

Glossary of Terms Related to Autism Spectrum Disorder Services

Compiled and edited by Cynthia E. Roat, MPH, June 2021

Term	Definition	Conversion
A-B-C analysis	An approach to understanding behavior by examining the Antecedent (the cause), the Behavior, and the Consequence (the result). ¹	
abstract language	Any vocabulary or phrases with meanings that are not clearly stated. Examples include idioms like, “it’s raining cats and dogs” or “break a leg” where the intended meaning does not match the literal meaning. There are also many examples of this in books and poetry where the author may describe something using abstract language like “it felt like a weight on my chest.” ⁵	
adaptive behavior, or adaptive skills	Includes communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work. These are skills that help the person be successful in their environment and are learned skills rather than innate abilities. ²	
age of majority	The age established under state law when an individual is no longer a minor and has the right to make certain legal decisions without consent. ¹	
anxiety disorder	A pattern of constant worry or tension under many different circumstances. ¹	
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	ABA is the name of a professional field that uses principles of learning to increase performance of socially desirable behaviors. ABA practitioners carefully observe and measure behaviors and the context in which they occur in order to individualize teaching plans to improve specific behaviors. ABA is commonly used as one component in interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorders. ²	
apraxia	See “Dyspraxia”. ²	
attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	A disorder that shows up in the areas of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness. It is evidenced by frequent shifting from one activity or focus to another, having difficulty organizing and completing tasks correctly, impulsive response, or failure to follow rules. It may occur with or without hyperactivity	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	which includes behaviors such as excessive running, talking, fidgeting, and/or restlessness. ²	
audiologist	A specialist who evaluates for hearing loss as a potential cause or contributor to developmental delay, and designs/supports interventions to minimize the impact of hearing loss when it is found. ²	
augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)	Any method of communicating without speech, such as by signs, gestures, picture boards, or electronic or non-electronic devices. These methods can help individuals who are unable to use speech or who need to supplement their speech to communicate effectively. ²	
autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	<p>A neurodevelopmental disorder. ASD symptoms are typically evident before a child is 3 years of age. The symptoms range from mild to severe – and individuals often have varied skills levels in different domains of functioning. Autism affects the person’s overall development in 2 primary areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>social communication</i>, or the way a person uses gestures, body language, and language to communicate and interact socially and relate with others 2. the presence of <i>restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities</i> (e.g., repetitive motor movements, echolalia/repeating speech, idiosyncratic phrases, extreme distress at small changes/difficulty with transitions, strong attachment to unusual objects/topics, adverse or intense responses to sensory input).² 	
aversive	An unwanted stimulus designed to change an individual's behavior through punishment. These should rarely be used in the treatment of autism ¹	
behavior intervention plan (BIP)	A plan to improve an individual’s behavior, created based on the results of a Functional Behavior Assessment. ¹	
behavioral disorder	A condition in which behavior significantly deviates from acceptable norms. ¹	
biomarker	An indicator of a certain biological state. ¹	
bipolar disorder	A brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks; also known as manic-depressive illness. ¹	

