Resources for Teams Serving Individuals with Severe Disabilities

National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC)

www.asha.org/njc

Mission

Promotes research, demonstration, and educational efforts that help persons with severe disabilities communicate effectively.

Member Organizations

- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American PhysicalTherapy Association
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Council for Exceptional Children Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness
- RESNA
- TASH
- United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Eligibility Issues

Access to Communication Services and Supports: Concerns Regarding the Application of Restrictive 'Eligibility' Policies

Stresses the need to base eligibility for services on individual communication needs and not on criteria such as age, type of disability, cognitive level, or prerequisite skills. Promotes access to essential communication services and supports in accord with federal statutes and state laws, regulations, and policies.

Applications

- Use as a basis for interdisciplinary clinical services, staff development, and competency assessment.
- Enlighten providers and their constituents about recommended practices.
- Use to advocate for services and resources for all individuals with unmet communication needs.

Assessment and Intervention Practices

Guidelines for Meeting the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities

Includes a **Communication Bill of Rights.** Describes assessment and intervention practices and essential skills for teams.

Applications

- Use as a standard framework to monitor practices.
- Prominently display the Communication Bill of Rights.

Frequently Asked Questions

Communication Services and Supports for Individuals With Severe Disabilities: FAQs

Provides information for professionals and consumers about communication development, funding for service delivery, eligibility policies,AAC, IDEA services, interdisciplinary teams, literacy, and specific disabilities and approaches. Addresses eligibility issues and "how to" questions such as:

- "Do I need to demonstrate a discrepancy in cognition and language in order to provide communication services?"
- "What should I do with a teenager who has not shown progress on IEP goals for a number of years?"

Applications

- Use the FAQs to inform a school district or family members about preferred contemporary practices.
- Locate key references to research articles on a given topic.
- Submit new questions to the NJC through the interactive Website at www.asha.org/njc

Team-Based Program Assessment

Communication Supports Checklist for Programs Serving Individuals with Severe Disabilities

(Published by Brooks: brookespublishing.com)

Self-assessment tool translates principles and practices into quality indicators. Designed for use by inter-disciplinary teams in a variety of service settings.The checklist addresses practice questions such as:

- Do our practices support and respect the communication rights of those we serve?
- Do our settings promote meaningful communication in natural contexts?
- Do our ways of assessing, goal setting,and implementating programs conform to current recommended practices?
- Does our team have the knowledge and skills to support the communication needs of people with severe disabilities?

Applications

- Systematically assess and evaluate philosophy and practices.
- Conduct staff needs assessments.
- Determine program strengths and needs in promoting communication.
- Develop Communication SupportsAction Plans.
- Use for research to measure practitioner knowledge and practices.
- Learn ways to use the checklist by viewing theASHA video-conference, **Quality Indicators: Programs Serving People With Severe Communication Impairments,** by Lee McLean.

For more information, access to NJC documents, and the FAQs go to: www.asha.org/njc