASD
    - Solving the Behavior Puzzle: Making Connections for Individuals with ASD
  - Strategies for Working with Students with Autism in the General Education Setting:
    - Strategy 1: Understanding Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
    - Strategy 2: Get to Know the Individual Student.
    - Strategy 3: Create Predictability.
Strategy 6: Create a Positive Learning Community.
Strategy 8: Use Instructional Strategies That Promote Successful Learning.
Strategy 10: Develop a Plan to Address Challenging Behavior.
Strategy 11: Borrow from the Special Educator's Toolbox.
Strategy 12: Respect Each Student's Dignity and Need for Autonomy

School-Based Applied Behavior Analysis Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders:
Course 1: Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders, Evidence-Based Practices, and the Basics of Applied Behavior Analysis (45 minutes)
Course 2: Reinforcement and Extinction (1.5 hours)
Course 3: Challenging Behavior Assessment and Treatment (1 hour)
Course 4: Communication and Social Skills Training (1 hour)
Course 5: Instructional Strategies (4 hours)
Course 6: Classroom and Environmental Arrangement (1.5 hours)