Term	Definition	Conversion
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	A professional certified to provide ABA therapy by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). ¹	
body language	A form of non-verbal communication that is an important part of social communication. It includes things like gestures (head nodding or shaking), personal space, facial expressions, and eye contact. ⁵	
case manager	A professional from a school or service agency such as the Department of Developmental Disabilities who serves as a direct contact for families and helps gather resources, team members and ideas. ¹	
catatonia	A state in which a person does not move and does not respond to others. ¹	
challenging behaviors	Behaviors that are destructive and harmful to the individual or others (e.g. hitting, biting, running away), that prevent learning and cause others to label or isolate the individual for being odd or different. ¹	
civil commitment	A legal process in which an individual experiencing a mental health crisis is ordered into treatment against his or her will, including to a hospital. ¹	
cognitive behavioral therapy	Type of therapy designed to help improve an individual's inappropriate or challenging behaviors by replacing the negative thoughts that cause these behaviors with positive thoughts. ¹	
cognitive development	How children learn to think, interpret information, make decisions, and solve problems. Areas of cognitive development include verbal reasoning (using language), non-verbal reasoning (using visual/spatial information), as well as executive control/functioning. ²	
communication	The developmental area that involves skills which enable people to understand (receptive communication) and share (expressive communication) thoughts and feelings. Waving goodbye, smiling, nodding, making eye-contact, using spoken language, following directions, and reading and writing are examples of communication. ²	
communication disorder	Difficulty with understanding and/or expressing messages. ² Communication disorders include problems with hearing, with making speech sounds	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	(articulation), with having a clear voice (voice disorders), stuttering (fluency disorders), difficulty learning, knowing and using grammar (language disorders), difficulty using language to get things done (social communication or pragmatic language disorders), and using language to learn (language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia). ²	
comorbid	Pertaining to a disease or disorder that occurs simultaneously with another. ¹	
compulsion	The drive to do something in particular or in a particular way, such as the need to straighten all the forks at the dinner table. ¹	
conservatorship	The legal right given to a person to be responsible for the assets and finances of a person deemed fully or partially incapable of providing these necessities for himself or herself. ¹	
crisis plan	A document that outlines in specific detail the necessary strategies and steps that must be taken when a crisis occurs. ¹	
data analysis	The process of thoroughly inspecting information related to challenging behaviors in order to draw out useful information and conclusions that may result in strategies to improve behavior. ¹	
de-escalation	The process of stopping a challenging behavior or crisis from intensifying, and calming the situation. ¹	
depression	A mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period of time. ¹	
developmental assessment	A structured evaluation of a child’s development in one or more areas including cognitive, language, motor, social/emotional, and adaptive. Professionals that conduct developmental assessments include: developmental behavioral pediatricians, psychologists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, educators, and audiologists. Types of tests that are used during developmental assessments include interview, observation, questionnaires, standardized tests, and non-standardized tests. ²	
developmental delay	The term used to describe the condition of an infant or young child who is not achieving new skills in the typical time frame and/or is exhibiting behaviors that	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	are not appropriate for his or her age. Some children who are developmentally delayed eventually have a specific diagnosis of a particular developmental disability. Other children with delays catch up with their typically developing peers. ²	
developmental disability (DD)	A severe chronic disability that is attributed to a physical or mental impairment, other than the sole diagnosis of mental illness, or to a combination of mental and physical impairments, is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22, is likely to continue indefinitely, results in the inability to live independently without external support or continuing and regular assistance, reflects the need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are planned and coordinated for that individual. ²	
developmental pediatrician	Also known as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician, these professionals have training and experience to assess and treat a wide range of medical and psychosocial aspects of a child's developmental and behavioral difficulties. Their expertise may make them a good choice for children with complicated medical or developmental problems. ²	
differential diagnosis	Distinguishing between two or more diseases with similar symptoms to identify which is causing distress or challenging behavior. ¹	
disruption	An event that causes an unplanned deviation from a situation. ¹	
Down syndrome, also known as Trisomy 21	The most common and readily identifiable chromosomal condition associated with intellectual disability. Children with Down syndrome typically have developmental delays but this can range from mild to severe. Common physical signs of Down syndrome include: decreased muscle tone; short neck; flattened facial profile and nose; small head, ears, and mouth; upward slanting eyes; white spots on the colored part of the eye (called Brushfield spots); wide, short hands with short fingers; a single, deep, crease across the palm of the hand; a deep groove between the first and second toes. ²	
dual diagnosis	The identification of an additional mental health disorder individuals with developmental disabilities. ¹	
dysarthria	A term used to describe the impact on speech production of muscle weakness and/or reduced muscle control due to neural damage. ²	

Term	Definition	Conversion
dyspraxia	A condition characterized by a difficulty with planning and performing coordinated movements although there is no apparent damage to muscles. Dyspraxia can impact any motor system, and will be described based on the motor system affected (e.g., upper limb dyspraxia, speech/verbal dyspraxia). The term “apraxia” is often used as a synonym for dyspraxia. ²	
early intervention	Programs or services designed to meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers (birth to three years old) and their families.	
echolalia	The immediate and involuntary repetition of words or phrases just spoken by others, often a symptom of autism or some types of schizophrenia. Also called echophrasia. ³	
elopement	A situation in which an individual leaves a safe place, a caretaker, or supervised situation, either by 'bolting,' wandering or sneaking away. ¹	
epilepsy	A brain disorder in which a person has repeated seizures (episodes of disturbed brain activity or convulsions) over time. ¹	
escalating	Increasing or worsening rapidly. ¹	
evidence-based practice (EBP)	A teaching strategy or practice that has been proven through research studies to improve skills or behaviors for a certain population. ⁵	
executive control / executive functioning	A group of skills that helps people plan, organize, control behavior, focus on multiple streams of information at the same time, self-monitor, and revise action plans as necessary. Acquiring these skills is one of the most important tasks of the early childhood years. ²	
extinction	A response used to eliminate a behavior that involves ignoring a mild behavior when it is used for attention. ¹	
extinction burst	Short term response to extinction in which there is a sudden and temporary increase in the response's frequency, followed by an eventual decline. ¹	
face blindness	An impairment in the recognition of faces. ¹	
fading	Gradually reducing the number of prompts or types of prompts to encourage	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	more independence for the learner. ⁵	
fecal digging	The process in which an individual puts his fingers into his rectum. ¹	
fecal smearing	The process in which feces are spread on property or the individual himself. ¹	
fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)	Children whose mothers drank during pregnancy, and who have developmental impairment may be diagnosed with one of several FASDs. The developing brain is the organ most vulnerable to prenatal alcohol exposure, but the range of impact of prenatal alcohol exposure includes both physical and neurodevelopmental impairment. These can include growth difficulty, minor facial anomalies, general developmental delays, seizures, learning disabilities, ADHD, executive functioning and processing challenges, as well as mental health or behavioral challenges. The most severe FASD is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS – see FAS), but other FASDs are far more common. ²	
fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)	A permanent birth defect syndrome caused by maternal drinking during pregnancy. FAS is characterized by growth deficiency; a cluster of 3 minor facial abnormalities including a thin upper lip, a smooth philtrum (i.e., the groove between nose and upper lip); small eyes; and significant abnormalities in brain development. FAS is the leading preventable cause of intellectual disability and other neurodevelopmental conditions. ²	
function of behavior	The purpose or reason behind a specific behavior for an individual. ¹	
functional behavior analysis (FBA)	The process of systematically determining the function of behaviors, usually inappropriate, that are displayed by people. Behaviors are defined, measured and analyzed in terms of what happened before and after their occurrence. Over time the events before and after the behavior occurs are systematically changed in order to determine the function of the behavior for the person displaying it. ²	
functional communication	Effective and appropriate communication that an individual uses across his daily activities to meet his or her needs. ¹ Can be verbal or non-verbal.	
generalization	The ability to use a target skill or behavior across the intervention timespan or timeframe, setting, and individuals (e.g. teachers, peers, parents). For example, when teaching a child to greet others, a teacher may initially implement the intervention when the student first enters classroom. Although the child may	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	begin to independently greet others in the context of entering the classroom, she may not be able to do so when coming home from or entering a different room in the school. If she can greet others across settings and individuals, then she has engaged in generalization of the skill. ⁵	
gestures	Body and hand movements used to communicate. Examples include pointing, waving, opening arms to demonstrate something is “big,” banging a fist on a table to emphasize a point or show anger, etc. ⁵	
guardianship	The legal right given to a person to be responsible for the food, health care, housing, and other necessities of a person deemed fully or partially incapable of providing these necessities for himself or herself. ¹	
hypersensitivity	Overly intense or exaggerated response to sensation. It may include defensive responses (like covering ears in anticipation of a sound, pulling away quickly when touched lightly) or disliking or avoiding of certain situations that involve an undesirable sensory experience (like avoiding public restrooms because the toilet flushing is aversive). ⁵	
hyposensitivity	Under exaggerated response to sensation. May include lack of response entirely or a reduced or slower response than expected. A child with hyposensitivity may not stop working and turn around when their name is called, may not seem to notice that another child ran into them, may smile, or laugh several seconds after you tickle them, may cry several seconds after getting hurt or not at all, etc. ⁵	
idiosyncratic language/ vocabulary	Using language in unusual ways that may not be obvious to the communication partner. This includes using scripts from previous conversations or media applied to different contexts like saying “C is for cookie” to express that they like something. Or “Dora loves waterfall!” to request to take a bath/shower. ⁵	
incontinence	The (usually) involuntary passing of feces or urine, generally not into a toilet or diaper. ¹	
individualized education program (IEP)	A written statement of a child’s current level of development (abilities and impairments) and an individualized plan of instruction, including the goals, the specific services to be received, the people who will carry out the services, the standards and time lines for evaluating progress, and the amount and degree to which the child will participate with non-handicapped peers at school. The IEP is	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	developed by the child’s parents and the professionals who evaluated the child. It is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for all children in special education, ages three years and up. ²	
individualized family service plan (IFSP)	A written plan describing the infant’s or toddler’s current level of development, the family’s strengths and needs related to enhancement of the infant’s or toddler’s development, goals for the child and the other family members (as applicable), including the criteria, procedures and time lines used to evaluate progress (the IFSP should be evaluated and adjusted at least once a year and reviewed at least every six months), and the specific early intervention services needed to meet the goals (including the frequency and intensity and method of delivering services, the projected date of initiating services and the anticipated duration of services). The IFSP is developed and implemented by the child’s parents and a multidisciplinary early intervention team (IFSP Team). The Individualized Family Service Plan is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for all infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services. ²	
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	The federal law reauthorized in 2004 that amends the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142). Part C of the law focuses on services to infants and toddlers who are at-risk or have developmental disabilities. ²	
intellectual disability	Characterized by significantly impaired intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work. ²	
interdisciplinary evaluation team	A group of health care professionals from diverse disciplines who form a team to work collaboratively in conducting a cohesive patient evaluation. ²	
intervention	A strategy or process put in place in order to improve or modify an individual’s behavior (i.e. medication, Applied Behavior Analysis). ¹	
involuntary commitment	A legal process in which an individual experiencing a mental health crisis is ordered into treatment against his or her will, including to a hospital. ¹	
joint attention	A set of early social communication skills used to show and/or share interest	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	about an outside object or event with a communication partner. They include initiating joint attention where the child shifts their gaze and/or gestures toward an object with the goal of getting another person to notice it. They also include responding to gaze shifts and gestures from other people so that they can learn what others find interesting. ⁵	
language delay	A disorder in which a learner's ability to understand and/or use language is behind what would be expected based on their age. ⁵	
language disorder	In children, this could mean trouble getting their meaning or message across to others (expressive language disorder), or understanding messages coming from others (receptive language disorder), as well as difficulty using language to get things done (pragmatic language/social communication disorder). ²	
learning disability	A disorder that affects how a person learns and understands primary skills such as reading, writing and math. ²	
least restrictive environment (LRE)	The educational setting that permits a child with disabilities to derive the most educational benefit while participating in a regular educational environment to the maximum extent appropriate. It is presumed that a child with a disability will be educated in the general education classroom, with appropriate supports, unless the IEP Team deems another setting as more appropriate. LRE is a requirement under the IDEA. ²	
maladaptive behavior	A type of behavior that is often used to reduce anxiety, but whose result does not provide adequate or appropriate adjustment to the environment or situation. ¹	
Medicaid	A government program that provides healthcare coverage for low-income families and individuals with disabilities in the United States. ¹	
medical home	A team based healthcare delivery model led by a physician that provides comprehensive and continuous medical care to patients. ¹	
mental health hold	Involuntary hospitalization due to a mental health crisis. ¹	
motor skill	The learned ability to perform movements, such as holding the body upright to sit, using the hands to manipulate small items, scooping food onto a spoon and	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	bringing it to the mouth, and moving the lips and tongue to articulate different sounds. Fine motor skills involve use of the small muscles of the body while gross motor skills are associated with large muscle movements. ²	
neurodevelopmental conditions	Problems affecting the development of the central nervous system or brain, resulting in delayed or unusual motor, speech, social or learning deficits.	
nonverbal communication	Any form of or attempt at unspoken or “physical” communication. Examples are temper tantrums, gestures, pointing and leading another person to a desired object. ²	
nutritionist	Nutrition services are provided by Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs). The nutritionist evaluates the child’s growth, energy intake, and nutritional status to make sure they are getting appropriate nutrients from their diet. Often, a nutritionist will work with a feeding therapist (e.g., speech or occupational therapist), to develop a plan when feeding problems are suspected. ²	
obsession	A repetitive thought or feeling dominated by a particular idea, image or desire, such as a person who only wants to talk about elevators. ¹	
obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)	An anxiety disorder in which people have unwanted and repeated thoughts, feelings, ideas, or sensations (obsessions) that make them feel driven to do something (compulsions). ¹	
occupational therapist (OT)	Is a skilled healthcare provider that assists people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations). Occupational therapy benefits individuals who have physical, developmental or cognitive limitations. With children, treatment is geared toward development of fine motor skills (e.g. writing, cutting), gross motor skills (e.g. climbing stairs, jumping), self-care (e.g. dressing, eating), and play. OT is the primary profession that addresses sensory processing differences. ²	
ototoxic	Damaging to the ears, causing sound sensitivities, dizziness or balance issues. ¹	
overcorrection	A punishment mechanism for a challenging behavior that involves requiring an individual to engage in repetitive behavior to an excessive extent in an attempt to prevent the behavior from reoccurring. ¹	

Term	Definition	Conversion
pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections (PANDAS)	A subset of children and adolescents who have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and/or tic disorders, and in whom symptoms worsen following infections such as "Strep throat" and Scarlet Fever. ¹	
phenylketonuria (PKU)	Is an inherited disorder that increases the levels of a substance called phenylalanine in the blood. Phenylalanine is found in food proteins and in some artificial sweeteners. If PKU is not treated, phenylalanine can build up to harmful levels in the body, causing intellectual disability and other serious health problems such as seizures, delayed development, behavioral problems, and psychiatric disorders. ²	
physical therapist (PT)	Is a health care team member who treats conditions that limit the ability to move and perform functional activities of daily life. Physical therapists provide services to improve body structures (e.g. muscles), enhance functional activities (e.g. walking), and promote improved participation in daily life. Goals for children may include developing improved strength, range of motion, coordination, balance, and acquisition of new motor skills. ²	
pica	An eating disorder that involves eating things that are not food (i.e. dirt, plastic). ¹	
picture exchange communication systems (PECS)	A unique augmentative/alternative communication intervention package that involves teaching an individual to give a picture of a desired item to a "communicative partner," and goes on to teach discrimination of pictures and how to put them together in sentences. ¹	
polypharmacy	The use of multiple medications by a patient. ¹	
positive behavior supports (PBS)	An approach to helping people improve their difficult behavior by understanding what is causing it, and then developing strategies to increase positive behaviors. ¹	
post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD)	An anxiety disorder that can occur after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event. ¹	
prematurity	A premature birth is a birth that takes place more than three weeks before a baby	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	is due. Normally, a pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks so a premature birth is one occurring before the start of the 37 th week of pregnancy. ²	
prompting	Any help given to a learner to assist in using a specific skill or behavior. Prompts can come in many different forms including visual, verbal, gestural, models, and partial or full physical. ⁵	
psychologist	Someone with a PhD or PsyD, trained in the evaluation, study and/or treatment of psychiatric and cognitive disorders. A school psychologist is a professional trained in psychology and education who collaborates with children, educators, parents and other professionals to create healthy and supportive learning environments for students based on careful evaluation of cognitive, executive, and adaptive skills. ²	
psychosis	A loss of contact with reality that usually includes delusions and hallucination). ¹	
psychotropic	A medication or intervention that affects brain activity, behavior or perception. ¹	
puberty	The process of physical changes that occur when a child's body matures into an adult. ¹	
red flags	Behaviors that cause caregivers concern in an area of a child's development. They warn you to stop, look, and think, and then observe and document. ²	
reinforce	To strengthen with additional material or support. ¹	
reinforcement strategies	Methods used to promote or increase positive behavior by providing motivating reinforcers, such as praise, a favorite toy, a cookie, or a preferred activity. Also called a "reward" or an "incentive."	
resilience	An ability to recover from or adjust easily to change or a difficult situation. ¹	
respite care	A service that provides short-term breaks that can relieve stress, restore energy, and promote balance for caregivers. ¹	
restraints	Physical restrictions immobilizing or reducing the ability of an individual to move their arms, legs, body, or head freely. This can be someone holding a person so they cannot move or it can be a an item that restrains their body	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	such as a device that holds their hands or bodies down. ¹	
restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests	Topics or tangible items that individuals with autism pursue with great intensity and focus for long durations of time. ⁴	
reward	A prize, token, or preferred activity given to an individual for good behavior, designed to promote the same behavior in the future. ¹	
risk factor	Conditions that increase the likelihood of aggression. ¹	
ritual	A repetitive behavior that a person appears to use in a systematic way in order to promote calm or prevent anxiety, such as arranging all the pillows in a certain way before being able to settle in to sleep. ¹	
rumination	The practice of (voluntarily or involuntarily) spitting up partially digested food and re-chewing it, then swallowing again or spitting it out. Rumination often seems to be triggered by reflux or other gastrointestinal concerns. ¹	
schizophrenia	A chronic, severe, and disabling brain disorder that makes it hard for individuals to think clearly and tell the difference between what is real and not real. ¹	
screening test or tool	An evaluation tool designed to identify children who are at-risk for having or developing a developmental disability. This is different from a diagnostic tool that is used to determine if a person has, or does not have a neurodevelopmental disability. ²	
seclusion	A situation in which an individual is isolated in a room in response to a behavior they have exhibited. ¹	
sedating	Calming, sleep-inducing, numbing an individual experiencing challenging behaviors or struggling during difficult situations. ¹	
seizure disorder	A seizure disorder, which can also be called epilepsy, is a disorder in which brain activity is disturbed and causes seizures. There are many types of seizures. Some involve uncontrollable jerking movements or losing awareness, but some can just look like a staring spell. ⁵	
self-advocacy	The ability of an individual to communicate his or her wants and concerns, and	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	make his or her own decisions. ¹	
sensory avoidance	Blocking or staying away from something that is painful or bothersome. ¹	
sensory defensiveness	A tendency to react negatively or with alarm to sensory input which is generally considered harmless or non-irritating. ¹	
sensory input	Any source that creates sensation and activates one or more of the senses - vision, smell, sound, taste, and touch. ¹	
sensory processing disorder	Refers to difficulty detecting, organizing, or responding to sensory information received and interpreted in the brain via all seven senses <u>and</u> that interferes with participation in daily life, development, behavior, and social interactions. ²	
sensory-seeking behavior	Behaviors caused by a need for additional stimulation of certain senses as a way of maintaining attention or achieving a calmer state. ¹	
sleep apnea	A usually chronic, common disorder in which an individual has one or more pauses in breathing or shallow breaths up to 30 or more times per hour during sleep, and results in daytime sleepiness. ¹	
sleep disturbances	Sleep disturbances can include a variety of issues including difficulties falling asleep or staying asleep, being on different sleep rhythms (e.g., awake at night), or needing increased amounts of sleep. ⁵	
social communication disorder	Applies to children who have deficits in the social use of language, but do not have the restricted interests or repetitive behavior commonly found in autism spectrum disorders. ²	
social reciprocity	The primary component of healthy social development – acts of kindness - interactions. It is about “joint attention” where there is purposeful language including body language and pretend play. Lack of social reciprocity is a key red flag, whether the child is not engaged in the world around him – this concern should not be ignored. ²	
Social Worker	Social work practice is aimed at assisting individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to reach their goals. The primary mission of the social work	

Term	Definition	Conversion
	profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. ²	
Special Needs Parent Advocate	An advocate for parents of children with special needs who helps ensures that the child's rights and needs are met in school and in the community. ¹	
specific learning disability	A disorder that manifests itself with a deficit in areas such as attention, reasoning, processing, memory, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, coordination, social competence and emotional maturity. Often identified by a discrepancy between school performance and the performance expected based on overall intelligence. ²	
speech sound disorder	Speech disorders in which some speech sounds in a child's native language are not produced, not produced correctly, or are not used correctly. ²	
speech-language pathologist	A clinician who assesses, diagnoses, treats, and helps prevent speech, language, cognitive, communication, voice, swallowing, fluency, and other related disorders. ²	
standardized test	A test administered and scored in a consistent or standard manner is a standardized test. It is administered in controlled conditions that specify where, when, how, and for how long children respond to the questions. In standardized tests, the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent. A well designed standardized test provides an assessment of an individual's mastery of a domain of knowledge or skill. ²	
staring spells	Occasions when an individual is in a trance staring into space, which can often signal seizure activity. ¹	
stereotypy	Repetitive or ritualistic movements such as body rocking or crossing and uncrossing of legs. ¹	
stimulation	Excitement or activity triggered by a stimulus either internally or externally. ¹	
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	A Federal income supplement program designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income, and provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. ¹	

Term	Definition	Conversion
tangibles	Items or rewards that can be touched, such as a toy or piece of candy. ¹	
time delay	A prompting procedure that fades prompts during activities by having longer delays before a prompt is provided	
Tourette's Syndrome	A neurological disorder characterized by tics, or repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations. ¹	
tracking scales	A document or other tool used to track information such as changes in an individual's behaviors, side effects of medications, school performance, etc. ¹	
transition plan / transition services	Part of IDEA, transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is results-oriented and focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability in order to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition services will be based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests. ²	
TRICARE	The health care program for Uniformed Service members, retirees and their families worldwide. ¹	
visual cues	An image or symbol presented to the learner that either prompts him to complete the target behavior/skill or assists in supporting the understanding of a particular activity, instruction, or direction. Visual cues can be used as prompts or supports. ⁵	
visual schedules	A display that shows the activities of a day or steps of an activity to support the learner in moving between activities or through activities. The displays can be made from objects, pictures, photos, or written text, and may be created for a full day, part of a day, or just the next two activities. ⁵	
vocational rehabilitation	A state and federally funded program designed to help people with disabilities become employed and to help those already employed perform more successfully through training, counseling and other support methods.	

Term	Definition	Conversion
voice output technology or voice output communication aid or speech generating device	A technological device that helps people who are unable to use speech to express their needs and exchange information with other people. ¹	
wraparound	An integrated, multi-agency, community-based planning process designed to build teams of providers, family members and natural supports to help keep complex youth in their homes and communities. ¹	

¹ The definition for these terms were taken from “Challenging Behaviors Glossary” published in 2012 by Autism Speaks.

² The definitions for these terms were taken from “Glossary of Terms Related to Neurodevelopmental Disabilities” by John Thorne, PhD, CCC-SLP. The “Glossary of Terms Related to Neurodevelopmental Disabilities” was adapted by John Thorne, PhD, CCC-SLP, from a number of in-depth resources (12/16) including:
http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/inclusion_glossary.cfm
<http://www.ddrcco.com/resources-and-training/glossary-of-developmental-disability-terms.php>
<http://autismnow.org/at-home/learn-and-understand-autism/autism-and-developmental-disabilities-glossary/>
<http://www.gennextmsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ECS-Glossary-May2015.pdf>
http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/PrinciplesThemes_ENG/Glossary_ENG.pdf
http://www.johnson-center.org/downloads/pdfs/What_is_a_Standardized_Test.pdf

³ The definition was taken from The American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary. Copyright ©2002,2001, 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

⁴ DSM-IV, 1994.

⁵ Excerpted from Steinbrenner, J., Sam, A., Chin, J., Morgan, W., & AFIRM for Paras Team. (2019). *Introduction to ASD*. FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/introduction-asd>

More information is available at:

- [Autism Society](https://www.autism-society.org/)
 Founded in 1965 by Dr. Bernard Rimland, Dr. Ruth Sullivan and many other parents of children with autism, the Autism Society is the leading source of trusted and reliable information about autism. Through its national network, the Autism Society has spearheaded numerous pieces of federal, state and local legislation, including the 2006 Combating Autism Act, the first federal autism-specific law. The Autism Society’s website is one of the most visited websites on autism in the world and our on-line resource database, [Autism Source™](https://www.autism-source.com/), and National Contact Center (800-3-AUTISM) provide information and service referrals to thousands of people each year. Look online at <https://www.autism-society.org/>.



- [Autism Speaks](#)

Autism Speaks was founded in February 2005 by Bob and Suzanne Wright, grandparents of a child with autism. Recognizing the need for a powerful voice Bernie Marcus donated \$25 million to help financially launch the organization.

Building upon the legacy of three leading autism organizations, Autism Coalition for Research and Education (ACRE), the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) and Cure Autism Now (CAN), who merged with the organization, Autism Speaks has made extraordinary advancements in the autism community.

Chief among these are increased global awareness of autism, better understanding of the breadth of the autism spectrum, and advocacy to increase research and access to care and support.

Today, Autism Speaks is dedicated to advancing research into causes and better treatments for autism spectrum disorders and related conditions both through direct funding and collaboration.

Look online at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)

CDC [works 24/7](#) to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are chronic or acute, curable or preventable, human error or deliberate attack, CDC fights disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same.

CDC increases the health security of our nation. As the nation's health protection agency, CDC saves lives and protects people from health threats. To accomplish our mission, CDC conducts critical science and provides health information that protects our nation against expensive and dangerous health threats, and responds when these arise.

Look online at <https://search.cdc.gov/search/index.html?query=autism%20spectrum%20disorder>